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The Effect Of Arab American Parental Involvement In School-Based And Home-Based Activities That Support The Academic Performance Of Their Children During The Elementary School Years

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**THE EFFECT OF ARAB AMERICAN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL-
BASED AND HOME-BASED ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT THE ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF THEIR CHILDREN DURING THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
YEARS**

by

ROLA BAZZI-GATES

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

2015

MAJOR: SOCIOLOGY

Approved by:

Advisor

Date

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, my husband and my three wonderful, smart, and beautiful kids Ali, Amanda, and Adam. I want to thank God for the strength and patience that he gave me throughout this long journey. Also, I want to thank my parents' Abdul and Khadijeh Bazzi, my siblings, my parents' in law Jean and Clinton Gates, and my husband Lieutenant Colonel Don Gates for their continuous love and support to me throughout this journey. I love you all so much. I am so lucky and grateful to have you in my life. GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures.....	ix
CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background of the Problem	1
The Impact of Generational Immigration	4
The Arab American Community in Dearborn, Michigan.....	5
Arab American Immigrants and Parental Involvement	10
Hispanic Immigrants and Parental Involvement.....	11
Statement of the Problem.....	13
Purpose of the Study	14
Research Questions: The Focus of the Study	14
Operationalizing Central of Terms and Concepts.....	14
Conclusion	16
Organization of this Study	16
CHAPTER 2 -LITERATURE REVIEW	18
Introduction.....	18
Factors of Parental Involvement	18
The Impact of Parental Involvement.....	22
The Constructs of Parental Involvement.....	24

Parental Involvement among Migrant Groups.....	25
Arab Immigrants and Education	28
The Barriers to Educational Success for Immigrants	29
Conclusion	30
CHAPTER 3-METHODOLOGY	32
Introduction.....	32
Context of the Study: Description.....	32
Denver and Brooks Elementary Schools	32
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions.....	33
Research Design.....	34
Sample.....	34
Parental Questionnaire	35
Initial Analysis	39
Intensive Analysis	39
Summary	42
CHAPTER 4 –FINDINGS	44
Themes and Categories	44
Theme I	44
Theme II.....	48
Theme III	49
Participants.....	51
Participants' Information	54
Mrs. Clark	54

Mrs. Mook.....	54
Mrs. Richardson.....	55
Mrs. Alena.....	56
Mrs. Drake	57
Summary of Findings.....	59
CHAPTER 5	60
Summary, Recommendations, and Conclusion.....	60
A Discussion of Results regarding the 3 Research Questions	61
Question 1: What does the involvement of Arab American parents look like in school-based and home-based activities that promote and support student educational success-	61
Question 2: What are the resources that allow Arab American parents to be involved in their children’s education?.....	61
Question 3: What are the barriers that make it difficult for Arab American parents to become more involved?	62
Practical Implications of Findings	63
Parents’ Recommendations about Parental Involvement	63
Interpretations and Analysis to Parents Feedback about Parental Involvement	64
Recommendations for Further Research.....	65
Discussion	66
Conclusions.....	67
Appendices.....	71
Appendix A- Parent Interview Questionnaire.....	71
Appendix B-Madison District Permission Request	75
Appendix C- Recruitment Script to Parents in Arabic.....	76

Appendix D- District Letter of Approval	77
Appendix E- Denver School Permission Request	79
Appendix F- Brooks School Permission Request.....	80
Appendix G- Recruitment Script to Parents	81
Appendix H-Informed Consent to Parents.....	82
Appendix I-Informed Consent to Parents in Arabic	85
Appendix J- IRB Approval	88
Appendix K- Principal # 1 Letter of Approval	90
Appendix L- Principal # 2 Letter of Approval.....	91
Appendix M- Data from the 2003 Detroit Arab American Study	92
References.....	93
Abstract.....	100
Autobiographical Statement.....	102

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 – Themes/Categories that Emerged from the Intensive Analysis Phase Worksheet	41
Table 2 – Participant Information	52

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Map of Ethnic Enclaves: Dearborn in 2011 (Wayne State University, American Community Survey, 2011)	7
Figure 2.2: Map of Arab Ancestry in Southeast Michigan (Wayne State University, American Community Survey, 2011)	8
Figure 2.3: Map of Arab Ancestry in Metro Detroit in 2011, (Wayne State University, American Community Survey, 2011)	9
Figure 3.0 Impact of Social-Demographic Characteristics on Arab-American Educational Activism (Detroit Arab American Study, 2003)	91

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It has long been noted that education plays a central role in the economic and social development of a nation and its people. Particularly, in the United States of America, education is one of the strongest markers for social-economic advancement. This is especially true for U.S. immigrant families and their children who are immersed in a new culture and often times a new language. Recent studies of U.S. immigration underscore the importance of education in the economic performance and assimilation of immigrants into the U.S. labor market (Suleiman, 1999). In addition to education, Spring (2009) states that family support is essential to one's ability to acquire social and economic success. For children whose parents are newly immersed into American culture, the struggle to adapt can be minimized by the support of parents and family involvement. However, the research is limited as to the effects of immigrant parents and their involvement in their child's academic success.

Background of the Problem

The Arab-Israeli clash in the Middle East has resulted in increasing literature focused on Arab Americans (Spiegel, 1996). Since the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, American people have become more interested in Arabs living in the country. Questions have been raised regarding their number, countries of origin, social and cultural backgrounds, and whether they have positive or negative impacts on U.S. society (Jamal & Naber, 2008). As a sign of this rising interest, the U.S. Census Bureau published its first report on the population of Arab ancestry in December 2003 (De la Cruz, and Brittingham, 2003). The current study is intended to examine the importance of Arab American parental involvement in the success of their students during their elementary years. The study will also provide information about the resources that

allow parents to be involved at their children's schooling and the barriers that prevent them from being involved and participate as much as they would like in their children's schooling.

Parental Involvement as an Important Predictor of Student Academic Success

Parent involvement is an important contributor to student success in school (e.g., Bempechat, 1992; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Reynolds, 1992; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). Blankstein (2004) states that the support and involvement of students' families are fundamental to student achievement. He cites a comprehensive study (see: Henderson, 1987; Henderson & Berla, 1995) which concludes that increased parental involvement leads to increased student academic achievement, even if such factors as socioeconomic status or ethnic background are considered. Involvement includes active parenting; communicating; school volunteering; providing learning at home; informed decision making; and collaborating with the community. The studies and analysis of parental involvement are crucial to understanding how and why parent support impact student's educational and social success.

According to the National Household Education Surveys Program (2012), the most common school-related activity that parents reported participating in during the school year was attending a general school or a parent-teacher organization or association (PTO/PTA) meeting (87 %). 76% of students had parents who reported attending a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference; 74 % had parents who attended a school or class event; 42 % had parents who volunteered or served on a school committee; 58 % had parents who participated in school fundraising; and 33 % had parents who met with a guidance counselor. Among those students who did homework outside of school, 86 % had a place set aside for homework in their home, and 67 % had an adult in the household who checked that their homework was done.

The factors contributing to academic success such as parental involvement is a compelling study because of its long reaching implications. At every income level, educational attainment makes a difference in the socio-economic achievement in the U.S. “Studies show that years of schooling are associated with income levels... and there is a steady increase in annual median income with educational achievement” (Spring, 2009, p. 38-39). Furthermore, college graduates earn higher incomes; accumulate more wealth over the course of their working lives; live in more affluent communities; are healthier and live longer lives; less likely to be incarcerated; and do better than non-college graduates on nearly every quality of life indicator. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2013), in 2012, the employment rate was 69 percent for young adults (those ages 20–24) and 74 percent for 25- to 34-year-olds. Between 1990 and 2012, employment rates for adults with at least a bachelor’s degree were higher than employment rates for adults without a bachelor’s degree. An American male over twenty five years old with a high school diploma makes on average \$37,030. For a male over twenty five years old with a Master’s Degree, he makes on average \$75,430—which is roughly double in income (Spring, 2009). For females, the average incomes are \$26,740 and \$52,440 respectively. Statistics such as these suggest that “achievement in school is the road to academic success” (Spring, 2009, p. 38).

The role of immigrant parents in the academic lives of their children is an important topic. Immigrants make up 13% of the total U.S. population. “In 2005, approximately 11 million school-age children were considered children of immigrants; this population is about one-fifth of the total number of U.S. school-age children. Among the children of immigrants, about 3 million were born outside the United States.” (Immigrations and U.S. Schools, p. 5). The U.S. Census Bureau has stated that within the next thirty years, most classes will be primarily students from

minority groups and that by 2020; only fifty-six percent of the students will be white non-Hispanic (Spring, 2009).

The Impact of Generational Immigration

In 2009, 33 million people in the United States were second generation immigrants, representing 11% of the national population. There are significant differences in income and education levels between the second generation immigrant population and the first generation immigrant population in the United States. Second generation immigrants are doing better overall and are assimilating more successfully into U.S. society. Second generation immigrants are more educated compared to first generation immigrants, exceeding parental education in many instances. A greater percentage of second generation immigrants have obtained a level of education beyond a high school diploma, with 59.2% having at least some college education in 2009. Also in 2009, 33% of the second generation immigrant population had a bachelor's degree.

Within the Arab American population, generational immigration has been shown to influence the culture of schooling and parental involvement. Moosa, Karabenick, and Adamsy (2001) examined first generation Arab parent involvement at the elementary school level. The results of this study show the beliefs held by many teachers about Arab parents' lack of involvement in their children's education. Teachers concluded that parent partnership with schools is not traditional in Arab culture based on their own observations that only a handful of mothers assist in classrooms and/or other areas of the school. Nevertheless, teachers are aware of other possible reasons for the lack of involvement, especially language barriers. Time restrictions and language difficulties are often complicated. Among the other causes of lack of parental involvement, teachers understood that most of the mothers had minor children at home who required their company and support. Most parents (81%) attended parent-teacher conferences on

a regular basis. In addition, almost all (97%) of the Arab mothers expressed eagerness to participate if they were requested to do so. The mothers also formed a home environment conducive to learning and assisted with homework. Such findings are contrary to the belief that immigrant parents are hesitant to get involved in their children's schooling if they are not English speakers and have limited education (Rumbaut & Cornelius, 1995).

The Arab American Community in Dearborn, Michigan

Arab Americans are among many who have immigrated to the U.S. However, the greatest concentration of Arab American families—one third of the total—reside in California, New York and Michigan (Arab American Institute). That number is magnified in Dearborn, Michigan. Over thirty percent of the Dearborn population is Arab American and is reflected in the schools with sixty percent Arab American students. Nationally, Dearborn is a unique Arab American community made up of mostly Muslims—particularly, those who are Shiite Muslims. Shiites are a minority in the Muslim world. The other groups are Lebanese, Iraqi, Yemeni, and Palestinian.

The maps below reflect the dominant ethnic groupings spotted in Wayne County, especially in and around Detroit, starting in 2011. It is critical to note, nonetheless, that there was a vicinity of these ethnic gatherings all through the seven-district locale as well. Areas with a high rate of ethnic groupings beyond the Detroit-Dearborn region were Pontiac in Oakland County and Sterling Heights in Macomb County. Of the seven area districts in Figure 2.1, Arab residents were widely gathered in Dearborn in 2011, which is in Wayne County. As per the American Community Survey, around 40 percent of the Dearborn residents are of Arab lineage; in Wayne County 4.2 percent of the populace are of Arab parentage. Figure 2.2 shows that the Lebanese ancestry makes up an extensive segment of upper east Dearborn, as did those with an

unclassified lineage and an "other" Arab heritage. Also, there is a small vicinity of Syrians and Armenians all through the region as of 2011. Figure 2.3 shows the residency of Arab Ancestry in Metro Detroit in 2011 and where they reside in Oakland, Macomb and Wayne counties.

As indicated by Naff (1984) and Orfalea (1988), Arab immigrants have been coming to the United States following the late 1800s, and the Detroit/Dearborn zone has turned into the biggest and most perceptible Arab American group in the United States. As in different parts of the United States, Lebanese make up the most elevated rate (43%) of the neighborhood Arab American population in the northeastern area of Dearborn (Zogby, 1990). Numerous Arab immigrants live and send their kids to school in the southwest edge of Detroit.

According to Arab American Cultural Center for Economic and Social Services (survey, 2011) about 300,000 people in Southeastern Michigan trace their descent from the Middle East. Dearborn has a sizeable Arab community especially Lebanese, who immigrated for jobs in the auto industry in the 1920s along with more recent Yemenis and Iraqis. In 2010, four Metro Detroit counties had at least 200,000 people of Middle Eastern origin. From 1990 to 2000 the percentage of people speaking Arabic in the home increased by 90% in the Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties region, with a 106% increase in Wayne County, a 99.5% increase in Macomb County, and a 41% increase in Oakland County.

Ethnic Enclaves: Dearborn in 2011

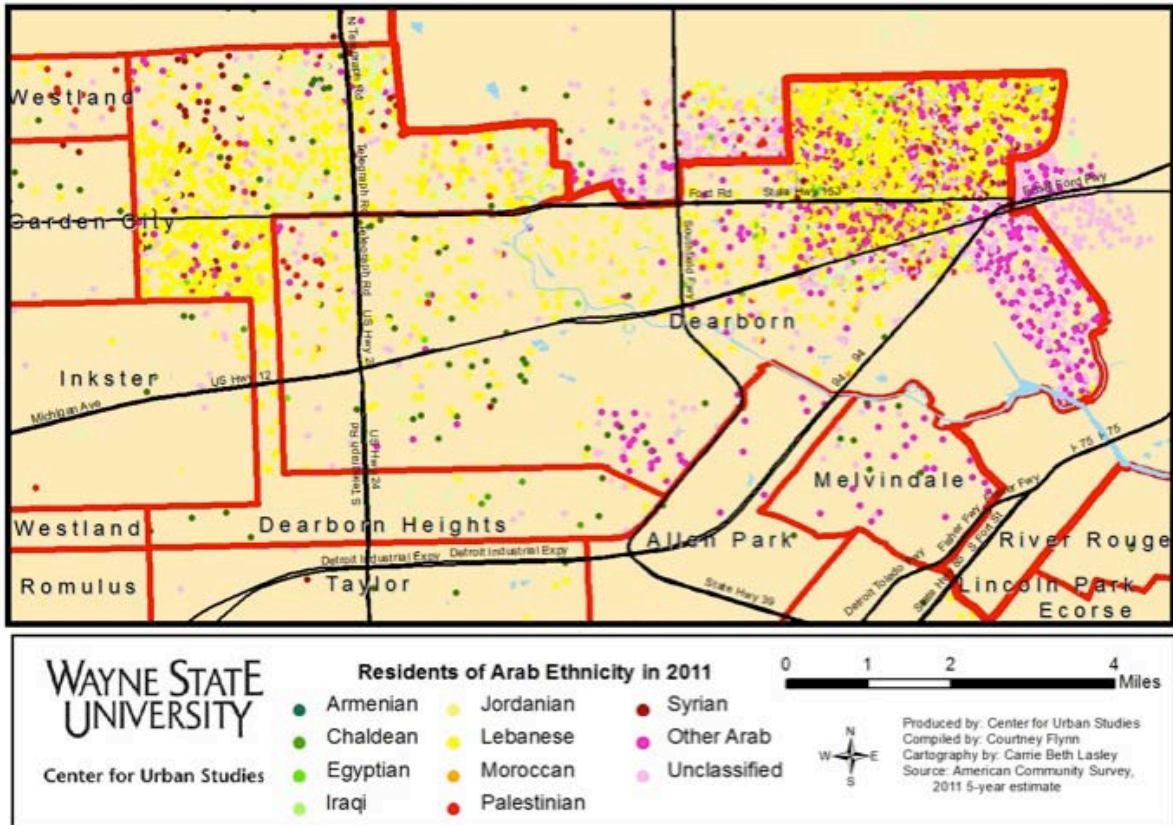


Figure 2.1: Map of Ethnic Enclaves: Dearborn in 2011 (Wayne State University, American Community Survey, 2011)

