Well-Being of Leaders, Teachers, and Parents During the COVID-19 Global Pandemic: A Basic Qualitative Study

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Abstract

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic impacted educational systems globally. To prevent the spread of the virus, governments worldwide instituted stay-at-home mandates. Living rooms transformed into the hub of homelife activity, serving as classrooms, workspaces, and recreational activities for the family. The problem this basic qualitative study explored was how the shift to remote learning affected the well-being of teachers, parents, and front-line school leaders. Few studies have examined the effect of a disaster on educational community members or explored school leaders' response to a crisis. The research study provided knowledge to fill the gap. Crisis leadership theories and Maslow's hierarchy of needs served as the theoretical framework. The study explored experiences and feelings of well-being during New York Pause and any factors having positive or negative effects. Using snowball and emergent sampling, 18 participants (six teachers, parents, and front-line school leaders) were selected to participate in semi-structured interviews. Data were collected from interviews and observational notes. Participants' statements were then analyzed using thematic coding both manually and using MAXQDA software. Member checking, bracketing, and data triangulation were used to increase the data's reliability, credibility, and validity. Results indicated participants experienced fear, anxiety, and other emotions negatively affecting their sense of well-being. Participants believed communication was essential to creating feelings of positive well-being, while a lack of communication and planning was the cause of a negative impact.

Keywords: COVID-19, pandemic, Maslow, crisis, qualitative, school communities

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, especially my father. Without their support, it would not have been possible. Dad, I wish you were still here with me. I hope to continue to make you proud.

Acknowledgments

A special thanks to my dissertation chair, Dr. David Collum. Thank you for hosting the dissertation hour each week. This opportunity provided invaluable guidance and the chance to connect with other students. Dr. Collum's kindness, advice, and support helped me to continue this journey after the loss of my father.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic had a profound effect on the functioning of educational systems. Schools closed their physical sites and pivoted to remote or online learning without any plan or guidelines to follow (Rincones et al., 2021). Equally important to note is this global pandemic differed from previous pandemics the world experienced due to the speed it spread worldwide and the number of people becoming ill and dying. Multiple aspects of everyday life were impacted by the pandemic (Corbera et al., 2020). At the 6month mark of the COVID-19 pandemic, 10 million people became ill, and approximately 500,000 of those perished (Choi et al., 2021).

Researchers have explored the effects of stress and anxiety on diverse groups during the COVID-19 crisis (Ayyildiz & Baltaci, 2020; Choi et al., 2021; Ranieri et al., 2021; Reyes-Guerra et al., 2021; Schlesselman et al., 2020). Stress and anxiety potentially affect a person's sense of well-being. The pandemic generated enormous amounts of stress and anxiety because of the ease of spread, the uncertainty of treatment options, and the increasing levels of confusion, fear, and panic reported by the masses (Ayyildiz & Baltaci, 2020).

Schools play a pivotal role in the lives of the community they serve. Exploration of the effect the COVID-19 pandemic had on teachers, parents, and school leaders provides valuable insight to assist in mitigating the impact of future crises. The following chapter includes the background of the study, a statement of the problem, and the purpose and significance of the study. Three research questions and a conceptual framework guided the direction of the study. Terms are defined for clarity. Assumptions, scope, delimitations, limitations, and a chapter summary complete the introductory chapter.

Background of the Problem

In December 2019, a new and novel coronavirus was identified in the Wuhan Province of Chin (Bozkurt et al., 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) named the new virus coronavirus disease 2019 also know asCOVID-19 (Aytac, 2021; Inauen & Zhou, 2020; Merino et al., 2020). COVID-19 spread rapidly. By early 2020, a pandemic was declared, with over 36 million cases diagnosed and over 1 million deaths occurring globally (Johns Hopkins University, n.d.). Historically, a previous pandemic was severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) that occurred in 2003 and did not spread as far nor was as deadly as the COVID-19 virus (Blasco-Belled et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 global pandemic initiated a worldwide crisis that included educational systems. Governments closed in-person learning in an attempt to slow the spread of disease (Aytac, 2021). Simultaneously governments instituted lockdown measures closing nonessential businesses, limiting travel, and encouraging citizens to remain at home (Daud et al., 2020; Kong et al., 2021). Nonpharmaceutical measures such as these were used during the SARS pandemic and the Spanish Flu from 1918 to 1919. Historical data illustrated a correlation between these measures and a lower mortality rate during Spanish Influenza (Yehya et al., 2020). Early research studies reported that, as a result of these measures, anxiety, depression, and stress were on the rise (Blasco-Belled et al., 2020; Janssen et al., 2020). Social isolation measures potentially affected emotions and how the public viewed the crisis (Blasco-Belled et al., 2020). In Malaysia, the United Kingdom, and Italy, cases of anxiety and depression were reported to have doubled (Daud et al., 2020; Kong et al., 2021).

Schools play a critical role in society. Educational settings are a safe place for students while parents work, where some students have their only meal of the day, interact with friends,

and have an opportunity to get medical care. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020b), school closures affect learning and well-being. UNESCO (2020b) cited those 778,000,000 students' academic worldwide remained affected by the pandemic as education continued either totally or partially remotely.

Teachers, parents, and school leaders were on the front line in managing and responding to the changes needed in the educational systems. In March 2020, most schools in the United States shifted from in-person learning to a remote format (Kong et al., 2021). Routines of daily living moved as homes became the focal point for all activities. Boundaries between home, school, and work became blurred as parents' involvement in their children's learning expanded, and teachers' roles moved toward facilitating the process (Kong et al., 2021). School leaders had the task of coordinating the process while tending to the emotional needs of students, parents, teachers, and themselves.

Statement of the Problem

The lack of strategic planning by educational authorities during the shift to remote learning affected the well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders. Educational authorities' absence of a plan left them ill-prepared to address all the issues of the growing crisis (Ayyildiz & Baltaci, 2020; Kuhfeld et al., 2020; Thornton, 2021). The ability of an organization to respond to an unforeseen event serves as a measure of the organization's readiness (Ayyildiz & Baltaci, 2020).

Disasters, either natural or artificial, can potentially disrupt educational systems. Hurricanes, tornadoes, and school shootings have affected individual school systems. Most weather disasters leading to school closures have been shorter than the predicted length of COVID-19's impact (Kuhfeld et al., 2020). An examination of the history of pandemics revealed

periods of school closures in an attempt to slow down or prevent the spread of disease (Huremovic, 2019). Some examples are the Spanish Flu, Smallpox, and H1N1 (i.e., Swine Flu). Despite these occurrences, educational leaders have not created crisis plans to close in-person learning.

The target population for the study was teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders working in New York State during the period of the New York Pause. New York Pause was the executive order signed by Governor Andrew Cuomo. Governor Cuomo ordered all nonessential businesses close and prohibited all non-essential gathering of people. New York Pause was in effect from March 22, 2020, until June 24, 2020 (New York State-COVID-19 Updates, 2020). At the time, New York State served 2,598,921 students, with 212,296 public school teachers, in 731 districts (New York State Department of Education, n.d.). These numbers did not include preschool students and private or parochial schools as these are not reported to the New York State's data site. The sample size of the current study was 18 participants, which included six members from each group, teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders. Participants engaged in semi-structured interviews focusing on their perceptions of the effects the COVID-19 pandemic had on their sense of well-being.

Few studies have addressed the effect of a disaster on educational communities' sense of well-being, which was found to be a gap in the literature. Limited studies also examined school leaders' responses to crises (Potter et al., 2021). When faced with an unexpected event, educational leaders must devise a plan of action to address the community's educational needs and their health and well-being to ensure the students' ability to engage in learning. A crisis significantly influences students' capacity for learning, attendance, and sense of well-being (Kousky, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders' experiences and feelings of well-being during the shift to remote learning due to the COVID-19 global pandemic in New State during the period of the New York Pause. Without understanding how teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders experienced the COVID-19 crisis, knowing how to assist in recovery and future planning would be limited. How the well-being of the participants was impacted during the early days of the crisis was investigated by this study. Recovery from mental health issues has a better outcome if treatment is provided early (Mental Health Foundation, 2020). Understanding the participants' lived experiences will provide a basis for educational leaders to address critical areas early on in a crisis to hopefully prevent a negative impact on the community's sense of well-being.

A basic qualitative design was used to explore individuals' lived experiences during a specific period. The purpose of using a qualitative design was to investigate the perspective of individuals who have all experienced the same phenomena. Qualitative inquiry is not merely describing the event but understanding what and how those who lived during the time felt and believed about the experience (Neubauer et al., 2019). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic on the feelings of well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders during the New York Pause.

Significance of the Study

The WHO declared the Coronavirus pandemic a global public health crisis—the highest possible alert (Sokolowska et al., 2021). Studies conducted to investigate best practices for managing a situation and the magnitude of the pandemic are scarce (Reyes-Guerra et al., 2021). To slow the spread of disease, governments globally instituted social isolation measures advising

citizens to remain at home (UNESCO, 2020). Inauen and Zhou (2020) examined the effects of social isolation on different segments of the population, all finding the health and well-being of citizens had been affected (Inauen & Zhou, 2020).

Using a basic qualitative design allowed for an exploration into how teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders felt their sense of well-being was affected during the early days of the COVID-19 global pandemic and what may have made it better or worse. The insight gained by the analysis of the interviews adds to the body of knowledge and fills the gap in the literature on how educational authorities may manage future crises. Future use of restrictive preventive measures to combat an epidemic is possible. Nonpharmaceutical measures are the best source of disease prevention and are critical to slowing the spread of the virus (Inauen & Zhou, 2020). Understanding reactions to these measures and what prevents citizens from complying with them aids in developing programs and strategies to alleviate some of the associated mental health issues and increase adherence (Inauen & Zhou, 2020; Ranieri et al., 2021). The significance of the study centered on understanding participants' sense of well-being. When mental health issues are alleviated, compliance with preventive social and personal measures may increase. Feelings of negative well-being and limited social support may result in noncompliance with nonpharmaceutical prevention methods and increase the number of people diagnosed with the virus (Inauen & Zhou, 2020).

Research Questions

Research questions narrow the study's purpose and guide the investigation's direction (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The content of the questions includes what is being explored while making; no assumptions (Peoples, 2021). Research questions guiding the study are as follows:

Research Question 1: How did the shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 global

pandemic affect the feelings and experiences of the well-being of teachers,' parents, and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State?

Research Question 2: What actions taken by educational authorities during the period of New York Pause positively affected the feelings of the well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State?

Research Question 3: What actions taken by educational authorities during the period of New York Pause negatively affected the feelings of well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework served as the foundation for the study guiding how data were gathered and analyzed. This framework combined crisis leadership and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Moreover, the COVID-19 global pandemic has been described as a global crisis affecting all aspects of daily life (Collie, 2021). In response, educational systems shifted to remote learning. Students were expected to engage in learning activities without peers or teachers in the same location. These theories contained relevant factors relating to the study.

Maslow's theory is based on the belief people are motivated by eight needs. These needs were placed in a hierarchy, with the lower ones at the bottom. Maslow stated the lower needs must be met first before a person would be motivated to move up the hierarchy (Maslow, 1943). During the pandemic, citizens faced many challenges, including the lower-level need for safety, such as worries about food, shelter, and becoming ill (Bridgman et al., 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a crisis that the world had never experienced (Zhao & Watterston, 2021). Educational communities needed to make swift changes to allow students' education to continue. School principals led the frontline work supporting their teachers, staff,

parents, and students to transition to new ways of learning and teaching (Weiner et al., 2021). The use of crisis management theory by educational leaders provided limited assistance because there was a lack of clear guidance on proceeding and little research for advice for leaders (Tourish, 2020). Educational leaders relied on communication skills, managerial skills, and the management of resources to meet the community's needs (Potter et al., 2021).