Arab Ancestry in Southeast Michigan in 2011

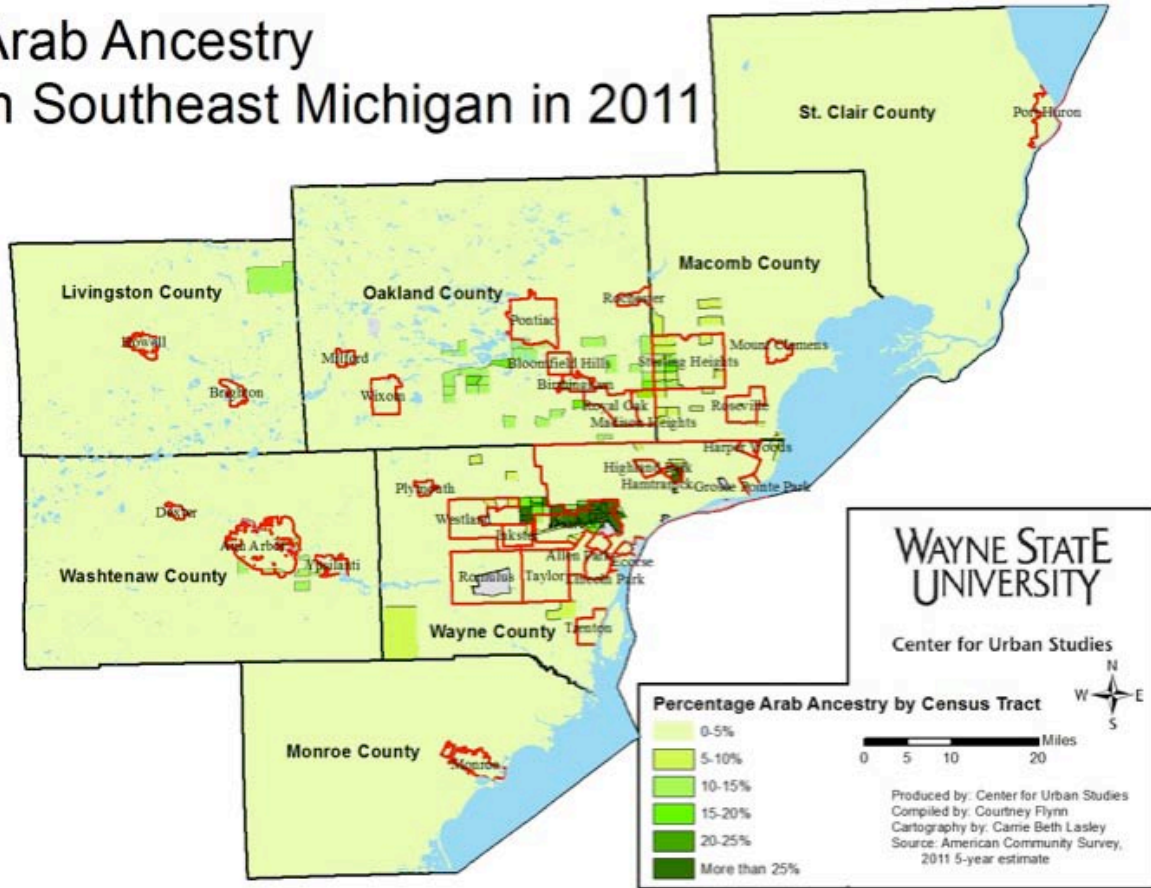


Figure 2.2: Map of Arab Ancestry in Southeast Michigan (Wayne State University, American Community Survey, 2011)

Arab Ancestry in Metro Detroit in 2011

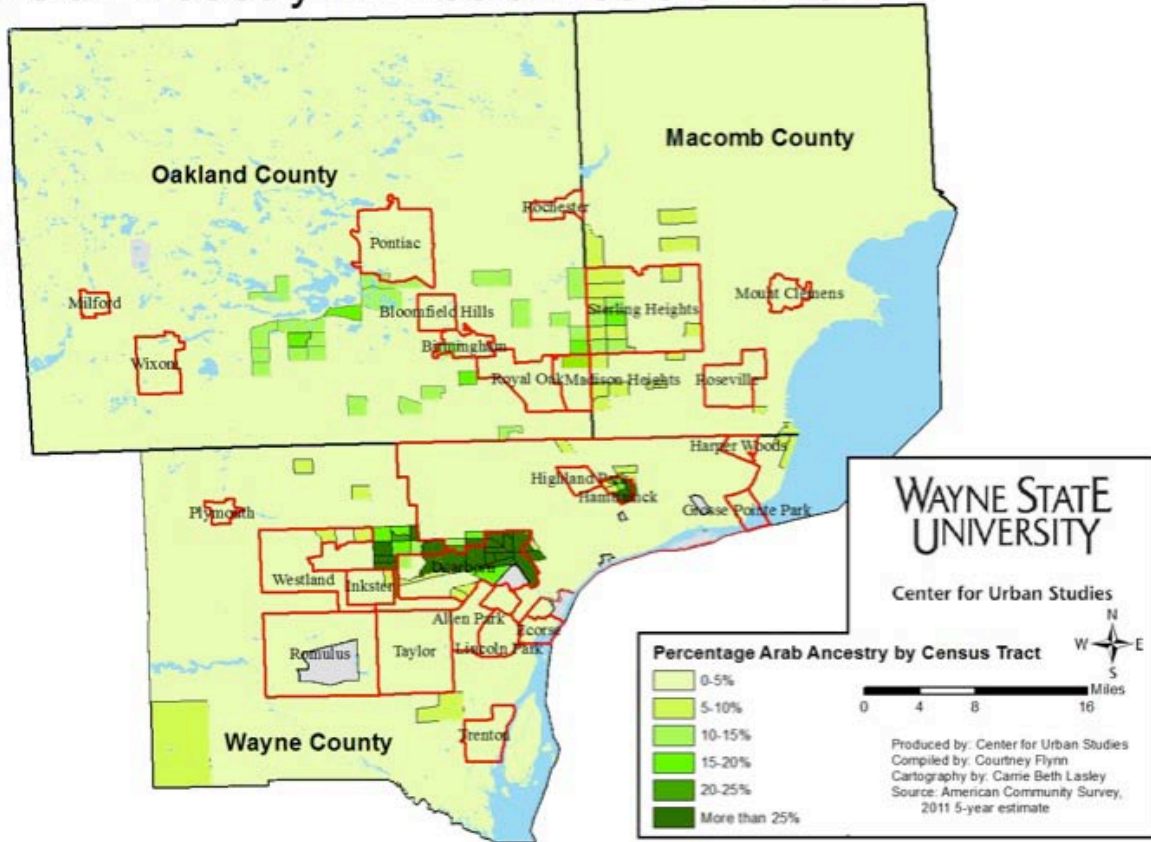


Figure 2.3: Map of Arab Ancestry in Metro Detroit in 2011, (Wayne State University, American Community Survey, 2011)

Arab American Immigrants and Parental Involvement

Parental involvement at schools during a child's elementary years offers a one of a kind opportunity for his/her academic success. The school and home connection has an essential role and positive impact on kids' academic achievement and behaviors. For immigrant parents, involvement in a child's education may be significantly different for several reasons. Hoover-Dempsey (2010) has found that ethnic and cultural factors impact how and to what extent immigrant parents will be involved at their child's school.

Arab American immigrants as any other ethnic minority in the United States, struggle to preserve their civilization, and pass it on from one generation to another. Arab American immigrants as well try to keep contact with their extended family and members of their home town who may be detached and spread around the world. Arab American parents view schooling and education by having a true dedication to their children, and to the educational and financial attainment (Al-Badry, n.d.). About 94% of Arab Americans live in metropolitan areas, 85 percent of them completed a high school diploma. Approximately 40 % of them have a college degree (compared to 24 for overall US); 17 % of them have a post-graduate degree (9 percent for overall US); and 88 % of them work in the private sector. Their median income was \$47,000 in 1999 (which is higher by 5,000 dollars than the overall US per capita income). Arab American immigrants are also younger, highly educated, and more likely to own businesses than other groups such as the Native Americans (Al-Badry, n.d.).

According to Shaheen (2001), the parental involvement of Arab American parents in their children's education is a prominent feature of the Arab American culture. Rouchdy (2002) found that Arab Americans in Detroit use Arabic language at home due to an increase in Arabic TV channels, Arabic media, and Arabic newspapers. Kenny (1992) found similar results in his

survey of 28 Arab American students who stated that they are being influenced by their parents, with 75% stating that their parents encouraged them to study Arabic and more than 75% claiming that their parents always or almost always spoke Arabic to them at home. Because of the limited research on Arab American families, studies of other immigrant families have been included in this literature review.

Hispanic Immigrants and Parental Involvement

There is research regarding Hispanic immigrants and how their culture addresses the role of parents in the child's schooling. For example, according to Espinosa (1995), Hispanic culture tends to emphasize obedience, respect for adult authority and education, strong family ties, and a cooperativeness that supports community life. Espinosa also indicated that many Hispanics believe in the complete authority of the school and teachers; that it is impolite for Hispanic parents to intrude into the life of the school. The parents often trust and respect the teachers and the school to do what is right for their kids. As it relates to questioning authority, this cultural emphasis might be related to their minor occupational roles in the U.S. as well as the fact that Hispanics are significantly more likely than other U.S. immigrants to immigrate to the U.S. outside of the lawful channels. As such, questioning of authority may bring attention to their family, and friends which could ultimately jeopardize their position in this country.

For Hispanics in the United States, the educational experience is one of accumulated drawback. Many Hispanic students begin formalized schooling without the economic and social resources that many other students receive, and schools are often poorly prepared to pay off for these initial disparities. For Hispanics, early disadvantages often stem from parents' immigrant and socioeconomic status and their lack of information about the U.S. education system. As Hispanic students continue through the schooling system, insufficient school resources and their

fragile relationships with their teachers persist to challenge their academic success. Initial difficulties continue to accumulate, resulting in Hispanics having the lowest rates of high school and college degree attainment, which hinders their chances for stable employment. The situation of Hispanic educational attainment is cause for countrywide concern.

There are several obstacles to educational progress experienced by Hispanic students in the United States. Many families lack English literacy activities in the home and the support needed for the child to learn and practice on a regular basis. In communities of large Hispanic populations where English is not the first language at home, many teachers are challenged with implementing the necessary instructional strategies that will help Hispanic students to advance because of the extended time required. The teachers are often solely responsible in supporting the child's learning of the English language. Therefore, many Hispanic students find it challenging to make the progress needed to continue with higher education.

Hispanics are among the least highly educated group in the United States: 11 percent of those over age 25 have earned a bachelor's degree or higher compared with 17 percent of blacks, 30 percent of whites, and 49 percent of Asian Americans in the same age group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Even more disturbing, more than one-fourth of Hispanic adults have less than a ninth-grade education (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002b). These numbers represent all Hispanic groups and include current immigrants. When examined by country of origin, educational accomplishment for Hispanics varies.

One of the most important factors in school success is the degree to which parents vigorously participate in their children's education preceding their entry into official preschool or kindergarten programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2003d). Particular activities, such as reading to children, have been shown to enhance children's language attainment, early reading

performance, social and emotional development, and later success in school (Loeb, Fuller, Kagan, and Carrol, 2004; National Research Council, 1998). National trend data from the National Household and Education Survey (NHES) from 1993 to 1999 indicate that Hispanic children aged 3 to 5 are less likely to be read to compared with non-Hispanic children. Families in which parents' main language at home is Spanish have particularly low rates of participation in literacy activities. In terms of reading to children three or more times per week, Hispanic families in which both parents speak only Spanish at home had participation rates that were nearly 50 percentage points lower than white English speaking families in 1999. Immigrant parents have reported facing more difficulties and issues to their involvement in the education of their children than others, particularly when English is not the primary language spoken at home. In addition, time in the United States since migration can have an impact on the degree of parental involvement in educational support activities. (Turney & Kao, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Parental involvement and its positive impact in supporting the child's academic achievement in school is evident in current research as indicated in the preceding background of the study. For immigrant families, parental involvement can be of greater significance but it requires a strong support system between family, community and the schools. Henderson, Mapp, Johnson & Davies (2007) found that children from immigrant families tend to do better when families and school staff join forces to bridge the gap between home and school cultures. However, research has also noted the challenges many immigrants face in the United States to support their children in school. According to Lahaie (2008), some parents expressed anxiety due to the inability to speak fluent English; and others felt timid and afraid to be rejected by other parents. Overall, parental involvement by immigrant parents was less as compared to native-

born American parents (Lahaie, 2008). Particularly for Arab American communities, there is a lack of information and even less on the impact of parental involvement for Arab American students.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the resources and barriers that respectively enhance and inhibit parental involvement in their children's schooling. There is little information and data available on Arab Americans' involvement in their children's academic experiences which is why this study is so important.

Research Questions: the Focus of the Study

This study examined Arab American parental involvement in their child's activities at school and in the home. The study also explored the educational views of Arab American parents and how their involvement impacts the performance of children in school. This study considered the following questions:

- 1) What does the involvement of Arab American parents look like in school-based and home-based activities that promote and support student educational success?
- 2) What are the resources that allow Arab American parents to contribute to their involvement in their children's education?
- 3) What are the barriers that make it difficult for Arab American parents to become more involved?

Operationalizing Central of Terms and Concepts

Arab-American Parents

Immigrants of Arab and cultural heritage and descent who immigrated to the USA.

Elementary School

A school that provides educational programs and extra-curricular activities to students from preschool through fifth grade.

Parent Involvement

The parents' participation is meaningful and an ongoing communication involving student academic achievement and other school activities. It ensures that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school. Also, parents are considered equal partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on being members of the PTA committee to assist in the education of their child.

Parent Involvement Activities Include:

- a) Attendance at school sponsored parent education activities
- b) Attending meetings with teachers & school staff
- c) Helping and supporting their children with homework and school projects
- d) Implementing activities and interventions suggested by school
- e) Seeking information, progress reports, etc from school

Academic Performance

- a) Completion of in-class & homework assignments
- b) Grades on in-class & homework assignments

- c) Performance on standardized tests
- d) Teacher evaluations of student performance
- e) Term & final grades

CONCLUSION

The preceding discussion provides background for the study by establishing a context for examining the involvement of Arab American parents in the education of their children. Involvement is indicated in their participation of school-based and home-based activities designed to promote, support, and enhance student performance in school. The study looked at the extent of parental participation in educational support. The study also examined the resources that are used and available to support and encourage parents to be involved in their children's school and at home. Finally, this study examined the barriers that prevent parents from being involved in their children's education at school and at home.

Major tasks that were accomplished by the study include defining, operationalizing, and collecting and analyzing data provided by interviews with Arab American mothers. The central focus was the examination of Arab American parent participation in educational activities both at home and school. Qualitative methods were used to answer research questions of interest while capturing and describing the essential features and 'flavor' of the experience of Arab American parents in the schools their children attend.

Organization of this Study

Chapter 1 has presented the introduction, background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research questions, definition of terms, and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 contains the review of related literature and research related to the problem being investigated. The methodology and procedures used to gather data

for the study are presented in Chapter 3. The results of the analysis from the study are presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the study and findings, conclusions drawn from the findings, a discussion, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This study examined Arab American parental involvement in both school and home-based activities. It also explored the resources which allow parents to be involved in their children's schooling, and the barriers which make it difficult for Arab American parents to become more involved. Chapter two provides a foundation of research regarding the topics aforementioned. The first grounding ideology is the Hoover-Dempsey theoretical model (2010) of parental involvement which discusses the following: 1) the predictors of parental involvement; 2) the different types of parent involvement; 3) attributes of the support mechanisms which simplify ways for parents to be involved; and 4) the positive effects of parental involvement on student's academic success and achievement.

The second foundational framework is parental involvement and its variance among different ethnic groups. The chapter presents a review of the literature on the various types of home-based and school-based activities. Epstein's (1995) parental involvement theory has concluded that there is a positive impact when strong partnerships are formed between the parents and the school; this theory will also serve as a fundamental framework for the study. Finally, the barriers which affect the educational success of students such as lack of English language skills, low socio-economic status, parents working full-time, and the duration they have been in the US are examined.