The theoretical framework aligned with the purpose of this study. During the pandemic, frontline leaders, parents, and teachers aimed to provide educational opportunities for the students. To effectively accomplish their goal, lower-level needs such as food, shelter, and health concerns must first be addressed to allow students and families to concentrate on learning (Maslow, 1943). Teachers and school leaders also worked to meet their lower-level needs of having the necessities, feelings of safety, and adequate teaching resources. Effective management of the crisis was critical to achieving these outcomes. A problem of the magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented (Reyes-Guerra et al., 2021). For educational systems to move forward with learning activities, lower-level needs had to be addressed simultaneously with managing the ever-changing crisis.

Definitions of Terms

Terms and concepts may have several meanings depending upon the context. Definitions of terms used in this study are provided for clarity:

Bracketing. Bracketing is a concept in phenomenological studies where the observer sets aside personal beliefs, experiences, and feelings concerning the subject of the investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Crisis. A crisis is an event or situation, predictable or not, causing feelings of anxiety and potential danger for individuals or organizations (Aspriadis, 2021). A precise definition of a

crisis is difficult to explain. When the steady state of equilibrium is disrupted this another way to describe a crisis. Additionally, crises are often combined with increasing levels of stress (Eastham et al., 1970).

Epoche. Epoche is synonymous with bracketing. Moustakas (1994) expanded the definition by setting aside all predispositions and consciously looking at the event as if the event was being observed for the first time. The researcher needs to have no feelings or opinions about the event, especially considering all the data.

*Frontline school leaders***.** Frontline school leaders refer to superintendents, principals, assistant principals, or any leadership title working in a local school system, as opposed to federal or state educational authorities, who have the power to issue regulations (Can Korkut & Llaci, 2016).

*Well-being***.** Well-being is described as having positive emotions and a feeling of satisfaction about the state of one's life (Centers for Disease Control, n.d.).

Assumptions

Assumptions in research studies cannot be quantified or proven (Brutus et al., 2013). Additionally, assumptions have the potential to influence the researcher's reasoning, decisions, and priorities (Burton-Jones et al., 2021). Accordingly, the primary assumption in this study was the honesty and truthful responses of the participants. Involvement in the study was voluntary, and no compensation was offered. Strict confidentiality was maintained by not including any identifying information in the data analysis. Another assumption was the participants met all the criteria for participation. Subjects were expected to have been in their position before the COVID-19 global pandemic to ensure they had comparable experiences. Data from a qualitative study were constructed from the responses of the participants. The data were analyzed and

served as the basis for the investigation's findings. In addition to the assumption of the truthfulness of the participants bracketing of feelings and beliefs occurred during the analysis.

Scope and Delimitations

The COVID-19 global pandemic challenged the educational community in unprecedented ways. Students, parents, teachers, and leaders faced numerous obstacles (Kuhfeld et al., 2020). The purpose of this study was to explore teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders' experiences and feelings of well-being during the shift to remote learning due to the COVID-19 global pandemic in New State during the period of the New York Pause. Recruitment was limited to18 participants, including six teachers, six parents, and six frontline school leaders. Data collection lasted 3 weeks and began after approval from the American College of Education's (ACE) Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Delimiters set the study's boundaries to ensure the purpose can be achieved (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). Purposive criterion sampling was initially the primary sampling methodology. Enough participants did not volunteer during the purposive criterion sampling, so emergent and snowball sampling were added to increase participation. To qualify as a participant, teachers and frontline school leaders were required to be in their position for at least 2 years before the pivot to remote learning. Parents needed to have children attending in-person school for at least 2 years before switching to remote learning within the same school district. All participants worked or attended school in New York State. The rationale for these delimiters was to ensure the participants' comparisons of their experiences before and during the pandemic were accurate.

Limitations

A basic qualitative design was used to explore the perception of teachers, parents, and

frontline school leaders' of how the COVID-19 global pandemic affected their feeling of well-being. Research limitations are potential weaknesses in the study's design beyond the controls of the study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). Self-reported limitations of a study help develop future studies by providing information for possible actions to address areas of concern (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). In contrast, self-disclosure of limitations may impact the potential for future publication as the study includes flaws (Brutus et al., 2013). The first limitation was time constraints. Four weeks were allotted for the completion of data collection because the research was part of a doctoral program.

Qualitative interviews yield substantial amounts of data requiring sufficient time for analysis (Moustakas, 1994). When multiple methods are used to investigate an issue, the results may produce more robust data (Davis et al., 2011). Due to the time limitation, only one data collection method was used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the 18 participants.

The second limitation is the ability to replicate the study. Qualitative analysis is challenging to replicate (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). A third limitation is using social media as a recruitment method. Participants were recruited from personal social media pages. Exact replication would be complex because the same access may not be available. The population surveyed for participation was limited to the number of people on social media. Research procedures and thematic codes were delineated to minimize the limitations. The use of interviews added the assumption of truth in participant responses. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and sent to the participants for review. Corrections were made as needed. Using member checking increased the study's credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Another limitation common to qualitative studies is the possibility of researcher bias. Researcher bias affects the study's validity by influencing the participants and analysis (Walters,

2001). To address the concern, epoche, bracketing, and self-reflective practices were used to assist in setting aside personal beliefs and feelings.

Chapter Summary

On January 30, 2020, the WHO declared a public health emergency of international concern caused by the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus (UNESCO, 2020b). By March 2020, the United States educational system began changing to distance learning (Kuhfeld et al., 2020). Businesses shut down. Homes served several purposes such as becoming a workplace, a school, and a place for recreational activities (Kong et al., 2021).

This basic qualitative study was conducted to explore the effect of the COVID-19 global pandemic on the perception of the well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders during the New York Pause. The background of the issue, the problem and purpose statements, and the significance of the study were discussed. Assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations of the research were outlined. The next chapter provides a comprehensive literature review and a description of the theoretical framework.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic forced the educational system's rapid closure. As a result, educational authorities' lack of strategic planning during the shift to remote learning affected the well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders. Pivoting to remote learning involved 1.6 billion school leaders, teachers, students, and parents in more than 190 nations (United Nations, 2020), leading to a global education crisis. The abrupt cessation of in-person learning compelled the educational systems to deploy a new operational method quickly. The quickly moving nature of the COVID-19 crisis illuminated the need for additional research on the effect on teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders. Six themes emerged from the literature, including an overview of the historical pandemics, teacher experiences and concerns, parents' experiences and concerns, school leaders' viewpoints, impact on well-being, and issues in higher education.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020a), school closures impact the community by interrupting learning, limiting access to childcare and food, and creating economic hardships for families unable to work. School leaders were faced with a crisis. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders' experiences and feelings of well-being during the shift to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic in New State during the period of the New York Pause.