Factors of Parental Involvement

Studies and research have shown that parental involvement is related to positive outcomes for children in many developmental domains, including student academic attainment as well as social and emotional development. Although parental involvement can be

advantageous for students, there can also be associated barriers that prevent parents from being actively involved in their children's educational lives. It is important to note that a limited amount of research has focused on gaining an understanding of parental involvement from the parents' perspective and most parents have not had a direct voice in the research regarding their involvement in their children's education.

Hoover-Dempsey (2010) define a theoretical model of parent involvement that encompasses predictors of parent involvement, different types of parent involvement, and the mechanisms used by parents which in return have positive outcomes on students' academic achievement. There are different factors that influence parents' ability and motivation to be involved such as time, resources, and the parent's cultural beliefs regarding their role in their child's education. Overall, Hoover-Dempsey revealed that there are several ways parents are involved which reveal that they embrace the role of academic schooling. Children whose parents are receptive to schooling create a stimulating home setting that includes one or more of the following: 1) home-based learning activities 2) help from parents or a family member with homework; 3) parent and school communication; and 4) explicit communication between the parent and child of the goals and expectations. The effect of a home environment as mentioned above may have a direct impact on the child as it supports and reinforces direct educational instruction. Parental support at home also models the teacher-student learning environment which helps the child to develop a positive attitude towards education.

The perceptions of school staff and faculty may affect attitudes of parents and may be an obstacle to parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey, 2010). Schools tend to define parent involvement as either a way of supporting student academic achievement or in terms of participation at formal school-initiated functions. Many staff members believe that parental

involvement is defined as participating in organized activities at school. Many teachers believe that when parents are not visible, this means that parents are less interested in their children's education. Not only do these perceptions, intentionally or unintentionally, affect the culture within families in subtle ways (Sigel & Laosa, 1983), but the implicit assumption is that parents who are not involved in these ways lack the capacity to provide adequate home learning environments for their children (Auerbach, 1989). Because research suggests that the vast majority of marginalized parents remain "uninvolved" in their children's schooling (Chavkin, 1993), this assumption has the potential of perpetuating a potentially dangerous stereotype. In contrast, parents—particularly marginalized parents—perceive their contributions to school success in terms of activities such as providing nurturance; instilling cultural values; talking with their children; sending them to school clean and rested; and checking homework (Scribner, Young, & Pedroza, 1999; Vaides, 1996). One suggestion to increase awareness about the varying perceptions of school staff and faculty is through professional development and teacher training. Another suggestion is to invite parents to participate that do not require their attendance at school such as sending newsletters, phone calling, and signing off on homework. Such efforts are believed to strengthen home-school ties and relay an accepted culture of schooling for both the school and the families.

The final point found in Hoover's research is that while a parent's involvement is valuable in his/her child's education there is difficulty in achieving improved or increased parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987). At times, several obstacles constrain the parents' ability to become actively involved in their children's education. One of the most common parent responses is that the parents' occupations may limit their availability for involvement activities. Their work schedules may make it difficult or impossible to attend

meetings or to serve as volunteers. Low wages may also force parents to work more than one job, limiting their availability to be involved in learning activities at home. The lack of financial resources may reduce a parents' ability to create a supportive home environment or to provide supplemental materials which their children may need to be successful in school. The home culture can, in some cases, also deter parental involvement. For example, the home culture may differ from the school culture, making effective school-home communication difficult.

Lareau and Benson's (1984) research reported another factor that has shown to be relevant in understanding why some parents are involved and some are not is related to the social norms of an ethnic or cultural group. Their study was conducted in two urban schools and compared two populations (families with a high income who considered themselves 'wealthy' and a 'working' middle class). It was found that variations in parental involvement were more likely related to social and cultural differences between the communities. For example, parents from the wealthy reported extensive social networks formed between their neighbors and also with the parents of their children's classmates. The close connection among the wealthy families seemed to be more aware of the activities in and around the school neighborhood and was able to provide financial support for the school. The working middle class parents, on the other hand, socialized within their own cultural/family groups and their children would not participate in the different out-of school activities, nor could they afford to provide any form of financial support for the school.

Another obstacle for parents is the bureaucracy within the public school which may discourage them from voicing their concerns, complaints, and demands about their children's schooling (Becher, 1986; Fine, 1993). When opportunities arise to communicate or voice parents' concerns, the mechanism is often flawed, with school professionals meeting with

parents only when problems occur. Under such circumstances, parents frequently are perceived as lacking the resources (i.e., experience, know-how, etc.) to provide meaningful home educational experiences for their children. Such beliefs may only serve to further alienate parents from their children's schooling and reinforce a deficit mentality (Finders & Lewis, 1994; Harry, 1992; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Stein, 1983; Young, 1996).

In some cases it is not the bureaucracy of the school system; it is the cultural up bringing that make parents reluctant to initiate contact with the school. Some parents reported that they are supportive of schooling and show high regard of the institution (Keller, 2006; Payne, 2005). It would therefore not be considered appropriate for them to interact with educators or raise questions about school events. As a result, parents may be reluctant to be involved with the school, perceiving such activities as questioning the decisions or actions of the experts. Parents living in poverty also view the importance of education very differently from their working-class or wealthy counterparts. Therefore, it is very important that school and staff maintain dialogues with parents to define and clarify role expectations for all significant stakeholders and provide appropriate training when necessary.

The Impact of Parental Involvement

According to the Michigan Department of Education, parent involvement is fundamental to student achievement and personal success (MDE, 2011). The site notes that the most accurate forecaster of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family creates a home environment that encourages learning. Parents are supportive when they expect the best academic achievement from their kids, and are always involved in helping their children. The benefit is a positive investment for all involved—the students, their families, and their community.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) state that parents positively impact their child's life through modeling, reinforcement, and direct instruction. In addition, parents act as models for their kids by demonstrating interest in school activities. Examples of parent participation are asking questions about the school day; spending time reviewing the child's homework; and making phone calls to the teacher. Epstein (1995) also stresses the impact of parental involvement when partnerships are formed with the school. She proposed that this type of partnership formed with schools can: 1) improve school programs and school climate; 2) provide family services and support; 3) increase parents' skills and leadership; 4) connect families with others in the school and community; and 5) help teachers with their work. When students see the bond formed with their parent and the school, they often take more interest in their work. The child will not want to disappoint their parents, which can lead to greater success in educational pursuits for the children.

Parental involvement in elementary schools in particular has become a very significant issue as researchers struggle to quantify the impact of parental involvement on the academic outcomes of elementary school children (Marcon, 1999). A study by Marcon (1999) used data from teacher ratings of 708 urban 4-year-olds in public preschool or Head Start programs to identify the extent of parental involvement for three cohorts of predominantly low-income families. Marcon utilized the classroom edition of the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales. The results showed that the greater the level of parent-school involvement and active types of parental involvement, the greater the positive development in all Vineland domains and the greater the mastery of early basic school skills in all subject areas. It was important to note that increased parent-school involvement was associated with more positive development and academic performance in preschool boys. The previous findings from Marcon (1999) reiterated

what previous research had shown, particularly by Reynolds (1992), that with more parental involvement, children's development and academic performance improve.

A study done by Driessen, Smit, and Slegers (2005) provides additional findings of the relationship between parental involvement and educational achievement. The researchers employed the Dutch PRIMA (primary education) cohort study. All data were obtained using tests and questionnaires, and analyses were made to discover the impact of parental involvement. This was done in an effort to examine the association, if any, of parental involvement on student outcome. This study also attempted to find information on the relationship between the background characteristics and student academic outcome variables. The characteristics included such school characteristics as degree of urbanization, school size, percentage of ethnic minority disadvantaged students, and percentage of native-Dutch disadvantage students, as well as social-ethnic origin. The student outcome variables included: language and mathematics achievement, well-being, self-confidence, and school supportive home climate. Driessen, Smit, and Slegers (2005) discovered that there is a significant relationship between parental environment and academic achievement. They also found differences in the way parents are involved based on ethnicity. It was found that in schools with a high percentage of ethnic minority students, parents devoted considerable attention to parental involvement at home while playing very little or no role in school. In predominantly "White" schools, by contrast, parents were found to play a considerable role at the school.

The Constructs of Parental Involvement

Parent involvement in school academic achievement could be a many-sided construct. Levin and Belfield (2002) outline three core domains of parent involvement: 1) involvement at home; 2) involvement outside the school; and 3) involvement within the school. Home

involvement includes the provision of a supportive learning atmosphere within the home that provides tools for learning such as books, computer, and newspapers. It will include learning activities like reading; help with homework; and parent-child discussions regarding the school day. The former and latter help to define and set expectations regarding academic achievement. Involvement outside of school could be support such as tutoring, academic clubs and teacher activities. Finally, school involvement includes the selection process for the highly qualified school and/or teacher; parent-school communication; and participation in parent-teacher meetings such as parent-teacher associations (PTA).

There are some inconsistencies specifically with homework support that may be related to the grade level of the child. Domina (2005) found that homework support was associated with the early years of elementary school. However, as the students reached the third and fourth grades, homework support greatly decreased; and furthermore, the effects of the help were reduced as compared to the earlier years. Lee and Bowen (2006) found that parent involvement in class, academic expectations, and homework support were associated with accomplishments for African American and Hispanic students, but the same was not found for European children. Jeynes (2003) found similar results in a study of K-12 graders. The study showed a positive relationship between parents that read with their children, checked their homework, and set clear academic expectations with student academic achievement. The results were not as strong though for Asian and Hispanic families. The literature on the advantages of parent involvement for helping children with homework has found that though the advantages vary somewhat by race and quality (Jeynes, 2003), parent involvement overall is usually rewarding for students and their academic achievement (Domina, 2005; Jeynes, 2003).

Parental Involvement among Migrant Groups

Many parents immigrate to the United States with the first goal of providing their kids with higher instructional and educational opportunities than they had in their country of origin (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). For migrant parents, the communication of high academic expectations is crucial to their child's academic development (Portes et al., 2009; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Rumbaut, 2000). There are consistent findings that setting high expectations has the best impact on academic achievement for all kids (Fan, 2001). Parent-school communication may be another purposeful predictor for early academic achievement of second generation migrant children. Finding a good school where immigrant students will attend are often vital, particularly those of low income (Levine & Belfield, 2002). Parents need to be able to meet their child's teacher and have open communication regarding their child's assignments and progress (Fan and subgenus Chen, 2001; LaHaie, 2009).

For migrant families, parent involvement in schooling can be hindered by restricted resources due to low socio-economic status, or low English proficiency. Some parents also do not feel welcomed or invited by teachers unfamiliar with migrant standing. In regard to home-based involvement such as support of English reading and writing, immigrants with low English proficiency (e.g., Asian and Hispanic immigrants) might be restricted in their ability to assist with their children's school assignment. Additionally, the lack of English skills often discourages immigrant parents from sustaining communication with educators and administrators (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006).

Research has found that immigrant parents who participate in reading and writing activities in their home language support the child's psychological development. However, support in the home language does not often translate well in English academics (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). In addition to English illiteracy, low levels of education may impede on the

parent's ability to academically support their child at home. The final obstacle for many migrant groups is the inability to attain the additional resources for growth. For example, lower financial gain levels among Hispanic immigrants compared to Asian immigrants has shown to inhibit a parents' ability to produce stimulating materials within the home.

There has been evidence of conflicting views of parent and school relationships, with many studies describing the cultural controversies among parents and teachers (Collignon, Men, & Tan, 2001; Huss-Keeler, 1997). Huss-Keeler (1997) examined the influence of teachers' perceptions of the involvement and interest of Pakistani parents in their children's education. The study took place in a multiethnic urban primary school in the north of England consisting of 400 working-class and low-income children ages 3-12. Data was collected through field notes, literacy artifacts, children's literacy work samples, structured audio-taped formal interviews, and informal interviews within the school and classroom settings. Results showed that the parents revealed interest in their children's education process, but in a culturally different way than what teachers had expected of middle-class parents. Many parents assisted and supported their children in the home environment based on their cultural norms, such as structuring time for homework and preparing for school. The parents were not, however, actively involved in the school process with support on homework or visiting the school building. Thus, teachers interpreted this as a lack of interest on the part of the parents. Parental involvement that was not visible affected the perceptions of the teachers because they viewed home and school as a partnership that required parents to directly help with academics and attend events at school.

Similarly, Collignon, Men, and Tan (2001) described the barriers that Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, and Vietnamese families faced while living in the New England region of the United States. The four focus groups in this study included a pool of prospective teachers,

Southeast Asian families and others who acted as participant-observers. In the discussions, it was discovered that both parents and teachers had serious deep-rooted issues stemming from culturally different expectations, values, and norms. The role of parents at school and home, and classroom practices were sources of confusion for the Southeast Asian families. The expectation that parents should be involved in the child's schooling was one conflict. Southeast Asian parents believed that schools and homes were separate entities with separate authority figures in control; while native parents and teachers of the United States believed that both entities need to work together to share common goals for the children's success. The researchers learned that these migrant families encountered many negative perceptions when they did not participate in their children's education.

Arab Immigrants and Education

Arab immigrants strongly support education and the emphasis on achievement is widely considered to be rooted in their culture. In general, the cultural standard emphasizes the importance of education, strong family ties and non-secular affiliation (Abraham & Patriarch, 1983; Youssef & Simpkins, 1985, Al-Ani, 1995). Arab immigrant parents want to be involved in their children's education and schooling, but what makes it difficult is limited English skills (Shaheen, 2001). The first generation and recent Arab immigrant parents find it difficult to participate in events such as the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings at the schools (Moosa, Karabenick, and Adamsy (2001). Their own children who speak English more fluently sometimes feel embarrassed and may be reluctant to have their parents meet peers and school staff. This status is not unlike any other ethnic minority in the US. Nevertheless, unlike other minorities, the tradition of many Arab American Muslims to wear hijabs and other distinctive Muslim clothing might present a challenge for the school child to feel comfortable in

the American culture. There has been frequent, strong criticism—even racist insults—of being an Arab and Muslim by the media and popular culture which have disgraced these groups, causing a feeling of shame or isolation (Shaheen, 2001).

There are significant differences in child raising practices between Arab and Western families especially as it relates to guardian-child relation, partition, and individuation. Educators should be prepared to understand these differences in to order to better serve the needs of Arab American students and their parents. Teachers should consider the following features when communicating with Arab American parents: Try to speak to parents in their native language or provide a translator. Also, parents want to teach and help their children learn and improve their education, but they don't have the skills, or academic knowledge to help them. Arab American parents should make an attempt to be an active participant in their children's education and not just listeners to teachers in meetings. Due to lack of English language skills, Arab American parents respond well to notes and letters from school if they are translated to Arabic.

The Barriers to Educational Success for Immigrants

The educational attainment of immigrant students is affected by many factors. Research in Canada on immigrants examined the effects of financial capital, family structure, community resources, and cultural relations on the educational attainment of immigrants (Abada, Hou & Ram 2008) found out that highly educated parents not only have the financial resources but also the knowledge and awareness to invest in their children's abilities at a young age which puts them on the right path and significantly increases their chances at better academic performance and university education (Abada et al. 2008). While financial capital plays an imperative role, group differences do suggest that social capital in the family and immigrant community also play a major role in the educational attainment of student immigrants and children of immigrants.

Immigrant students within certain ethnic groups that have solidarity and a strong community also succeed in the educational system. It is especially helpful in communities of bilingualism which provide them with an expanded network of resources and effective communication. When the ethnic community works together and all adults supervise the children of the community, it decreases delinquent behavior. This has been specifically found among Vietnamese children (Bankston and Zhou 1997). Many ethnic groups involve their children in supplemental enrichment activities where they learn about the language of their homeland, the culture, and family values. This in turn creates an opportunity for immigrant children to receive and give support and from other children who may come from different socioeconomic backgrounds or have varying cultural values and beliefs (Abada et al. 2008).

Conclusion

In chapter two, parental involvement activities were defined which included a stimulating home setting, home-based learning activities, help with homework, parent and school communication, and parental goals and expectations. This chapter also provided an overview of the Hoover-Dempsey theoretical model (2010) of parental involvement predictors, the different types of parent involvement, and the mechanisms used by parents which in return have positive outcomes on students' academic achievement. It was also noted that, compared to middle school teachers, elementary school teachers more strongly believed that parental involvement was important for students (Epstein and Dauber, 1991). Low levels of parental involvement at some schools may be the result of the staff perceptions of parents or the degree to which they feel parental involvement is important for their students. Other factors that influence parents' ability and motivation to be involved include time, socioeconomic status, resources, and parent's cultural beliefs regarding their role in their child's education. In chapter three, the methodology

will be presented. A qualitative case study was conducted to examine Arab American parents' perceptions on parental involvement, the resources, and the barriers.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

A qualitative case study inquiry was conducted to examine Arab American parents' perception of parental involvement at Denver and Brooks Elementary schools in Madison Public schools. Burton & Bartlett (2005) propose that the contextual investigation methodology approach offers a systematic way to explore and discover both implicit and explicit data. Merriam (1988) also suggests that through systematic analysis, rich information from the data can be revealed. Upon critical evaluation, the contextual investigation method was the most fitting for this study (Burton & Bartlett, 2005; Merriam, 1988). The method utilized for the data collection and contextual analysis are upheld by Merriam (1988), Yin (1994), Gillham (2000) and Stake (2005). The process is the following: (1) distinguish the issue and focus the examination questions; (2) select the data; (3) plan and gather information; (4) break down and assess information and (5) set up the last report.

Context of the Study: Description

The setting of the study took place in a suburban community in a mid-western state in America. Madison is the pseudonym given to the school district to ensure confidentiality in this study. The Madison school district is considered the fifth largest in the state with approximately more than 19,000 students. Denver and Brooks are the pseudonyms for the two elementary schools to ensure confidentiality in this research study. About 70 % of the student population in these two schools qualify for a free or reduced lunch. About 95% of the Denver school students are from Arab American descent. Brooks's school has wide diversity of students from different countries.

Denver and Brooks Elementary Schools

Denver elementary has been identified by its state as a Reward school and “Beating the Odds” School. Denver is ranked for the second time from the Bridge Magazine as the 2nd top school out of 1,210 elementary schools in the state. Denver has approximately 300 students who work hard and show good progress year after year; and they continue to perform better every year in all standardized tests in all subjects. Denver students constantly score near the top in the Madison district. It was acknowledged as a "model" school by the district Superintendent. The school has many students who are English language learners (ELL).

Brooks’s elementary school is also named as a Reward school and “Beating the Odds” school. It was recently named as number 6 in the top schools in the State by the Bridge Magazine. The teachers and administrators are focused on continuous improvement and the execution of best practices in the classrooms. School teachers are reported to have utilized best practices in delivering and ensuring the best education for all students.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

This study is interested in the role that Arab immigrant parents play in the academic lives of their school aged children. There is little information and data available on Arab Americans’ involvement of their children’s academic experiences which why this study is so important. That said, the study posed the following research questions:

1. What does the involvement of Arab American parents look like in school-based and home-based activities that promote and support student educational success?
2. What are the resources that allow Arab American parents to be involved in their children’s education?
3. What are the barriers that make it difficult for Arab American parents to become more involved?

Research Design

The researcher used in-depth interviews from twenty parents—all mothers—in the Madison School District. The interviews took place in the parents' homes. This method is useful because of its ability to capture “studies of events within their real-life contexts” (Yin, p. 66). The responses from the participant interviews were important because they may be able to “eliminate erroneous conclusions so that one is left with the best possible, the most compelling, interpretation” (Bromley, 1986, p. 38). The observations informed the emerging themes and categories that were used to develop the final report. This study collected data from conducting in-depth interviews with 20 mothers in their home in Dearborn, Michigan. Fathers were at work at the times of the interviews. Also, all mothers mentioned that they are the main care takers of their children's education and they are mainly involved in the schools. The students of these 20 parents attend two elementary public schools in the Madison School District. The researcher chose and randomly selected ten Arab American families from each school for the interviews. The method that was used to develop emerging categories and to determine the overall themes of the study is an initial and intensive analysis of in-depth participant interviews. Using a modified version of Stake's (2006) cross-case analysis procedure, each of the participants' responses were compared and contrasted with each other in relation to the findings and themes. The utilization of a tape recording, note taking and maintaining a reflective journal helped as a part of distinguishing the noteworthy occasions that happened while conducting and directing the study.

Sample

All participants in the study were native of an Arab country and had children who attended either Denver or Brooks. Twenty Arab American families that met these criteria were randomly selected from both schools. Two families out of the twenty have been in the U.S. for

an average of 3.5 years and the rest of the families have lived in the U.S. for an average of 7 to 15 years. The interviews were all audiotaped with the parents' permission. Parents signed the informed consent after the researcher explained it to each parent in English or Arabic according to the parents' preference. Each interview took about 45 minutes to conduct.

Parents were comfortable and happy to answer all questions. The researcher felt very welcomed and treated with hospitality and respect when she visited the parents who were interviewed. One of the advantages of conducting this study is that the researcher has been working in these two schools as a school social worker for the last four years and has a great relationship with the school parents, staff, students, and teachers. In addition, as an Arab American fluent in Arabic, I was quickly able to establish rapport with my interview subjects.

This sample included parents with different characteristics: gender, age, occupation, nationality, level of education, and marital status. The sample consisted of twenty mothers, all of whom accepted the invitation to be interviewed by the researcher. The fathers were at work during the times of the interviews. The average age of the mothers was 30 years old. The top three nations from which the interviewees migrated are from Lebanon, Yemen, and Iraq. The average level of education is high school. The top occupation is housewives, and 95% were married. Only four mothers of the twenty worked outside of the house full time. The languages that are spoken at home in most families are Arabic and English. The average income of the families is about \$ 40,000 with an average of four people in the household. The participants in this study are, in general, representative of their community's demographics as it relates to education, age, occupational status, marital status, and income for the Arab Americans living in Dearborn.

Parental Questionnaire:

The parental questionnaire was divided into two major parts. The first part focused on questions regarding school organization; parents' involvement at the school in PTA; and school meetings. Another question was opened-ended and asked if there were any other home or school activities of which they were involved. The second part of the questionnaire focused on demographics, parents' level of education and the adults living in the house and their level of education. The researcher wanted to examine to what extent family, relatives and friends are educated as compared to the parent interviewee. The researcher asked in-depth open-ended questions to find out the parents experiences and resources that allow them to participate. Also, the researcher asked about the barriers in their daily lives that prevent them from being involved and participate in their children's schooling.

Questions about involvement with PTA

How involved would you say you are at your child's school PTA or other parent organizations at your child's school?

If involved, please describe the last issue or most important issue that you worked on with your PTA?

Among those that are involved in the school PTA, are you involved as you would like to be?

If yes, then what allows you to be involved as you are?

If you are *NOT* as involved as you would like to be, then, what makes it difficult for you to be as involved as you would like to be?

Questions about involvement in school meetings

Have you ever attended a meeting about a school-related issue at your child's school?

If involved, Please describe the last issue or most important meeting that you attended at your child's school. Do you participate in the meeting? If yes, how exactly?

Among those that are involved in the school meetings, are you involved as you would like to be?

If yes, then what allows you to be involved as you are?

If you are *NOT* as involved as you would like to be, then, what makes it difficult for you to be as involved as you would like to be?

(If *NOT* involved at all), what types of things would you say make it difficult for you to attend these meetings?

Questions about involvement in other school activities

Are you involved in your child's school in any other way? If so, please tell me about it.

Among those that are involved in other school activities, are you involved as you would like to be?

If yes, then what allows you to be involved as you are?

If you are *NOT* as involved as you would like to be, then, what makes it difficult for you to be as involved as you would like to be?

(If *NOT* involved at all), what types of things would you say make it difficult for you to get involved?

Questions about involvement in helping with homework

In a typical weeknight (Mon.-Thursday), how much time do you spend helping your child with their homework or reviewing relevant material with him/her?

Please describe what you do with your child on a typical afternoon / evening helping him / her with their school work.

Do you spend as much time as you would like helping your child with his/her homework?

If you do: What allows you to spend as much time as you do in helping your child with his/her homework? (i.e. own education, friends, family, mosque members, etc.)

If you don't: What makes it difficult for you to spend as much time as you would like in helping your child with his/her homework? (I.e. language difficulty, education, time commitments due to work, children, other stuff, etc.)

What are some things that provide you confidence in your ability to help your child excel in his/her classroom?

What are some things that cause you to question / second guess your ability to help your child excel in his/her classroom?

How pleased are you with the education that your child is receiving at his/her school?

How pleased are you with your child's grades/ classroom performance?

What are the types of homework activities that you do with your kids over the weekend?

Part II: Social Demographic Characteristics

Gender

Age: In what year were you born?

In what country were you born?

Mother tongue: [1] Arabic [2] English

When did you first arrive in the US? How long have you been living in Dearborn? How long have you been living in your current residence? How long have you been living in the United States?

How many children under 18 do you have that live in your house?

How many adults 18 & up live in your house?

How are these adults related to you?

What is the highest level of education that you have received?

What is the highest level of education that other adults in your household have received?

To the best of your knowledge would you say that your friends and family that live outside of your house are as, more, or less highly educated as you are?

What do you do for a living?

What do the other adults in your household do for a living?

Initial Analysis

After the researcher collected the data, the researcher coded the data to recognize any major topics or themes as supported by the participants in the related research questions. In the beginning, the researcher was looking for any similarities among the parents' answers that connected to the research questions and gave understanding of the degree to which parents are involved at home and at school to support their children's' academic success. As topics developed and classifications could be subdivided, these topics were further separated into subcategories utilizing an altered form of Spradley's (1980) analysis method. The researcher was looking for any important connections of the parents' reactions. This included searching for terms that developed as parts of one area. By categorizing comparable responses; distinguishing the relationship of terms to its structure and contrasting various wording used by the parents, the researcher had the capacity to find the developing subcategories and themes.

Intensive Analysis

The researcher utilized Merriam's (1998) concentrated investigation process for the next stage of analysis. This procedure included a deeper review of the emerging categories and topics from the past procedure with a specific end goal to refine and decrease each taxonomic class (Merriam, 1998). These subjects were then dissected to focus on the associations of the subcategories keeping in mind the end goal to develop central themes. They were marked as Theme 1, Theme 2, and Theme 3, and demonstrated essential data about the objective of the

study. This research data did show how parents support their kids at home and at school, and the resources that they use in order to be involved. Also, it examined the barriers that prevent them from participating fully and as much as they want to be involved.

As the researcher proceeded with the examination process, the researcher altered what would be considered subjects or classes. Furthermore, the researcher surveyed which of the beginning managing inquiries were applicable to the study and which ones need to reformulated (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Based on the data that the researcher collected, the researcher determined that the following research questions were relevant:

- 1) How does the involvement of Arab American parents look like in school-based and home-based activities that promote and support student educational success?
- 2) What are the resources that allow Arab American parents to contribute to their involvement in their children's education?
- 3) What are the barriers that make it difficult for Arab American parents to become more involved?

Amid this period of examination, the researcher coded, sorted, and examined the information utilizing a spread sheet. The researcher entered all information as data sources in the spreadsheet and afterward had related sections based on comparable associations and examples. As the researcher considered the central inquiries, the topic examination stage helped the researcher to further sort the information and make determinations of the subcategories. By the end of this stage, the researcher had general subjects and also subcategories. Every subject and its subcategories were examined in relation to one of the exploration questions. Each theme and its subcategories addressed one of the research questions. The three themes are the following:

1. Parental involvement is important and critical to student success

2. Parents do whatever it takes to attend meetings at school and be involved
3. Parents have barriers that prevent them from being involved as much as they want to be

Utilizing an adjusted form of Stake's (2006) worksheet for introducing the contextual analysis subjects, the topics and subcategories for this study are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Themes that Emerged from Intensive Analysis Phase Worksheet

	Question	Categories	Data Sources
Theme 1: Parents Reflect on their Experiences and Perceptions of Parental Involvement	Question 1: What does the involvement of Arab American parents look like in school-based and home-based activities that promote and support student educational success?	A. Parents are very active at school 1. They attend PTA meetings, school activities, other meetings in school, volunteer in classes, donate time and money 2. They communicate with the classroom teacher, administrator, and staff on a regular basis	Interviews Observations
	Question 2: What are the resources that allow Arab American parents to contribute to their involvement in their children's education?	B. Parents are using their background knowledge to help their kids at school and at home 1. Parents utilize their academic knowledge, education, experiences, and parenting skills to support their kids with homework and school projects	

<p>Theme 2:</p> <p>Parents Do: “Whatever It Takes” Approach to support their kids</p>	<p>Question 2: What are the resources that allow Arab American parents to contribute to their involvement in their children’s education?</p>	<p>A. Parents are relying on each other for support:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inform each other of meetings 2. Advocate for their kids 3. Volunteer in class <p>B. Parents are having some barriers that prevent them from being a fully active participant:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of English Skills 2. Shy to participate 3. No transportation 4. Having a baby at home 5. Inconvenience of meeting times 	<p>Interviews Observations</p>
<p>Theme 3:</p> <p>Powerful Connection among Parents in the School and in the Community</p>	<p>Question 1: What does the involvement of Arab American parents look like in school-based and home-based activities that promote and support student educational success?</p>	<p>A. Parents can’t support their kids education as much as they want to due to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Difficulty understanding English and communicating with their kids’ teacher 2. Three parents were illiterate in both languages Arabic and English 3. Don’t know how to help their kids with academic work and homework 	<p>Interviews Observations</p>
<p>Question 3: What are the barriers that make it difficult for Arab American parents to become more involved?</p>			

Summary

Data were collected from the interviews with the parents at their homes and from the researcher's observations and taking notes during and after the interviews took place. The data were collected and analyzed from the questionnaire to examine their perceptions of the effect of parental involvement on student's success and what are the resources that allow them to participate and be involved and what are the barriers that prevent them from being involved and participate at home based activities and school based activities. The researcher's home visits took place in February 2015 at parents' homes after school hours and during the school mid-winter break.

Data were collected and analyzed from the twenty parents' open-ended questions interviews. In addition, the researcher took notes during the interviews, and audio taped all twenty interviews. Parents were very pleasant and happy to be interviewed by the researcher. They showed interest about this topic and they enjoyed sharing freely their opinions, feedback, and experiences about the effect of parental involvement at home and in the school to promote academic success for their children's education.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Themes and Categories

After the researcher transcribed the interview data and proof read them, the researcher came up with the following three themes and three categories for each theme to support the themes. These themes are the following:

Theme I: Parents reflect on their experiences and perceptions of parental involvement

Category 1: Juggling different tasks to make their involvement possible

Category 2: Cancelling any appointments and avoiding any other duties in order to be involved in helping their kids at school and at home

Category 3: Reflection on academic student success and parent satisfaction

Theme II. Parents do “Whatever It Takes” approach to support their kids

Category 1: Set times every afternoon to support their kids with homework

Category 2: Parents are involved at schools and attend meetings and activities

Category 3: Relying on each other and creating a positive home environment to support learning

Theme III. Powerful connection among parents in the school and in the community

Category 1: Parents support their kids at home and at school by relying on each others

Category 2: Taking younger siblings to school with them in order to be involved

Category 3: Trust relationship to go with each other’s children on field trips and to attend meetings together

Theme I: Parents Reflect on their Experiences and Perceptions of Parental Involvement

All parents interviewed have common beliefs about the importance of education for their family. They also believe that it is critical for the continuation of the family’s academic and

social success. These parents reported that they want their kids to earn the best education and the highest degree since the parents did not have the chance and opportunities to earn college degrees or beyond due to different circumstances. The circumstances mentioned were the following: 1) poverty; 2) wars while in their native countries; and/or 3) the lack of skills such as English. Parents value and believe that the higher the education their kids have, the better jobs and colleges are attainable later in life. Parents sacrificed their lives and emigrated from their native countries to the U.S. just to provide the best education and opportunities for their children.