Surpassing the Spanish Influenza, COVID-19 became the deadliest disease of the 20th century (UNESCO, 2020a). Leaders needed to make quick decisions despite the potential for dire consequences if a leader chose an ineffective method (Tourish, 2020). At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, little was known about the transmission mode, causing difficulties in

identifying preventative measures (Harris & Jones, 2020).

Students' responses to the COVID-19 crisis on providing education during this timeframe have been examined (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). Community members suffered from anxiety and trauma from their lived experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bozkurt et al., 2020). Bozkurt et al. recommended emotional and psychological support for students, parents, and teachers.

Most of the literature focused on providing education via alternative methods (Kayalar, 2020; Kruszewska et al., 2020; Mukhter & Chowdhary, 2020; Pryor et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020). Little research has explored the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the well-being of school leaders, teachers, and parents. Countries employed the method of closing the economy and schools to prevent the spread of COVID-19 with typical activities coming to a halt further impacting members of the school community and resulting in feelings of isolation (Bozkurt et al., 2020). These measures resulted in members of the school community suffering from feelings of anxiety and uncertainty (Pitlik, 2020). School leaders had the added concern and responsibility of leading schools during a pandemic and caring for others (Urick et al., 2021).

The literature review includes an overview of the search strategy, theoretical framework, history of past pandemics, COVID-19, and lived experiences of parents, teachers, and school leaders. A counterargument is also made by exploring many of the issues COVID-19 highlighted already existed. Discussion of the theoretical framework and a summary of related literature is provided, along with a restatement of the need for this study.

Literature Search Strategy

Sources were found through the American College of Education (ACE) OneSearch system. The ACE OneSearch system provided access to 45 databases through Open Athens.

ACE's library included ProQuest dissertations, theses, and the education and health management databases. Additional resources were located using Google Scholar and reviewing the reference lists of other scholarly journal articles on the topic.

Searches were made using keywords and subjects to find the most current peer-reviewed academic articles published within the past 5 years. COVID-19, Hemagglutinin 1 Neuraminidases 1 Influenza (H1N1), Spanish Influenza, and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) were selected for exploration as a representation of the last four pandemics the world faced. The virus attributed as the cause of the pandemic stems from a variant of the H1N1 Flu and the human Coronavirus (Pergolizzi et al., 2020). Topics were paired with keywords to narrow the search further. Keywords included *pandemics, school leaders, administration, principals, superintendents, teachers, parents, students, mental health, well-being, the effect of, caused by,* and *the educational system.*

The literature search for the theoretical framework was conducted using ACE OneSearch and Google Scholar. Keywords used include *leadership theory, crisis leadership, mental health, feelings, well-being, stress, anxiety, fear, reaction to, Maslow's hierarchy, Bloom's taxonomy, and lower* and *higher-level needs.* The search terms served as the foundation for selecting the literature reviewed.

The steps taken for data preparation should be delineated to set a good foundation for a qualitative study's reliability and validity (Peoples, 2021). Articles identified as acceptable for use were entered into a thematic excel worksheet and reference calculator. The worksheet was divided into themes and color-coded. Themes are critical data pieces describing participants' meaning and feelings (Peoples, 2021). Citation information, research type, methodology, notes, quotes, key points, contradictions, and credibility were gathered from the articles and entered

into a matrix. The reference calculator was used to ensure 76% or more were peer-reviewed versus non-peer-reviewed and not greater than 5 years old.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provided the foundation for data analysis and the interpretation of the meaning of the data. Based on the theoretical framework, the focus was on understanding the data clearly and systematically. A theoretical framework adds to the study's validity as seminal theories may be referenced, adding depth to the discussion of data (Kivunja, 2018). For this study, the theoretical framework combined crisis leadership theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Crisis Leadership

Klann (2003) described a crisis as explosive and emotionally charged. Leading during a crisis provides many challenges for a leader whose most important function is the source of information (Urick et al., 2021). In an emergency, expert communication skills, having a clear picture and understanding of the issue, knowing what needs to be accomplished, having an attitude of caring, and having a solid understanding of values are required from leaders (Klann, 2003). Leaders make decisions during a crisis facing uncertainties under the threat of causing possible harm (Urick et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 global pandemic met the criteria of being a crisis with its many unknowns and potential harm if one fell ill. Effective communication skills were paramount for educational leaders to help institutions move forward during an emergency. Leaders needed to be flexible and change direction as new information was discovered or as the number of cases increased or decreased in their area (Marshall et al., 2020). Skills that centered on acclimating to a crisis were also essential for those in charge. Additionally, skills required in an emergency are

staying calm, identifying if a problem needs immediate resolution, seeking advice, engaging in strategic thinking, being authentic and empathic, and being open-minded (O'Connell & Clarke, 2020).

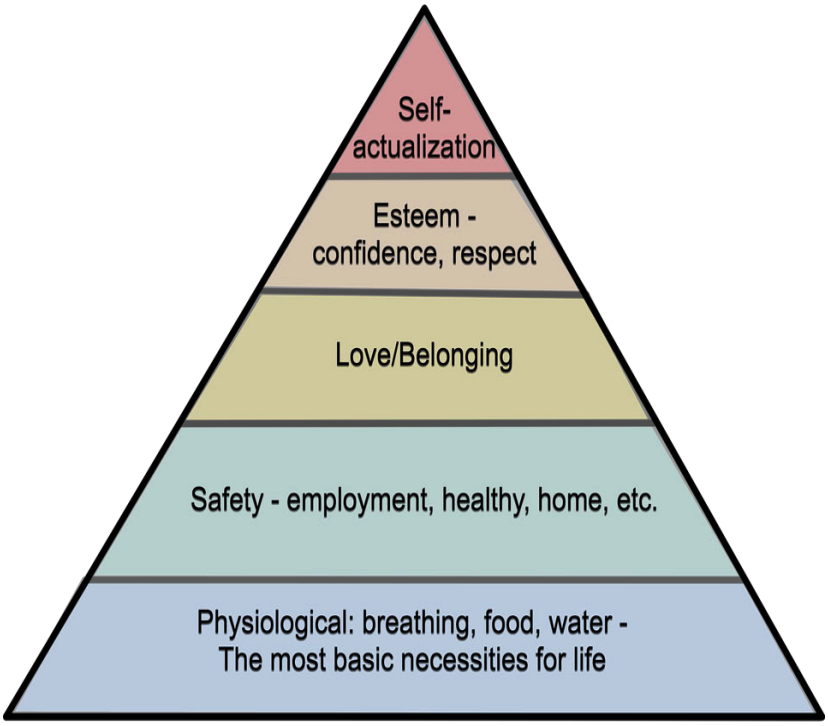
Educational systems shifted to remote learning as an emergency alternative to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus (Bozkurt et al., 2020). Schools used the nonpharmaceutical measures of suspension of in-person learning and shifting to distance learning to provide safe educational opportunities for all students. Leaders needed to use crisis management skills during the pandemic for rapid decision-making. Information about the virus changed daily, necessitating leaders to change gears quickly to address one challenge after another. Schools assumed the role of a source of information for the community regarding learning and health and safety information (Pollock, 2020). Educational systems needed to strategize a method to meet the community members' basic needs to continue learning.

Maslow's Hierarchy

Maslow (1943) suggested the needs of people exist in a hierarchical format. Basics needs are at the bottom of the hierarchy with self-actualization at the top of the triangle (see Figure 1). Maslow believed until the lower-level needs were met, a person could not move to the next level. The COVID-19 pandemic threatened the school community at the basic level of need regarding safety and necessities for life. Basic needs include food, shelter, and clothing. Feeling safe entails living without fear, being connected to others, and having a sense of belonging (Crandall et al., 2019). Schools are the focal point of a community, meeting all their students' basic needs, including daycare, food, and education (Doucet et al., 2020).

Figure 1

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Note. Needs from the lowest level to the highest level. Reprinted from "Who Built Maslow's Pyramid? A History of the Creation of Management Studies' Most Famous Symbol and its Implications for Management Education," by T. Bridgman, S. Cummings, & J. Ballard, 2019, *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *18*(1), p. 87 (https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2017.0351). Copyright 2019 by Academy of Management.

Learning and Education

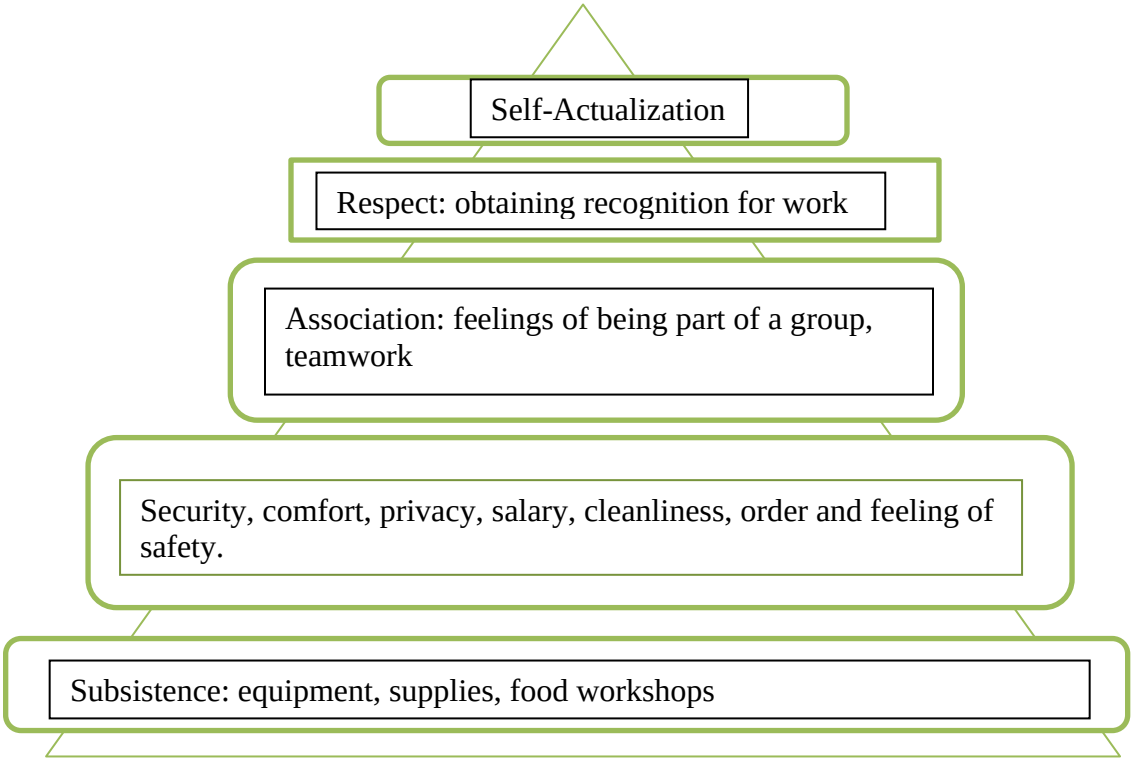
The COVID-19 global pandemic was the cause of tremendous upheaval in the everyday lives of the worldwide population. The disruption included isolation, anxiety, panic, and uncertainty (Bozkurt et al., 2020; Marcinko et al., 2020). Educators faced the challenge of

establishing a method to meet their students' and families' basic needs (Urick et al., 2021). Teachers implemented emergency remote learning methods attempting to continue students' education. Traditionally, distance learning allows for flexibility for both students and instructors in a higher education setting. An emergency shift to this method for all learners brought many obstacles to be overcome by teachers, students, families, and leaders, affecting their well-being (Misirli & Ergulec, 2021). The pivot to online learning brought attention to the role of schools beyond just filling the education needs of children. Schools also play a critical role in the socialization and care of students (Misirli & Ergulec, 2021).