Parents also valued the relationship they have with the school. They emphasized that communication has to be strong in order for the student to be successful and continue to grow and progress academically, socially, and behaviorally. Many parents emphasized that their child's teachers in the school are critical. Communication between the parent and the teachers helps the parents to know what their kids are learning so they can continue to nurture and strengthen the relationship between home and school. Parents informed the researcher of the need to know what the teachers are teaching the children at school in order to know and learn how to teach them at home. Parents believe that if there is a good support system in the house and at the school, the student will be successful in all areas. Parents also mentioned that support is extended when there is help from their husband, the older son, the brother, the sister, family, friends, neighbors, and other relatives.

The researcher discovered how parents created and further developed a network among each other. There were about 10 families that lived in the same neighborhood and in close proximity of each other. This strong relationship created some peace of mind among one another. For example, these parents call each other to share what information they missed if some of them could not attend the meeting on a specific day or event. The relationships that were formed

served as a strong foundation built on trust. One parent shared the belief that these parents will do whatever it takes to support each others' kids at school and in the neighborhood. And this is really true as the African proverb says that "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child."

Parents reported during their interviews that it is so important and is worth the effort to attend meetings at school, volunteer, attend PTA meetings, donate money, food, papers, and attend events at the school. Their kids enjoyed knowing and watching their parents come to school to volunteer and be there with them. Mothers reported that being at school gave their children a sense of pride and they felt good about themselves. This boosted their children's self-esteem to see their mothers around the teachers and being an integral part of the school. One specific example is when a parent said, "Whatever the school and the teacher need, we will provide and be there for them." Another parent stated, "We are very thankful for the teachers, the school, and the education that our kids are getting." The level of satisfaction is very high among the parents in both elementary schools. Parents felt very comfortable and happy to feel welcomed in the school by staff and felt a sense of belonging by being at the school.

Many parents emphasized how important it is to attend meetings with teachers and the outcome from being there. For example, one mother reported that her "strong and positive relationship will show the teacher that we as parents care about our kids and their learning...I want to know from the teachers how to help my kids at home...Teachers have a strong influence on our kids and our kids listen to them more than us. This is something natural... our kids respect their teachers and they value them..." One parent stated that "the more I am involved and attend parent teacher conferences, volunteer in the classroom; learn about how to read the report card, the more I learn how our children learn and how to help our kids at home with homework and teach them how to do their homework effectively."

Parents stated that they enjoy many hands-on activities and they wanted to be present during those class sessions in order to repeat them with their kids at home. For example, one parent reported that, “This kind of learning and interaction between our kids and us in school is very powerful...it gives us the tools and model for us on how to help our kids learn at home...I want my kids to be successful in life and in society..” Another parent stated that we are” hungry for knowledge and information... anything that the school can provide for us of educational series and sessions, we will attend...”

Parents stated that they go to the school and ask about their children’s academic and behavioral performance on a regular basis, even every few weeks, because they care and they want to know when to intervene and support the teachers. Parents believe that the home and the school have to work together as a team to support each other for the sake and the success of the student.

Parents reported that they support each other by attending the PTA meetings at the school. It offered one of the strongest networking platforms to share with other parents what is going on at the school such as upcoming events, meetings, activities, school wide assemblies, and school projects that affect all students. One parent, for example said, “We feel as parents united and strong because we help each other. We speak Arabic and English... If one parent is new to the country or the school we support that family... We offer help to each other...Even if it is providing transportation, translation, going to each other’s house or even my neighbor calling me to translate or explain a letter to her in Arabic that she received from the school...” This is the true meaning of unity and indicative of the strong relationship among parents; they agree on the value of the school to support their kids’ academic, social and emotional well being. One parent reported the following:

“I attend most school meetings, like dentist fair, hair cut for the cancer foundation, how to help our kids, and the relationship between the students and the speakers, Nutrition topic too... is healthy things to know... The more knowledgeable and we the more powerful we are... relationship with people is very important... I am curious and I talk to people at school. I participate. I speak English and Arabic... I ask questions if I don't understand in meetings... How to eat healthy not eat Junk food I want to be up to date with information...I feel that I am very involved and I ask questions and participate people should not be shy at all to ask questions... I like meetings in the morning... when you drop off your kids at school or in the afternoon at 2:30 pm... then you take your kids home.... Pick and pull up times are good for me.”(Interview # 6, February 12, 2015)

Also, when Mrs. Alena was asked about her attending and participating in school activities, she replied:

“I read books and gave away books to kids... I try to sing the story... I exaggerate and make it fun when I read to kids in class to make the story very attractive to the kids to listen to me and interesting, bake sale, fundraising, I push my daughter to donate her hair to help other and to sick children for cancer patients.....I am very involved in everything... Let me tell you about my last experience in preschool... I was the first mom to put a seed beans on the cotton and put one spoon of water on it... So you see the bean and plant is growing in front of the students eyes...exciting and interesting to the kids....life cycle continuation... Time is an issue for not to be there at school.... When I had my last baby at home... before It was difficult to participate but now it is much better... read books at school to kids, I can do field trips this year... attend school fair.”

Theme II: Parents Do “Whatever It Takes” Approach to Support their kids

Arab American Parents are using their English skills to support their kids and even if they don't know English they will enroll in English classes in the community. They seek programs that teach them English as a Second Language (ESL) so they can improve their verbal, reading, and writing skills in order to support their kids' education. Parents reported that they will drive and provide transportation to their kids to get them to school on time in order to be at school and so as not to miss a minute from their learning. Parents connect, communicate, share, meet, and call each other to support their children's education. Parents enroll their kids in after-school tutoring programs, take them to the library, have computers at home, and use the internet. Some

parents who have been in the U.S. for a long time help the newcomer families by providing translation, transportation, and support. Parents reported attending the “Parent Talk Program,” a program offered by the Madison school District. It focuses on discipline and ways to deal with kids to raise “Response-Able” kids. This program helped and improved many parents’ discipline skills at home. One parent stated, “I wish we have more programs like the Parent Talk in our school...It helped us a lot...It gave us the tools and skills to improve and know how to raise our kids.....”

Parents reported that they feel well connected and empowered with each other when it came to dealing with the school. One parent also reported that “We have the support that we need from the teachers, administration and each other as parents...we feel like a strong school community in the neighborhood”. Parents reported that they work hours after school to help their kids with homework. Many parents reported that homework is essential in their kid’s education which means “we need to empty our schedule after school hours just to sit with our kids and teach them, monitor their homework progress and see if they need any help we can offer.” Another parent told the researcher that “even though I don’t speak English, I still ask my son to come sit next to me and read to me...I want to show my kids that I am here for them to support them and listen to them.”

Theme III: Powerful Connection among Parents in the School and in the Community

Parents reported that they rely on each other, especially those who live on the same street, to help each other if one of them missed a meeting at the school, or if one of them needs a translation for a form or a paper that they received from the school or from the teacher. It is suggested that this bond of trust and open line of communication which parents formed among each other did help their children academically to be successful.

Some parents reported that not knowing English language skills and not being able to read and write English is a barrier for them to be involved at the school and to help their kids at school. Another barrier for some parents is having a baby in the house (or younger siblings not enrolled in school yet). Other barriers include limited education and background knowledge for some of these mothers. Few mothers reported that they don't drive a car, while other mothers reported that they work and have jobs outside the house (part-time or full-time). All these barriers affected their parental involvement at the school and at home. Few parents reported that they are shy, and don't participate in meetings or ask questions. Some parents attend college, are working on their GED, or work full-time or part-time. Other parents reported that there is an inconvenience of meeting times at the school and prefer other times that don't interfere with their work schedule. Some mothers reported that taking care of their house such as cleaning, cooking, running errands, taking care of the grandparents and checking on them prevent school involvement, and take time away from attending meetings at the school and being involved as much as they want to be.

Another factor that prevents parents from being involved is doctor appointments or fatigue and stress from being pregnant at the time their other children are in school. A few mentioned that they were sometimes overwhelmed as a single mother or often carried much of the weight to support their children academically. Still, others stated that they needed a babysitter, or during cold weather, they chose not to go to the schools. Some parents reported that the time the family or the child have been in the country is a factor of how much they know their rights and what to do or how to help out at their child's school. A few parents mentioned that there are issues with the child; for example that their child is lazy, slow, shy, and anxious. Finally, some parents shared that their child has behavioral issues, are being bullied or suffer

from being homesick because they are newcomers in the country. All of these issues and barriers affect parental involvement and participation in school meetings, PTA and school events even as parents want to help their kids at school and at home.

A parent's response "Mrs. Finley" to the question about what are the barriers that prevent her from being involved as much as she wants to say:

"Time of course, I have family... cook for my kids.. It is very important... that is the first reason.... Why I can't participate, also because of appointments with doctors... also take care of my house, work, and cook for them or emergency with my parents and have to take care of them."(Interview # 6, February 12, 2015)

Another parent "Mrs. Calaski" replied to the same above question about barriers that:

"I have a baby and time is an issue. I wish I have more time to participate more. At the school meetings and PTA. Being pregnant now in the 6th month. Baby at home, my daughter is 2 years old Mona. I don't understand English or speak English. Only Arabic... Dr. Appointments, taking care of the house."(Interview # 2, February 11, 2015)

Another parent "Mrs. Bertoni" replied to the same question about barriers that:

"Time is an issue and I help my elderly mom. And I take my son to work and do shopping and grocery for my family. Speak some English but not perfect. I like more Arabic for me to understand better." (Interview # 20, February 17, 2015)

Participants:

The participants for this study were twenty randomly selected Arab American parents, ten parents from Denver Elementary and ten from Brooks Elementary. It happened to be that all of the interviewees were mothers since dads were at work during the times of the interviews. The ages of the mothers ranged between 20 years old to 45 years old. Over half of the mother participants were housewives. All of them had children enrolled in Denver or Brooks elementary schools, at different grade levels between preschool and 5th grade. The first guideline in selecting parents for the interviews was to select the Arab American parents from these two schools, Denver and Brooks in Madison Public Schools District. Also, participants were notified

that were no identifiers in this study. Parents were informed of how much time the interview would take.

Each participant was very involved and seemed interested to take part of the interview. Each participant was given between 30 and 45 minutes interview. The first step was to review the informed consent with each participant either in Arabic or in English according to the participant's preference. Then, each parent signed and dated the informed consent. The total individual time commitment for this study including the whole home visit took an hour. The two schools in this study have an open door policy where parents are welcomed and also encouraged to participate in their child's classroom and education. The following accounts below entail elaborate details of five families interviewed out of the total twenty parents. There were many similarities in the parents' responses about their role and perceptions in parental involvement; their resources which allow them to participate; and the barriers that prevent them. Chapter 5 provides a discussion regarding these findings.

Table 2. Participant Information

Participant Code (Pseudo-name)	Parent's year of birth	Country Of Origin	Kids in Elementary School	Kids' School Grades	Parental Involvement HOW?	Resources For Parental Involvement	Barriers For Parental Involvement
Mrs. Clark	1984	Lebanon	2	1st, and 3rd	Attends PTA Meetings at school Homework Volunteers in classroom	Speaks English, Drives, Feels comfortable with school, Committed to help her son, library,	Running errands, Time of meetings, Taking care of the house

Mrs. Mook	1982	Yemen	1	1 st	Attends school meetings and PTA, Communicate, and volunteers in classroom, Homework help and support	Relies on neighbors, Older siblings to help with homework, Communicates, in Arabic with teacher, and Paraprofessional support, feels comfortable and happy with school	Limited English, Have a baby, Does not drive,
Mrs. Richardson	1979	Iraq	1	2 nd	Attends meetings, volunteers in classroom, feels independent, speaks some English, communicate on regular basis with teacher	Drives, Older siblings help with homework, relies on neighbors for academic and school events support	Attends daily ESL classes to learn English, Times of the meetings
Mrs. Alena	1974	Lebanon	1	Preschool	Attends meetings, volunteers in classroom, feels independent, speaks some English, communicate on regular basis with teacher, fundraising events	Relies on neighbors, and translators at school, committed to help and support her son, uses the internet for educational games and websites	Attends ESL classes 4 days a week to learn English, running errands, taking care of the house
Mrs. Drake	1987	Lebanon	1	2 nd	Communicates with teacher, bake sales, PTA meetings, volunteers	Internet educational websites, husband support, dad speaks better	Have a baby, Running

					sometimes, daily homework support with her and dad	English than mom,	errands, Time of meetings, Taking care of the house
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Participant Information

Mrs. Clark

Mrs. Clark has 2 children who attend elementary school; she is involved in her kids' schooling and attends PTA meetings. She immigrated to the United States in 2004. She is a housewife and her husband is a car mechanic. She has been living in the same house for the last 10 years in Dearborn. She does her best to attend meetings at the school, is involved with the PTA, and volunteers in the classroom. Education is very important to her and her family because she did not finish her college program. Her husband graduated from high school but did not attend college. "I want my kids to finish college and be the best they can be." "I work hard now on them but they are my investment...they will do what's good for them and for their parents later in life." Her friends and relatives are educated as her or some of them are more educated than her. (Interview # 1, February 9, 2015)

Mrs. Mook

Mrs. Mook has one child attending Brooks Elementary school. She was born in Yemen and immigrated to the U.S. seven years ago. Even though her education is limited, she completed the 6th grade and her husband earned his high school diploma. She reported that she attends PTA meetings and feels involved as much as she can, considering that she has a baby in the house. Also, her English language skills are limited which affects the extent to which she

feels comfortable communicating with her son's teacher. She informed the researcher that she tries her best to be involved and that she relies on other parents who live near her and friends to support her with her son's education. For example, if she has a question about academic support and materials, she stated that, "I would call my son's friend mom to ask her how to help my son solve this math project...or just to answer any question I have about helping my son with homework." Also, even though this mom does not know English that well she still spends about two hours daily sitting close to her son, in case he needs her to support him. She asks him to read for her and tell her about how his day at school. The communication that she has with her son is great. She mentioned that her son is slow when it comes to doing his homework and that he is moody. Mrs. Mook reported that she asks him to open his backpack and show her his planner, homework, tests, and his school work. She is happy with her son's school, grades and his school performance. She is committed and wants her son to be highly educated and to graduate from college. (Interview #2, February 11, 2015)

Mrs. Richardson

Mrs. Richardson was born in Kuwait but she is originally from Lebanon, and she has been living in the U.S. in Dearborn since 2011. She has one son who is attending Denver Elementary. She attends all meetings at the school, including PTA meetings. She prefers to have a translator in the meetings at the schools due to difficulties understanding English. But still she attends meetings and wants to be involved in her son's education. She feels good when her son does well and brings home good grades and report card. When she was asked about homework issues and helping him at home she replied:

"I can't help him as much and I don't know how to help him... No English... my other kids are doing homework too. I don't know HOW to help him.... Communication in English and Arabic is an issue between me and my kids is an issue. The system is

different between here and Lebanon... He uses iPod... about numbers and letters but still hard for him to learn..."

Mrs. Richardson is happy with the school and her son's performance. Her response about if she likes the school and if she is happy about her son's performance was:

"Yes! I am happy and the neighbors support to me make me love the school... the parents are supportive, and live next to me and around me. They help me a lot. I drive too. I am not that happy about his grades. They ask me to help him but they don't show me how.... I let him play educational games on the internet." (Interview # 19, February 17, 2015)

Mrs. Alena

Mrs. Alena has been in the U.S. since 2002. She emigrated from Iraq and has been living in Dearborn for the last 13 years with her family. She has one son who attends Denver Elementary school. She has 3 kids under the age of 18 living with her and her husband at home. She finished college in psychology back home in Iraq. Her husband finished middle school but did not continue in order to work and support his parents. Her relatives and family are more educated, and her English language skills are better than them. She stated that, "In Iraq they don't teach us English." She is a housewife and her husband works in a company to make signs for the stores.