Recent studies have promoted applying Maslow's theory first when planning to work with students during a crisis (Bridgeman & Cummings, 2019; Jablonski et al., 2021). Following steps to assist students in meeting their basic physiological and safety needs, the shift to academics may occur (Doucet et al., 2020; Netolicky, 2020). The need for education is unquestionable; however, when faced with a crisis, the priority should be to ensure the health and safety of the community. Providing health and safety promotes a classroom climate of continuity and academic progress. Fisher and Royster (2016) applied Maslow's hierarchy to address the needs of teachers (see Figure 2). The findings suggested teachers used multiple resources to combat stress, and different situations fostered varying stress levels.

Figure 2

Fisher and Royster Hierarch of Teachers' Needs Based on Maslow's Theory



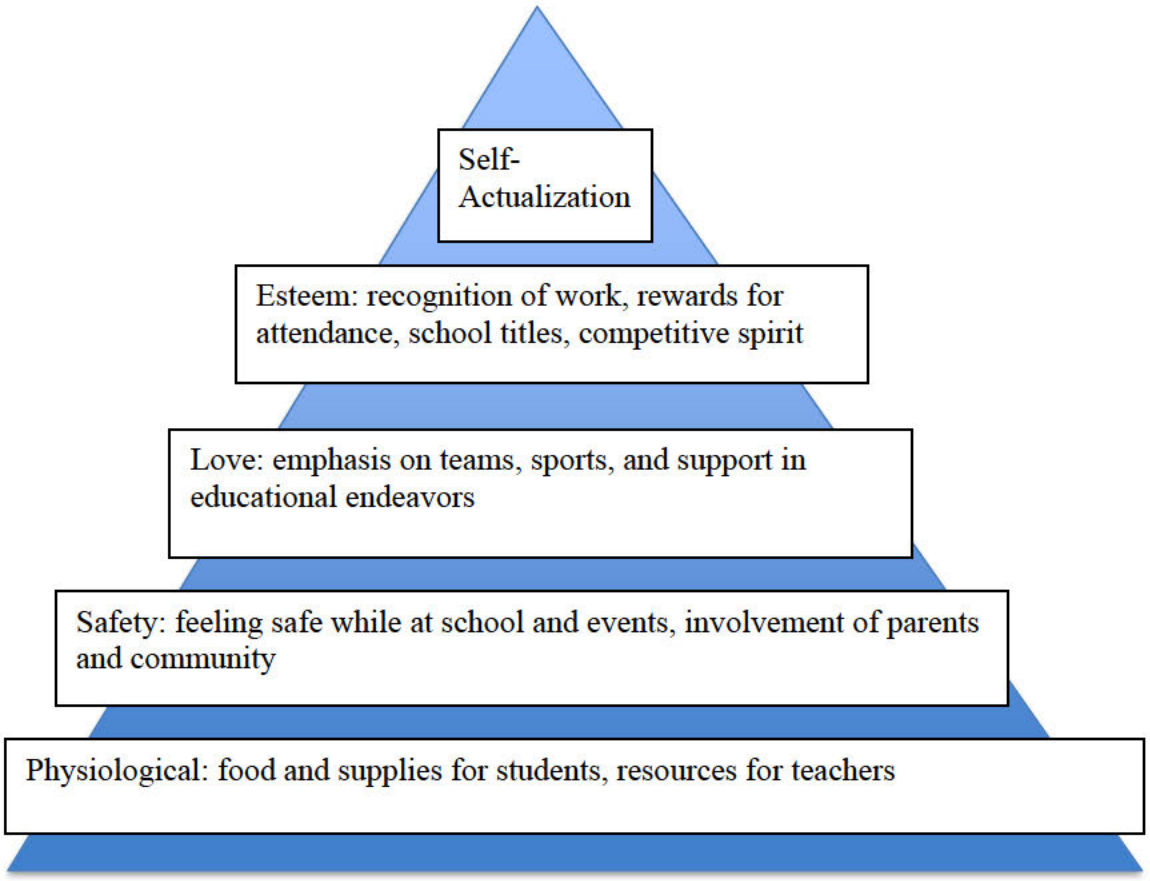
Note. From "Mathematics Teachers' Support and Retention: Using Maslow's Hierarchy to Understand Teachers' Needs" by M. H. Fisher and D. Royster, 2016, *International Journal of Mathematical* E*ducation in Science and Technology*, *47*(7), p. 999 (https://doi.org/10.1080/0020739X2016.1162333). Copyright 2016 by International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology.

Fisher and Crawford (2020) combined Fisher and Royster's (2016) hierarchy with Maslow's theory as a framework to create an order to address the needs of students in at-risk schools (see Figure 3). Using Maslow's theory as the framework, the school leaders addressed basic needs first and transformed the school from one of crisis to one of distinction. This

transformation occurred over 7 years. School leaders attributed their success to addressing basic needs and then moving upwards (Fisher & Crawford, 2020).

Figure 3

Maslow's Hierarchy to Support Struggling Schools



Note. Needs of students from lowest to highest. From "From the school of crisis to distinguished: Using Maslow's hierarchy in a rural underperforming school," M. H. Fisher & B. Crawford, 2020, *The Rural Educator*, *40*(1), p. 10. Copyright 2020 by Rural Educator.

Blended Theories

The COVID-19 virus resulted in a complex crisis threatening social and economic organizations globally. When an emergency occurs, leaders typically use crisis theory for guidance. Situations created by the COVID-19 global pandemic required leaders to expand their thinking to include the physiological and safety needs of employees and the community (Kavrayici & Kesim, 2021). The combination of crisis leadership and Maslow's hierarchy of needs served as the framework to explore the experiences, feelings, and state of school leaders, teachers, and parents resulting from the pandemic. Netolicky (2020) suggested leaders consider a less is more approach and keep it simple during the crisis.

Research Literature Review

A review of the literature was conducted to survey the current knowledge base about the research questions. Relevant theories, themes, debates, and existing gaps were found. Six major themes were identified including: (a) an overview of the historical pandemics, (b) teacher experiences and concerns, (c) parents' experiences and concerns, (d) school leaders' viewpoints, and (e)impact on well-being, and (f) issues in higher education.

Historical Pandemics

The Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) role is to protect the United States from health and safety threats. Subsequently, the CDC gave recommendations to all industries to promote the health and safety of the public (UNESCO, 2020a). Individual states had the option to accept or reject the recommendations. Throughout history, there have been epidemics and pandemics recorded. Authorities were faced with decisions regarding the status of schools (McKenna, 2009).

In the past 100 years, before this study, the world has faced four pandemics: (a) Spanish

Flu, (b) SARS, (c) H1N1, and (d) the COVID-19 global pandemic (Pergolizzi et al., 2020). The H1N1 Flu and Spanish Influenza were caused by the same virus (Pitlik, 2020). An epidemic is declared by the CDC when cases of the illness exceed expected cases. A pandemic is designated when an epidemic spreads to multiple countries or continents and affects a large section of the population. The CDC and the World Health Organization (WHO) must jointly declare a pandemic (Pergolizzi et al., 2020).

History of pandemics is filled with lists of diseases causing tremendous societal changes. Behavioral scientists have conducted minimal research in exploring pandemics and the effects a pandemic has on the population's well-being (Huremovic, 2019). Social impacts of pandemics include travel restrictions, school closings, and the shutdown of the economy. School closures are often one of the first social interventions governments take to control the spread of disease (Qiu et al., 2017). A comparison of previous pandemics was explored to increase understanding of the effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic on the school community. Learning from history provides a more advantageous position for school leaders in the future (Scarpa et al., 2020). Similar to the COVID-19 global pandemic, historical situations set the foreground for understanding how academic progress is made despite the difficulties faced during pandemics.

Spanish Influenza

The Spanish Influenza was the first pandemic of the 20th century. Spanish Influenza had the same vector (i.e., how the disease is spread) as the H1N1 Influenza. First discovered in the United States, the Spanish Influenza was transmitted to Europe by U.S. military forces (Scarpa et al., 2020). The central powers, i.e., Germany, and Austria-Hungary, were infected more virulently than the allied powers including France, Britain, Russia, Italy, Japan, and the United States. Huremovic (2019) suggested this may have affected the war's outcome.

The first wave of the Spanish Influenza pandemic in the United States was mild until wintertime when it turned more deadly (Scarpa et al.,2020). Public health authorities used nonpharmaceutical methods by closing schools and prohibiting large gatherings of people. Wearing masks was encouraged, and quarantine orders were placed for people exposed to the flu (Schwartz, 2018).

During the Spanish Influenza pandemic, most cities in the United States closed schools to prevent the disease from spreading. New York City, Chicago, and New Haven exerted states' rights and decided to remain open (Stern et al.,2010). The academic community studied how cities fared during the pandemic (Huremovic, 2019; Stern et al., 2010). Stern et al. suggested the reasoning behind the decision to stay open was New York City, Chicago, and New Haven were leaders in the school hygiene movement. Politicians formed the school hygiene movement to promote improved health and sanitary conditions (Stern et al., 2010). One of the significant components of the campaign was the school nurses' presence and the school facilities' cleaning and disinfection (Stern et al., 2010).

Spanish Influenza led to school closures based on the number of school members becoming ill or if the government advised closing to prevent the spread of illness. In the United States, approximately 726 schools were closed affecting 368,282 students (Beach et al., 2022). The CDC vacillated on the recommendations for closure lengths, first indicating 7 days, then raising it to 14 days, to changing the guidance to closures not being necessary (Klaiman et al., 2011). Countries opting to close schools were China, France, and South Africa (Fotheringham et al., 2020).

There exist many similarities between the Spanish Influenza pandemic and the COVID-19 global pandemic. Both pandemics were viral, highly contagious, and spread globally in

months (Beach et al., 2022). Governments during both events employed nonpharmaceutical measures, such as social distancing, masks, and the prohibition of group gatherings to slow the spread of the disease (Beach et al.,2022). Inequities and disparities in health care and economics were also highlighted during both pandemics (Beach et al., 2022). CDC guidance also changed frequently, with quarantine periods requiring 14 days at first before being dropped to 10 days (UNESCO, 2020b).

SARS

The SARS pandemic spread through the world predominantly through air travel (Fox, 2004). Asia bore the brunt of this virus (Pergolizzi et al., 2020). Schools were forced to close abruptly. School officials needed to implement new teaching methods to conduct classes and determine how students' academic lessons would continue (Fox, 2004). Exploring teachers' perspectives on using information and communication technologies (ICTs) revealed feelings of unpreparedness due to sudden closures (Fox, 2004). Teachers thought no guidelines were given for moving forward (Fox, 2004).

As the spread of the virus subsided, schools changed their focus to the task of reopening. A retrospective study explored kindergarten education in Hong Kong during the SARS pandemic (Rao, 2006). Schools completed daily health checks to reopen safely, and handwashing was required upon entry. Traveling was limited, and if a family traveled, quarantine was mandated for 10 days before reentry to school was permitted. Teachers wore aprons and carried alcohol spray, tissues, and gloves. As part of this study, principals completed questionnaires about their beliefs on the impact of the guidelines on the school's day-to-day operations. Principals reported thinking the government response to the outbreak was too slow, meaning schools should have been shut down sooner. An example cited was the closure of in-person learning (Rao, 2006).

HINI Influenza

The H1N1 Influenza vector was the same virus responsible for the Spanish Influenza pandemic. Huremovic (2019) reported H1N1 affected communities from April 2009 until May 2010. A comparison of virulence of the H1N1 virus and COVID-19 virus suggested that H1N1 was not as deadly a disease as COVID-19 (Qiu et al., 2017).