When the researcher asked Mrs. Alena about the last issue with PTA and resources that allow her to be active participant and involved in her son's education she replied: "I like to attend meetings and important information on how to help him at home. I am learning English at ACCESS (community social services organization) from 9:00 to 11:00 am. Monday thru Thursday. I took off from ESL class to attend the meeting at the school. Time is an issue. I wish the meetings are from 2:30 to 3:30 pm. so we can take our kids home after we are done. I call the teacher and go to the classroom with Mrs. Brendon. I check on how he is doing... He was Student of the Month last month. His grades in report card are 1 and 2... Me and the teacher

agreed on how to teach him reading and it worked! Excellent communication between me and the teacher... writing is still 3 only... But everything else is good.”

When the researcher asked Mrs. Alena about the barriers that don't allow her to participate as much as she wants to in her son's school, she replied: “Time is an issue, I attend ESL classes and I don't really work... Monday thru Thursday. I drive and I speak English to do things by myself.”

Her son attends Movie Night by himself, and she provides him with transportation and brings him back from school.

When the researcher asked Mrs. Alena about helping her son with homework, she replied: “He takes time to do his work... He does homework at school, reads 3 chapters at home... 30 minutes or 45 minutes just for him to read for me. I say the words wrong and he corrects me and taught me words in English. I help him with math games. He is smart in math. He plays sometimes on the computer... He likes Lego's games... He makes me buy all these games. Expensive Lego's... \$50 each...He finishes now faster... he reads...I give him attention... I give him less time now than before because he is better.”

When the researcher asked Mrs. Alena about her support system, she replied: “Education is very important in my family's house. All of my siblings have college degrees.” Mom reported that she feels confident when she sees her son's report card and he is earning good grades. “When I see his report card and improving in all subjects, earning good grades.... I feel good and better!” (Interview # 18, February 17, 2015)

Mrs. Drake

Mrs. Drake was born in Lebanon, immigrated to the U.S. in 2006 and has been living in Dearborn since she arrived. She has 3 kids under the age of 18. Mrs. Drake and her husband take

care of the children at home. Her husband installs carpets, and she is a house wife. She participates in some PTA meetings. “I participate sometimes because I have a baby. I like to participate and be involved when he goes to preschool. “

When she was asked about the barriers that prevent her from participating and being involved, she replied:” I wish I have more time to share, participate, and volunteer in the school. The baby is an issue for me mostly.”

Attending classroom meetings is important for Mrs. Drake: “I attend all the meetings with the teachers. She explains to me all the information on how my son is doing in class. The teacher tells us everything and same thing with my daughter. I ask questions and raise my hand and participate. I feel that other parents participate more than me because they have the time and don’t have babies at home.” Also, Mrs. Drake participates in other school activities: “I donate in things for bake sale... but I don’t go and stand there... because of the time... I give cookies for class and class events.”

Mrs. Drake helps her son with homework: “I spend like 3 hours with them every afternoon. I sit him next to me and we do homework. I tell him to read the questions and see if he understands them first. He corrects himself... parents should not correct for their kids, he should depend on himself. She tells him everything on how to do it in class. I spend good and enough time with them... also; dad works with my son... and helps him with homework sometimes more than me... My husband knows more English and explains things better than me in a different way and better... “

Mrs. Drake values education and learning: “Education is very important and if you are not educated you can’t do anything... nothing helps and important other than education for a child in the future.” Mrs. Drake feels confident; she stated, “I am willing to help in the classroom

and in anything they need.” When asked about the importance of parental involvement, Mrs. Drake replied, “This is a very important topic... It gives the kids good self -esteem and boost confidence... My kids love it... they tell their friends that mama is coming to school and they love school because of my involvement.” Mrs. Drake is very happy with her son’s school: “I am very happy from the school. Sometimes he comes home but some things he does not understand... I tell him that you have to focus... and I am happy with the grades... his last report card was good.” When asked about homework activities over the weekend, Mrs. Drake replied, “He reads at home and does his work... My daughter, I write for her ABC and we do educational activities at home on the internet.” (Interview # 17th, February 17, 2015).

Summary of Findings

The findings from the parents’ responses in the interviews overwhelmingly support that parental involvement is important to them and the success of their children. The Arab American parents in this study expressed that they value their children’s education tremendously; they will do whatever it takes and will use any available resources to support their kids at school and at home. The findings in this chapter were guided by the three research questions examining the involvement of Arab American parents in their children’s schooling. These questions addressed specific school-based and home-based activities which promote and support student educational success and the barriers that make it difficult for Arab American parents to become more involved.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This study examined the perceptions of parental involvement among Arab American families. It reviewed the extent to which parents participate in activities at school and at home and whether or not these parents encourage their children's academic experience. Also, this study examined the resources which allow parents to be involved in their children schooling, and the barriers which make it difficult for Arab American parents to become more involved.

According to the accounts provided by the Arab American parents in this study, parental involvement is very important to a student's academic and social success. It is evident from the parent's responses that they want to be included and will do whatever it takes to be involved in their children's education. If they have the time, resources, and support from their family, relatives, neighbors, and the school, they will be active participants in both home-based and school-based activities. Parents are using many of the available resources to be involved in their children's schooling. The extent to which schools encourage parents in their children's education depends on the services that are provided by each school district. Based on the responses from twenty parents in two of the Madison Public Schools, parent involvement is supported by the schools. The school district provides bilingual staff who speaks Arabic and English who are able to communicate and translate for parents.

This study also examined the barriers that may prevent parents from being active participants in their children's education. These barriers include being a parent who is working part-time or full-time; having a baby in the house; or being a single parent. As a school social worker in the Madison Public schools, the researcher rarely hear parents make comments and remarks that involvement is overwhelming such as, "We do not have the time to come to

school;” “We do not know how to be involved;” or, “We don’t know what to do.” Parents understand that education is important to their child’s success in life, and see why they need to be partners with schools in educating their children. The purpose of this study was to understand the parents’ perception about parental involvement and what it means to each of them. Also, the study explored the available resources that make it easier for parents to participate. Lastly, the study examined the barriers that prevent them from participating and fully supporting their children’s education in home-based activities and school-based activities.

A Discussion of Results Regarding the 3 Research Questions:

Findings from twenty Arab American parents reveal that parental involvement is important. Each parent offered insight as to what they do at home and at school in support of their children’s success in school. Parents responded to open-ended and direct questions and through intensive analysis, the data was classified to address the guiding research questions. The first question was:

I. What does the involvement of Arab American parents look like in school-based and home-based activities that promote and support student educational success?

This study focused on Arab American parental involvement in school and home-based activities and their perception of its impact on the performance of their children in school. Furthermore, the type and extent of Arab American parental participation in school-based educational programs was examined. This study also reviewed the type of and extent of Arab American parental participation in home-based educational activities.

Parents indicated that parental involvement is very important for their students’ success academically, socially, and behaviorally. Parents attend school events and participate in school-based organizations such as the PTA. Fourteen parents out of the twenty parents interviewed

were involved and/or members of the school PTA. They work hard with their kids at home to support them with homework; they take them to the library and use the internet to help their children do projects and other school-related activities. Parents are satisfied and happy with their kids' schooling. They indicated that learning from their children's' teachers is also important because it makes it easier to help their children at home academically. Parents believe that there is a positive and strong relationship between the help they provide at home and school and their child's academic success.

II. What are the resources that allow Arab American parents to be involved in their children's education?

Parents use any resources available to them to be able to support their kids academically at school and at home. For example, they use the library, the internet and use translators at the school to communicate with the teachers and school administrators. Parents attend workshops in the community that teach English and/or parenting skills. They also rely on their husbands, older kids, relatives, neighbors, and friends for transportation and English translation. These resources, such as the weekly parent education meetings, help them learn ways of how to better support their children at home.

III. What are the barriers that make it difficult for Arab American parents to become more involved?

Parents indicated that they face different types of barriers which prevent them from being involved in their children's education at school and at home. Parents voiced the following concerns which impact their level of involvement in their child's schooling: 1) limited English speaking skills; 2) lack of transportation 3) having a baby in the house; 4) part-time or full-time work outside of the home; 5) running multiple errands; and 6) daily chores such as cooking and cleaning. These factors inhibit parents from helping their children with homework assignments

or going to school to attend PTA meetings, events, and parent teacher conferences. Even though the parents might face some of these challenges they still do their best to support their kids.

Practical Implications of Findings

Although this study is not generalizable in every context, it has practical implications for districts with large immigrant populations, particularly those of Middle Eastern descent. Further research is strongly recommended to further investigate parental involvement with Arab American parents to see if similar or different experiences apply to all Arab American parents in the district. It would be important to understand how to support parents on every level and how to increase their involvement and engagement in all areas.

Parents' Recommendations about Parental Involvement

Overall, parents gave similar recommendations about this topic. They recommended that it is beneficial for the schools to offer ESL classes at each school. One mom stated that, "Time and flexibility is important. I would like the school to offer meetings at different times... I want to learn how to use the computer. They should offer computer classes and basic skills. I like to learn about programs on the computer in order to help my son... I depend now on my neighbors and the parents around me... I use other parents to translate for me and to fill out an application. Support between school and home is critical for student success." One parent stated that, "We need ideas and lessons on how to help our kids to do homework." Parental involvement is a helpful topic for parents who want to be involved in activities, homework, and learning." Some parents wished that they had more time to spend with their children and knew more English to help them with homework.

Another parent wanted a day care at the school so she could participate more often. One parent stated, "I want to learn English to go to the doctor and communicate with my kids' teacher

in English and to help them do better.” She added, “I wish they would open preschool classes for my younger son and ESL classes for me and all parents who need it. We want to live here and help others. This is our country and our kid’s country. We like it here better than Yemen.” Another parent stated, “I like to have meetings for parents on discipline skills.” Also, some parents hoped they would have a class for full day preschool so their children could learn along with transportation provided by the school. One parent stated, “Schools should offer tutoring after school every day in the afternoon. A lot of parents have problems with that... some don’t know English.” One parent recommended that schools teach parents about sexual education for the kids because as she stated, “We are Arab and it is a taboo issue we have to educate the parents on how to teach this issue with our kids and talk to them about puberty... teach kids what does that mean to prevent problems before they go to middle school. Parents need education too on how to talk to their kids about sexual issues.... We are supposed to talk about it with our kids... I want the school to teach the parents and we teach our kids and talk to them.”

Interpretations and Analysis of Parents’ Feedback about Parental Involvement

After examining the recommendations and feedback provided by the parents, it is evident that these Arab American parents care about their children’s education tremendously and they want to be involved in their learning and education. They feel that there is a need for them to be involved so they can learn how to help their kids at home. Parents expressed a need of support in order to overcome the barriers that prevent them from in-school events such as PTA meetings. If schools offered, for example, child care, translators at the meetings, and ESL classes, it would ease their involvement at the school.

Parents want to develop the necessary skills in order to help their children at home with homework. One parent expressed her interest of learning how to educate her kids about sexual

topics. Her hope was that it would bring awareness to them and teach them how to protect themselves from diseases. The responses affirm that parents are eager to learn and they are motivated to support and teach their kids at home. These parents also welcome the guidance and support from school staff.

Recommendations for Further Research

The impact of parental involvement has been investigated at the national, state, and local levels. The conclusion at every level is the same: parental involvement directly affects the student's academic success in schools. What can be done to improve and enhance parental involvement at the schools? To answer this question, we need to increase and support more parental engagement by providing community-based activities and programs. These programs have to be designed in a way that meets the needs of parents they serve. The programs should consider the parents' availability, current set of skills, and the needs of both the parents and the children. Further research that will identify concrete programs which support parental contribution is recommended.

A closer look into various aspects of parental involvement is recommended and would consider one or more of the following:

1. This research study provided the parents' insights of parental involvement for elementary school children. Further study of other grade levels is recommended.
2. This research study was restricted to information from one school district. The study should be extended to different regions.
3. Future studies are needed that share the parent's perspective of parental involvement.
4. This study utilized qualitative methodologies; a quantitative methodological study or a blended-strategies approach may reveal other aspects of parental involvement.

5. A study with a larger sample may determine if the results are similar to those found in the present study.
6. Further research could examine the teacher's perceptions and experiences of parental involvement support for immigrant families.
7. Study the role of educational administrators (principals and central office staff) on establishing policies to help immigrant parents with their child's education.
8. Further research is needed that continues to give voice to Arab American parents as it relates to the importance of participation in their children's education.
9. Investigate the results of an experimental research study that compares outcomes of parent involvement with the addition support programs.

Discussion

The motivation behind this study was to understand the insights of Arab American parents about parental involvement and the extent to which they support their children academically during their elementary years. The results from this study were positive because parents indicated a strong interest in their child's academic experience. Many expressed that they would do anything they could to be involved. Parents reported being very satisfied and happy with their child's school, administrators, teachers, and academic performance.

The themes that emerged during the analysis phase emphasized the ways in which parents support their children academically and specifically how they do whatever it takes to attend meetings at school to be involved. For example, a mom told the researcher, "I take my one-year old baby to school in a stroller just to attend the PTA meetings, participate in bake sales and meet with my son's teacher." Parents will take their little toddlers and babies to school with them just to participate in school functions. Another example of parents doing whatever it takes

to support their child's education is calling each other and providing transportation to the school. A mom told the researcher during the interview that "I called my neighbor down the street to come and give me a ride so I can attend the parent-teacher conference with my daughter's teacher." Another theme that emerged was the amount of time participants spend after school to help their kids with homework. Parents discussed how they sacrifice their time and forsake social life such as visiting friends or relatives just to be present with their kids and do homework with them. As one parent stated, "Being at home with our kids when it is homework time is very important. We cancel all our visits and stop running errands during that time just to be with our kids and help them do their homework."

Conclusions

Parental involvement can have significant impacts on student academic performance during elementary school years. According to Cotton and Savard (1982), parental involvement has a positive impact on a student's learning and academic achievement. In addition, the more parents are involved in their children's education the greater the chance that the child will be better in their academic achievements. This accounts for any type of parental involvement at all levels of grade schooling. Greater academic achievements are present when the parents are active in school activities and when they are helping the teachers in the classrooms or even on field trips. Parents benefit from communication with school personnel on how to help their children at home. One example is the "make and take" activities where parents construct and practice with the teachers in order to replicate the same activities at home. Many studies and research throughout the years show that early educational programs for students with strong parental involvement have a positive and strong impact on student's success. Parental

involvement has a positive impact on students and helps to improve their grades in all subject areas. It even supports self-confidence and promotes positive classroom behavior.

The current study provided information about the resources that allow parents to be involved at their children's schooling, and the barriers that prevent them from being involved as much as they would like in their children's schooling. Some parents have reported the challenges of being involved in the education of their children, particularly when English is not the primary language spoken at home. In addition, time in the United States since emigration can have an impact on the extent of parental involvement in educational support activities. The findings from this study also indicate that Arab American parents value education, care about their kids' education and success and they will do whatever it takes to help them at home and at school.

The theory presented and discussed in the introductory chapter discusses the link between immigration status and the involvement of parents in their child's school work. Generational immigration has been shown to influence the culture of schooling and parental involvement. Moosa, Karabenick, and Adamsy (2001) examined first generation Arab parent involvement at the elementary school level. Findings from this study support this theory. Immigrant parents still attended PTA meetings and parent-teacher conferences; volunteer in classrooms; participate in bake sales; and other school functions even though they face challenges. Some of these challenges include but are not limited to the lack of English language skills; not having any babysitter; or not having transportation to the school. Also, the study affirmed that most parents (81%) attended parent-teacher conferences on a regular basis. In addition, 97% of the Arab mothers expressed eagerness to participate if they were requested to do so. The mothers formed a home environment conducive to learning and assisted with homework.

The findings support previous research on parental involvement and immigrant parents discussed in chapter 2. According to Hoover-Dempsey, there are several ways parents are involved which show that they embrace the role of academic schooling. Children whose parents are receptive to schooling create a stimulating home setting that includes one or more of the following: 1) home-based learning activities 2) help from parents or a family member with homework; 3) parent and school communication; and 4) explicit communication between the parent and child of the goals and expectations. The effect of a home environment may have a direct impact on the child as it supports and reinforces direct educational instruction. Parental support at home also models the teacher-student learning environment which helps the child to develop a positive attitude towards education.

This type of research is particularly important for administrators within the Dearborn Public Schools and other schools with larger immigrant populations. Research such as the one mentioned above confirms that the more the parents are involved in their children's education, the more successful the students will be both academically and socially. This is often reflected in the district reputation, test scores, and nation-wide achievement contests such as the status of 'reward schools.' Improvements at the district level often increase the funding to the school districts from the State and federal government.

Based upon the findings in this research study, Dearborn public schools and other school districts with large immigrant populations can do the following to improve parental involvement in their elementary schools:

1. Have flexible times for parent education meetings and parent teacher conference to increase parent's participation. All school districts should provide a variety of options for parent participation.

2. Provide translators to parents during any school meeting.
3. Offer ESL classes at different times throughout the community and at the school to teach parents English language skills.
4. Involve parents in decision making that relates to their children's education and to the school.
5. Provide workshops for parents on how they can help their children at home with homework and learning activities. As parents' own skills and self-confidence are improved, it may have a positive effect on their child and his/her academic success.
6. Aim for meaningful parent involvement in the schools especially for immigrant parents. Surveying parents' wants and needs is an important task in order to provide the appropriate services for them. Ongoing effective communication with parents is crucial by the teacher, school teams, and the school administrators.
7. Provide preschool classes and babysitting services to parents who have younger kids so they will be able to attend school functions and meetings.

In conclusion, parents reported that the more they are involved in their children's education at school and at home, the better their kids succeed and do better at school in all aspects. Parents indicated that parental involvement also affects their children's self-esteem, grades, social relationships, and behaviors. Thus, parental involvement is very relevant and important in the lives of these Arab American families.

APPENDIX A
Parental/Guardian Involvement Interview Questionnaire

Directions: This questionnaire is to gain insight regarding your perception of parental involvement in your child's education in Dearborn Public schools. Your feedback will be kept confidential. Thank you in advance for your time and support.

Part I: Parental Involvement at School and at Home

1. Elementary Children:

	Child's Name	School Name	School Location	Grade
1a.	_____	_____	_____	_____
1b.	_____	_____	_____	_____
1c.	_____	_____	_____	_____

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION QUESTIONS

PTA

2. How involved would you say you are at your child's school PTA or other parent organizations at your child's school?

3. If involved, Please describe the last issue or most important issue that you worked on with your PTA?

3a. Among those that are involved in the school PTA, are you involved as you would like to be? If yes, then what allows you to be involved as you are?

3b. If you are *NOT* as involved as you would like to be, then, what makes it difficult for you to be as involved as you would like to be?

3c. (If *NOT* involved at all), what types of things would you say make it difficult for you to get involved?

SCHOOL MEETINGS

4. Have you ever attended a meeting about a school-related issue at your child's school?

5. If involved, Please describe the last issue or most important meeting that you attended at your child's school. Do you participate in the meeting? If yes, how exactly?

6a. Among those that are involved in the school meetings, are you involved as you would like to be? If yes, then what allows you to be involved as you are?

6b. If you are *NOT* as involved as you would like to be, then, what makes it difficult for you to be as involved as you would like to be?

6c. (If *NOT* involved at all), what types of things would you say make it difficult for you to attend these meetings?

OTHER ACTIVITIES

7. Are you involved in your child's school in any other way?

8. If so, please tell me about it.

9a. Among those that are involved in other school activities, are you involved as you would like to be? If yes, then what allows you to be involved as you are?

9b. If you are *NOT* as involved as you would like to be, then, what makes it difficult for you to be as involved as you would like to be?

9c. (If *NOT* involved at all), what types of things would you say make it difficult for you to get involved?

HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

10. In a typical weeknight (Mon.-Thursday), how much time do you spend helping your child with their homework or reviewing relevant material with him/her?

11. Please describe what you do with your child on a typical afternoon / evening helping him / her with their school work.

12. Do you spend up as much time as you would like helping your child with his/her homework?

12a. If you do: What allows you to spend as much time as you do in helping your child with his/her homework? (i.e. own education, friends, family, mosque members, etc.)

12b. If you don't: What makes it difficult for you to spend as much time as you would like in helping your child with his/her homework? (i.e. language difficulty, education, time commitments due to work, children, other stuff, etc.)

13. What are some things that provide you confidence in your ability to help your child excel in his/her classroom?

14. What are some things that cause you to question / 2nd guess your ability to help your child excel in his/her classroom?

15. How pleased are you with the education that your child is receiving at his/her school?
16. How pleased are you with your child's grades/ classroom performance?
17. What are the types of homework activities that you do with your kids over the weekend?

Part II: Social Demographic Characteristics

Interviewee number ----- *Start Time* ----- *Date* -----

1. Gender: [1] Male----- [2] Female-----
2. Age: In what year were you born?_____
3. In what country were you born? _____
4. Mother tongue: [1] Arabic ----- [2] English-----
5. When did you first arrive in the US? How long have you been living in Dearborn? How long have you been living in your current residence? How long have you been living in the United States?
6. How many children under 18 do you have that live in your house?
7. How many adults 18 & up live in your house?
- 7a. How are these adults related to you?
8. What is the highest level of education that you have received?
9. What is the highest level of education that other adults in your household have received?
10. To the best of your knowledge would you say that your friends and family that live outside of your house are as, more, or less highly educated as you are?
11. What do you do for a living?
12. What do the other adults in your household do for a living?

13. Is there anything else you would like to add or comment on this topic?

APPENDIX B
District Permission Request

Dear Dr. _____,

I am conducting a research study for my PhD dissertation, and I am requesting your permission to conduct the study in the school district at Denver and Brooks elementary Schools with parents. The letter of support must be on school district letterhead indicating the willingness of the district to allow me to conduct my research.

The study is titled “The Effect of Arab American Parental Involvement in School-Based and Home-Based Activities That Support the Academic Performance and Educational Success of their Children during the Elementary School Years of K-5th Grade.”

All information obtained from teachers and parents will be confidential. The data analysis of the study will be summarized with no teacher or parent identified. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Informants can withdraw from being part of this study at anytime during the completion process. Withdrawal from this study will not affect informants. Furthermore, there are no known risks to informants from taking part in this study, and no foreseeable direct benefit either; however, participation is important to the improvement of education.

If you have any questions about this study, feel free to reach me at (313) 663-6654 or by email at rbazzi@hotmail.com

Respectfully yours,

Rola Bazzi-Gates, ACSW, LMSW, SSW
PhD Candidate, Sociology Department
Wayne State University

APPENDIX C

Arabic Version Parent Phone Script

الهاتف: اتوظيف سيناريو لأولياء الأمور

مرحباً [السيدة / السيد] _____.

اسمى رولا بزي-عيسى. أنا على درجة الدكتوراه مرشح في قسم علم الاجتماع في جامعة ولاية واين، وأنا الاتصال بك عن الدراسة عندما اتود في مدرسة طفلك. ونحن هذه الدراسة عن آثار مشاركة الوالدين في الأنشطة التي يمكن أن تساعد في تحسين أداء أطفالهم في المدرسة. إذا وافقت على المشاركة، سوف يطلب منك أن تجيب على بعض الأسئلة عن نفسك، أطفالك، المدرسة يحضرون، وأنواع الأنشطة التي تقدمها المدرسة أو في المجتمع التي تم تصميمها لتقديم معلومات أو نصائح لمساعدتك على مساعدة أطفالك بشكل جيد في المدرسة. أنت أيضاً سوف يطلب بعض الأسئلة حول الأشياء التي تقوم بها في المنزل للمساعدة أطفالك بشكل جيد في المدرسة. سوف مشاركتكم في هذه الدراسة والمعلومات التي نقدمها تساعد على تحسين الخدمات التعليمية المدارس توفر للأطفال وأولياء أمورهم. سوف المقابلة يستغرق ما بين 30 و 45 دقيقة. هل تحب المشاركة في الدراسة؟

APPROVAL PERIOD

OCT 2 2 '14

NOV 2 3 '15

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

APPENDIX D



Department of Assessment & Evaluation

October 2, 2014

Rola Bazzi-Gates
39842 Golfview Drive
Northville, Michigan 48167

Dear Ms. Bazzi-Gates:

Thank you for your request to conduct research with Dearborn Public Schools. Your study titled, "The Effect of Arab American Parental Involvement in School-Based, Home-Based, and Community-Based Activities That Support the Academic Performance and Educational Success of their Children during the Elementary School Years of K-5th Grade" has been approved.

We understand that all information obtained from teachers and parents in your qualitative study will be kept confidential and that the data analysis of the study will be summarized without staff or parent identification. We ask that you comply with the following:

- 1) Dearborn administrators and instructional staff may not be used to facilitate research during their instructional time or working hours.
- 2) All information collected about students during the course of this study must be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law and must be maintained unless disclosure is given by parents/guardians and Dearborn Public Schools.
- 3) If Dearborn Public Schools buildings are needed to meet with participants or parents during non-instructional hours, a building permit (providing location, meeting area and times) must be obtained from the Dearborn Public Schools Adult & Community Education Office.
- 4) Research purpose, methodology and instruments must be presented and approved by appropriate administrators (building principals at Geer Park and Iris Becker).
- 5) Permission to review and access student's records is granted for the purpose of establishing eligibility prior to obtaining consent for participants.

We congratulate your efforts to learn more about the parental involvement link to student achievement and success!

If you have questions regarding these requirements, please contact me at (313)-827-3040 (O).

Sincerely,



Kathleen B. Klee, PhD
Director, Assessment & Evaluation

cc: Mr. Brian Whiston, Superintendent
Dr. Jill Chochoi, Executive Director of Elementary Education
Dr. Gail Shenkman, Associate Superintendent
Mr. David Higgins, Principal, Becker
Mrs. Lamis Srou, Principal, Geer Park

Office Assessment & Evaluation, Rm. 15
18700 Audette Street
Dearborn, MI 48124
Phone (313) 827-3040
FAX Number (313) 827-3131
klee@dearborn.k12.mi.us

APPENDIX E
Denver School Permission Request

Dear Mr.____,

I am conducting a study for my PhD dissertation, and I am requesting your permission to conduct the study in the school district at Denver and Brooks elementary Schools with parents. The letter of support must be on school letterhead indicating the willingness of the school to allow me to conduct my research.

The study is titled “The Effect of Arab American Parental Involvement in School-Based and Home-Based Activities That Support the Academic Performance and Educational Success of their Children during the Elementary School Years of K-5th Grade.”

All information obtained from teachers and parents will be confidential. The data analysis of the study will be summarized with no teacher or parent identified. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Informants can withdraw from being part of this study at anytime during the completion process. Withdrawal from this study will not affect informants. Furthermore, there are no known risks to informants from taking part in this study, and no foreseeable direct benefit either; however, participation is important to the improvement of education.

If you have any questions about this study, feel free to reach me at (313) 663-6654 or by email at rbazzi@hotmail.com

Respectfully Yours,

Rola Bazzi-Gates, ACSW, LMSW, SSW
PhD Candidate, Sociology Department
Wayne State University

APPENDIX F**Brooks School Permission Request**

Dear Mrs. _____,

I am conducting a study for my PhD dissertation, and I am requesting your permission to conduct the study in the school district at Denver and Brooks elementary Schools with parents. The letter of support must be on school letterhead indicating the willingness of the school to allow me to conduct my research.

The study is titled “The Effect of Arab American Parental Involvement in School-Based and Home-Based Activities That Support the Academic Performance and Educational Success of their Children during the Elementary School Years of K-5th Grade.”

All information obtained from teachers and parents will be confidential. The data analysis of the study will be summarized with no teacher or parent identified. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Informants can withdraw from being part of this study at anytime during the completion process. Withdrawal from this study will not affect informants. Furthermore, there are no known risks to informants from taking part in this study, and no foreseeable direct benefit either; however, participation is important to the improvement of education.

If you have any questions about this study, feel free to reach me at (313) 663-6654 or by email at rbazzi@hotmail.com

Respectfully Yours,

Rola Bazzi-Gates, ACSW, LMSW, SSW
PhD Candidate
Wayne State University

APPENDIX G**Recruitment Script to Parents**

Hello:

My name is Rola Bazzi-Gates. I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Sociology Department at Wayne State University, and I am asking for your help by participating in a study I am conducting about the effects of parent involvement in activities that could help improve the performance of their children in school. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer some questions about yourself, your children, the school they attend, and the kinds of activities offered by the school or in the community that are designed to provide information or advice to help you help your children do well in school. You also will be asked some questions about the things you do at home to help your children do well in school. Your participation in this study and the information you provide will help improve the educational services schools provide to children and their parents. The interview will take about 45 minutes and your identity and the identity of your children will be completely confidential.

Sincerely,

Rola-Bazzi-Gates, LMSW, ACSW
PhD candidate, WSU

APPENDIX H

The Effect of Arab American Parental Involvement On Student Success

Behavioral Research Informed Consent

Title of Study: The Effect of Arab American Parental Involvement in School-Based, Home-Based, and Community-Based Activities That Support the Academic Performance and Educational Success of their Children During the Elementary School Years of K-5th Grade.

Principal Investigator (PI): Rola Bazzi-Gates
Department of Liberal Arts
(313) 613-6654

Purpose

You are being asked to be in a research study on the effect of parental involvement on student success, because your family is of Arab descent. This study is being conducted at Geer Park/Becker Elementary schools. The estimated number of study participants to be enrolled is 40 parents and 14 teachers. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Study Procedures

In this research study, I will collect information about parent participation in activities designed to help them help their children do well in school and the relationship between their participation in these activities and the performance of their children in school.

If you agree to take part in this research study, you will be asked to meet with me after school hours at your child's school for only one interview which will take 30 to 45 minutes. If you prefer, I will visit you at your home to conduct the interview. I will ask you each question and I will take notes of your answers. I may audiotape the interviews so I can have records of the interview in order to analyze my data later. The questions will be about your parental involvement at your child's school and the support that you and your child are getting from the school. You have the option of not answering some of questions if you are not comfortable.

I will also use information from your child's academic and behavioral records for my research, such as their grades, any special services they receive and disciplinary record.

Benefits

The study, there be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future.

The study may help researchers understand factors that affect school academic and behavioral outcomes among Arab American students.

Risks

Although every effort will be made to protect your study data, it is possible that unauthorized persons may gain access to your information.

Submission/Revision Date: October 14, 2014 Page 1 of 3
Protocol Version #: 1

Participant's Initials

Form Date: 10/2013

The Effect of Arab American Parental Involvement On Student Success

Study Costs

Participation in this study will be of no cost to you.

Compensation

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality

All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. You will be identified in the research records by a code name or number. Information that identifies you personally will not be released without your written permission. However, the study sponsor, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Wayne State University, or federal agencies with appropriate regulatory oversight [e.g., Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), etc.] may review your records.

When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity.

Audiotape recordings of you will be used for research or educational purposes, your identity will be protected or disguised. The audiotape will be erased after completing the study. You have the right to review the tape. Your personal identity will be shielded and secured.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in this study. You are free to only answer questions that you want to answer. You are free to withdraw from participation in this study at any time. Your decisions will not change any present or future relationship with Wayne State University or its affiliates, or other services you are entitled to receive.

Questions

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Relu Bazzi-Gales at (313) 613-6654. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call (313) 577-1628 to ask questions or voice concerns or complaints.

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Submission/Revision Date: October 14, 2014 Page 2 of 3
Protocol Version #: 1

Participant's Initials

Form Date: 10/2013

The Effect of Arab American Parental Involvement On Student Success

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. If you choose to take part in this study you may withdraw at any time. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by signing this form. Your signature below indicates that you have read, or had read to you, this entire consent form, including the risks and benefits, and have had all of your questions answered. You will be given a copy of this consent form.

_____ Signature of participant	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of participant	_____ Time
_____ Signature of witness**	_____ Date
_____ Printed of witness**	_____ Time
_____ Signature of person obtaining consent	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of person obtaining consent	_____ Time

APPROVAL PERIOD

OCT 23 14 OCT 23 15

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Submission/Revision Date: October 14, 2014 Page 3 of 3
Protocol Version #: 1

Participant's Initials

Form Date: 10/20/13

APPENDIX I

Behavioral Research Informed Consent in Arabic

Forward Translation (To Arabic)

التجرب المصوبة الموافقة المسبقة

عنوان الدراسة: أثر المشاركة الأوبئة الأمريكية العربي في مدرسة القائم، انطلاقاً من المنزل، والأنشطة التي تدعم الأباء الأكاديمي والنجاح للترية أطفالهم خلال سنوات المدرسة الابتدائية الصف 5-K- المجتمعية.

الباحث الرئيس (PI): رولا بزي غيتس

قسم الآداب

{313} 513 6654

الغرض

يتم طلب منك أن تكون في دراسة بحثية عن تأثير تدخل الأهل في نجاح الطالب، لأن عائلتك هو من أصل عربي. وتجرى هذه الدراسة في المدارس نجير بارك / بيكر الابتدائية، ويقرر عدد المشاركين في الدراسة إلى أن التحق هو 40 الآباء والمعلمين 14، يرجى قراءة هذا النموذج وطرح أي أسئلة قد تكون لديك قبل الموافقة على أن يكون في الدراسة.

إجراءات الدراسة

في هذه الدراسة البحثية، وسوف جمع المعلومات حول مشاركة الوالدين في الأنشطة المصممة لمساعدتهم على مساعدة أطفالهم بشكل جيد في المدرسة والعلاقة بين مشاركتهم في هذه الأنشطة وأداء أطفالهم في المدرسة.

إذا وافقت على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية، سوف يطلب منك لقاء معي بعد ساعات الدوام المدرسي في مدرسة طفلك لمناقشة واحدة فقط والتي سوف تستغرق 30 إلى 45 دقيقة. إذا كنت تفضل ذلك، وسوف زبيرة لك في منزلك لإجراء المقابلة الشخصية. سأطلب منك كل مؤثر وأنا، سوف أخذ الملاحظات من جياتك. أنا قد شريط صوتي المقابلات وأذا فإني يمكن أن يكون لها سجلات شفوية من أجل تعاون البيانات الخاصة بي في وقت لاحق. سوف تكون الأسئلة حول مشاركة الآباء الخاص بك في مدرسة طفلك وتدعم الذي تك وتطلقك تزداد من المدرسة. أياها خبير عدم الإجابة على بعض الأسئلة إذا لم تكن مرتاحة.

وسوف أيضا استخدام المعلومات من سجلات، مثل: الأكاديمية والمدرسية لبحثي، مثل درجاتهم، أي الخدمات الخاصة التي يتلقونها وسجل تأديبي.

قوائد

الدراسة، أن يكون هناك أي فائدة مباشرة بالنسبة لك. تكن معلومات من هذه الدراسة قد تستخدم الآخرين الآن أو في المستقبل.

هذه الدراسة قد تساعد الباحثين على فهم العوامل التي تؤثر على نتائج الأكاديمية وسلوكية المدرسة بين الطلاب العرب الأمريكيين.

المخاطر

وعلى الرغم من ذلك، كل جهد ممكن لحماية بيانات الدراسة الخاصة بك، فمن الممكن أن الأشخاص غير المرخص بهم قد الوصول إلى المعلومات الخاصة بك.

تكلفة الدراسة

والمشاركة في هذه الدراسة أن يكون من أي تكلفة عليك.

تعويض

لن تدفع لك لتشاركته في هذه الدراسة.

المرحلة

وستبقى جميع المعلومات التي تم جمعها عنك خلال هذه الدراسة سرية إلى حد يسمح به القانون. سيتم تحديد لكم في سجلات البحث من قبل رمز اسم أو رقم. لن يتم الإفراج عن المعلومات التي نحدد شخصيتك بدون إذن مكتوب الخاص بك. ومع ذلك، فإن الراعي للدراسة، مجلس المراجعة المؤسسية (IRB)، في جامعة ولاية واين، أو الوكالات التي مع الرقابة التنظيمية المناسبة (مثل إدارة الغذاء والدواء (FDA)؛ ومكتب التنمية البحوث البشرية (OITRP)؛ مكتب الحقوق المدنية (OCR))، التي قد مراجعة سجلات الخاصة بك.

عندها يتم نشر نتائج هذا البحث أو مناقشتها في المؤتمرات، سيتم تضمين أي معلومات من شأنها أن تكشف عن هويتك.

وسيتم استخدام التسجيلات مرتبط صوتي منكم لأغراض بحثية أو تعليمية، سوف تتم عملية هويتك أو التوقيع. سيتم مسح شريط صوتي بعد الانتهاء من الدراسة. لديك الحق في مراجعة الشريط. سيتم حماية الهوية الشخصية وتأمينها.

المشاركة الطوعية / السحب

بشارك في هذه الدراسة هو طوعي. لديك الحق في اختيار عدم المشاركة في هذه الدراسة. أنت حر في الإجابة فقط لأسئلة التي تريد الإجابة. أنت حر في الانسحاب من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة في أي وقت. وقد لا يؤثر أي علاقة لصداقة أو الصداقة مع جامعة واين منسك أو الشركات التابعة لها؛ أو خدمات أخرى بحق تلك الحصول عليها.

الأسئلة

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة حول هذه الدراسة الآن أو في المستقبل، يمكنك الاتصال رولا دي غيوش في 6694-623 (313). إذا كان لديك أسئلة أو تعليقات حول حقوقك كمشارك في البحث، ويمكن الاتصال بـ مخلص المراجعة المؤسسية في 577-1628 (313). إذا كنت غير قادر على الاتصال بموظفي البحوث، أو إذا كنت تريد التحدث إلى شخص آخر غير موظفي البحوث، يمكنك الاتصال أيضا 577-1628 (313) نصح أسئلة أو استفسارات أو شكاوى صرت.

الموافقة على المشاركة في دراسة البحوث

الى توافق طوعا على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، يجب التوقيع على خط دائم. إذا اخترت للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة قد سحب في أي وقت. كنت لا تغطي عن أي من حقوقك القانونية من خلال توقيع هذا النموذج. توقيعك أثناء يشير إلى أن كنت قد قرأت، أو قد قرأت لك، وهذا نموذج موافقة بأكمله، بما في ذلك المخاطر، والمنافع، وأن كل من فرد على استلك، صرف تحصل على نسخة من هذا النموذج الموافقة.

تاريخ

توقيع مشارك من نحن

التوقيت	اسم المطبوعة من المشاركين
تاريخ	توقيع الشاهد **
التوقيت	مطبوعة من الشاهد **
تاريخ	توقيع شخص الحصول على موافقة التسجيل
التوقيت	اسم المطبوعة من شخص الحصول على موافقة

APPROVAL PERIOD

OCT 2 3 '14

OCT 2 0 '15

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

APPENDIX J

IRB Approval Letter

**WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY**

IRB Administration Office
87 East Canfield, Second Floor
Detroit, Michigan 48201
Phone: (313) 577-1628
FAX: (313) 993-7122
<http://irb.wayne.edu>

NOTICE OF EXPEDITED APPROVAL

To: Rola Bazzi-Gates
Sociology

From: Dr. Deborah Ellis or designee D. Ellis / RB
Chairperson, Behavioral Institutional Review Board (B3)

Date: October 21, 2014

RE: IRB #: 082414B3E

Protocol Title: The Effect of Arab American Parental Involvement in School-Based, Home-Based, and Community-Based Activities That Support the Academic Performance and Educational Success of their Children During the Elementary School Years of K-5th Grade

Funding Source:

Protocol #: 1408013293

Expiration Date: October 20, 2015

Risk Level / Category: 45 CFR 46.404 - Research not involving greater than minimal risk
Research not involving greater than minimal risk

The above-referenced protocol and items listed below (if applicable) were **APPROVED** following *Expedited Review* Category (#7)* by the Chairperson/designee for the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board (B3) for the period of 10/21/2014 through 10/20/2015. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals that may be required.

- Revised Protocol Summary Form (received in the IRB Office 10/16/2014)
- Protocol (received in the IRB Office 8/5/2014)
- A waiver of consent and a waiver for written documentation of informed consent for chart review of educational records for study eligibility only have been granted according to 45 CFR 46.116(d). This waiver satisfies: 1) risk is no more than minimal, 2) the waiver does not adversely affect the rights and welfare of research participants, 3) the research could not be practicably carried out without the waiver, and 4) providing participants additional pertinent information after participation is not appropriate.
- A waiver of requirement for written documentation of informed consent for the teachers has been granted according to 45 CFR 46 116(d). This waiver satisfies: 1) the research involves no more than minimal risk to the participants. Research with the teacher involves questionnaire only regarding involvement by parents in supporting their child in school; 2) the research involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context. Questionnaires only; 3) the consent process is appropriate and 4) an information sheet disclosing the required and appropriate additional elements of consent disclosure will be provided to participants.
- Behavioral Research Informed Consent - English and Arabic versions (dated 10/14/2014)
- Research Information Sheet for Teachers (dated 10/9/2014)
- Phone Recruitment Script to Parents - English and Arabic versions
- Email Recruitment Script to Teachers
- Data Collection Tools: Parental/Guardian Involvement Interview Questionnaire and Teacher Survey Questions

* Federal regulations require that all research be reviewed at least annually. You may receive a "Continuation Renewal Reminder" approximately two months prior to the expiration date; however, it is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval **before** the expiration date. Data collected during a period of lapsed approval is unapproved research and can never be reported or published as research data.

APPENDIX K

October 12, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

I support Rola Bazzi-Gates and the study she will be conducting titled, "The Effect of Arab American Parental Involvement in School-Based, Home-Based, and Community-Based Activities That Support the Academic Performance and Educational Success of their Children during the Elementary School Years of K-5th Grade." Rola and I have discussed her study, the approach she will take, and the confidentiality of all information she obtains from parents and staff of Iris Becker Elementary. Rola has been given permission to review and access student records to establish eligibility prior to obtaining consent from participants. Rola is also aware that interviews for this study will not take place at Iris Becker Elementary or during school hours. If interviews are scheduled to be conducted at Becker after school hours, Rola will obtain a permit from the Dearborn Public Schools Adult and Community Education Office.

As the principal of Iris Becker Elementary, I am supportive of her study, the information she will obtain to further her career and to assist in the academic and social growth of students she works with in the district. If you should any further questions feel free to contact me at 313-827-6950.

Best regards,



David Higgins
Principal, Iris Becker Elementary

APPENDIX L

Geer Park Elementary

*Learning**for**Life*

Dear Mrs. Bazzi-Gates,

We, at Geer Park, are excited that you are on your way to completing your PhD dissertation. You have my permission to conduct research with the parents and faculty at our school. Also, you are allowed to review students' academic and behavioral records prior to the study so you can select who can participate in your study, and during the study. You understand that research cannot be done during school hours or without consent from any individuals involved in your study.

We look forward to reviewing your findings in an effort to better understand and support our community.

Best wishes,

Lamis Srour
Principal
Geer Park Elementary
(313) 827-2300
srourl@dearbornschools.org

Geer Park Elementary
14767 Prospect
Dearborn, MI 48126
Phone: (313) 827-2300
Fax: (313) 827-2305

APPENDIX M

I supplemented my qualitative findings with Data from the 2003 Detroit Arab American Study

Impact of Social-Demographic & Attitudinal Characteristics on Arab American Educational Activism: Source: 2003 Detroit Arab American Study

	% Active in Parent Teacher Association (PTA)	% Attended Meeting on Education
Non-College Graduate	38.85**	36.72**
College Graduate	49.44	47.57
Immigrant	37.3**	36.07**
Non-Immigrant	52.82	48.59
Doesn't Speaks English Very Well	25.84**	32.54**
Speaks English Very Well	50.77	44.07
Worried about Hate Crime/FBI watch Since 911	40.31**	39.87
Not Worried about Hate Crime/FBI watch Since 911	52.78	37.04

*<.05; **<.01

Figure 3.0 Impact of Social-Demographic Characteristics on Arab-American Educational Activism (Detroit Arab American Study, 2003)

The survey-based preliminary findings affirms my qualitative work and study that Arab American parents who are college educated, fluent in English speaking, unworried about ethnic intimidation are more likely than other parents to be active and involved in related civic activities at school and in their children's education.

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DC: Arab American Institute.

ABSTRACT**THE EFFECT OF ARAB AMERICAN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL-BASED AND HOME-BASED ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF THEIR CHILDREN DURING THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YEARS**

by

ROLA BAZZI-GATES**August 2015****Advisor:** Dr. Khari Brown**Major:** Sociology**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

Parental involvement can have significant impacts on student academic performance during elementary school years. The current study intended to examine the importance and effect of Arab American parental involvement in the success of their students during their elementary years. The study also provided information about the resources that allow parents to be involved at their children's schooling, and the barriers that prevent them from being involved and participate as much as they would like in their children's schooling.

The present research applied appropriate approach, principles, and findings. This research examined the effect of Arab American immigrant parental involvement and participation in school based and home based activities that support student academic success. Some parents have reported facing more difficulties and barriers to their involvement in the education of their children than others, especially when English is not the primary language spoken at home. In

addition, time in the United States since emigration, can have an impact on the extent of parental involvement in educational support activities.

A qualitative research design was used as the framework for this study. A purposive sample of 20 parents was selected to participate this study. A qualitative in depth 20 interviews used to examine Arab American parents' perception of parental involvement at Denver and Brooks Elementary schools in Madison Public schools.

The findings indicated that Arab American parents value education tremendously, care about their kids' education and success and they will do whatever it takes to help them at home and at school. Furthermore, this study focused on the resources which allow parents to be involved and allow them to participate in their children's education, and helping them with homework and school projects. Also, this study examined the barriers which prevent Arab American immigrant parents from participating in their children's education. Additional research is needed to further study the effect of Arab American parental involvement and the success of their children during their elementary school years.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT ROLA BAZZI-GATES

EDUCATION

2016	Education Specialist Certification, General Administration & Special Education Director, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan
2015	Doctor of Philosophy - Major: Sociology Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan
1998	Masters of Social Work (MSW=64 credits) Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan
1996	Child Development Associate (CDA), Washington
1994	Bachelor of Liberal Arts with a Major in Sociology, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1998-Present	School Social Worker, Dearborn Public Schools, Dearborn, MI
2001 -2006	Clinical Social Worker, Apex Behavioral Health, Dearborn, MI
2000 – Present	Field Instructor, Dearborn Public Schools, Dearborn, MI
2004 -2006	Faculty Liaison, U of M Social Work Department, Ann Arbor, MI
2000 -2008	Social Work Supervisor, Mentor, and Consultant, Hamadeh Educational Services, Dearborn, Michigan
1996 – 2002	Mental Health Therapist, ACCESS, Dearborn, MI

AWARDS

- Awarded the “Outstanding Ancillary Employee of the Year” from Dearborn Public Schools and Wayne County RESA, May 2006
- Graduate Scholarships: Women’s of Wayne, WSU, LAHC, May 2006
- Awarded “School Social Worker of the Year” 2011 from MASSW, Region A
- Awarded Frank Huang Memorial Scholarship, WSU, April 2015
- Awarded “Impact Award” Dearborn Public Schools, May 2015

CERTIFICATION, LICENSES. & AFFILIATIONS

- Certified School Social Worker by the State of Michigan
- Certified Clinical & Macro Social Worker by the State of Michigan
- Licensed by the State of Michigan as LMSW
- Covey Leadership: Teen Facilitator Certification
- Accredited by National Association of Social Workers as ACSW
- Member of the National Association of Social Workers, NASW, Washington
- Member of the Michigan Association of School Social Workers, MASSW