A comparison study explored the differences in the educational system's decisions during the Spanish Influenza versus the H1N1 Influenza. Stern et al. (2009) conducted a qualitative study to historically examine the educational system's response to an influenza pandemic by studying the reaction of the government officials of 43 cities. Evidence suggested cities fit into one of three classifications. Cities were classified by the ones remaining open. A second classification focused on schools available for in-person learning where school nurses examined the students daily. The third classification included schools closed for in-person learning with different interactions with local health agencies. A comparison of the data concluded significant differences between Spanish Influenza and H1N1including vaccination availability, increased health education resources and increased school nurses (Stern et al., 2009).

COVID-19

The COVID-19 virus had its origins in Wuhan, China. Scientists suggested the transmission mode was bats, transmitting the virus to pangolins and humans at an open food market (Pitlik, 2020). COVID-19 has proven to be one of the deadliest and most unpredictable global pandemics since the Spanish Influenza (Scarpa et al., 2020). Within 5 months, the COVID-19 virus spread globally, and countries were forced to take extreme measures (Kavrayici & Kesim, 2021). Deaths worldwide were listed as more than 500,000 during the first 6 months of the crisis (Pitlik, 2020). Governments closed businesses, closed schools, and typical daily

activities ceased as a method to stop the spread of the virus. The COVID-19 global pandemic also caused fear, uncertainty, stress, panic, and behavior disorders globally in general populations (Marcinko et al., 2020). Additional methods to stop the spread of disease were social distancing, curfews, handwashing, and mask-wearing (Bozkurt et al., 2020).

Schools pivoted to online learning platforms to continue addressing students' academic needs. Common platforms used included Zoom, Google Classrooms, Canvas, Microsoft Teams, Facetime, and Whats App (Misirli & Ergulec, 2021; Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). The shift to online learning led to many challenges, including access to devices and the internet, increased screen time, parents becoming teachers, students unable to sit for long periods, lack of engagement, ability to use technology, and lack of sustained motivation (Doucet et al., 2020; Misirli & Ergulec, 2021). Pokhrel and Chhetri (2021) suggested incorporating learning how to use online educational tools when in-person learning resumes. These authors further recommended the devices become a regular part of the pedagogy to enhance learning.

Teachers' Experiences

The disruption to the educational system thrust teachers to invent new ways of engaging and instructing students. Governments estimated the pivot to remote learning impacted 8.6% of the world's students (UNESCO, 2020a). Distance education became the norm, with educators using both asynchronous and synchronous learning models. Teachers mailed packets home and used web-based and app-based platforms to ensure learning continued (Pryor et al., 2020). Common concerns teachers expressed were how to connect with the students, the impact instruction would have on academic achievement, and the number of available resources for students at home (e.g., computers; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021).

Giunco et al. (2020) posited adapting lesson plans for digital instruction was challenging

for teachers. The COVID-19 global pandemic added a new dimension to education. Teachers needed to help students cope with unpredictable situations while engaging in innovative teaching methods and overcoming numerous obstacles (Kruszewska et al., 2020).

Teachers reported classroom management presented a different type of challenge. The problem was connected to the teacher's ability to communicate the lesson effectively with the students. Numerous issues existed with internet access and lacking the necessary infrastructure to support learning (Kruse et al., 2020; Sari & Nayirqui, 2020). Professional development was a common need among teachers of all age groups (Szente, 2020). The use of technology, specifically targeting a school's online platform, was a standard recommendation for professional development to improve student participation and support teachers (Giunco et al., 2020; Midcalf & Boatwright, 2020).

Teachers faced similar fears while assisting students in coping with uncertainty. The workplace shifted to home, schedules changed, and the teaching formats shifted. Multiple factors affected teachers' well-being and sense of safety (Doucet et al., 2020). For teachers to effectively meet the needs of students, teachers' needs must be addressed as well (Doucet et al., 2020). Teachers faced different challenges depending on the age of their students.

Preschool Teachers

A qualitative observational study of preschool teachers during the COVID-19 global pandemic's early weeks examined child engagement and family involvement (Szente, 2020). Several studies agreed the experiences of teachers and parents highlighted inequities that already existed (Samuelsson et al., 2020; Szente, 2020). Teachers' most significant challenges were the lack of adequate technology, student participation, and communication between stakeholders (Midcalf & Boatwright, 2020; Szente, 2020).

Preschool teachers in Norway reported an initial closure of schools for all students except parents who were essential workers. The ministry of education ordered the reopening of all schools after 6 weeks (Pramling Samuelsson et al., 2020). Additional responsibilities of implementing the new health protocols became part of teachers' daily routine. Pramling Samuelsson et al. (2020) interviewed preschool teachers from Norway, Sweden, and the United States to compare their feelings regarding working during school closures and reopening. Sweden and Norway issued policies for their countries regarding how a school would operate during a pandemic; by comparison, each state made its own decisions in the United States. Norway's teachers reported feeling comfortable with the reopening plan the government issued. The teachers in the United States reported differing opinions about the effectiveness of states' plans.

Elementary Teachers

Qualitative studies were conducted to examine the experience of teachers during the COVID-19 global pandemic (Pryor et al., 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020). Experiences varied based on many factors. Teachers needed to adapt to distance teaching and restructure their days (Pryor et al., 2020). Depending on the grades being taught, the amount of parent contact varied. Research in Indonesia focused on the perceptions of lower grade teachers in response to teaching online during the pandemic (Rasmatilda et al., 2020). Thematic analysis revealed four themes: (a) instructional strategies, (b) challenges, (c) supports, and (d) instructors' motivation. One of Rasmatilda et al.'s, (2020) findings was to include or change a description of the leaders' and teachers' roles to increase communication. Increased communication promoted parents' understanding of school personnel's expectations and responsibilities. Authors noted students' motivation waned over time and required growing support and encouragement to stay focused.

The educational system suffered from a lack of technology available to the students, whether access to devices or the internet (Rasmitadila et al., 2020).

In contrast, Pryor et al. (2020) examined elementary teachers' experiences in a rural community in the United States. Families needed tremendous support in the early days of distance learning, especially with technology. After several weeks of using technology, the need for support greatly diminished. Polish teachers experienced a similar situation in learning how to use technology. Kruszewska et al. (2020) found teachers relied on each other to improve their technical skills and communicate new concepts to their students. Over time parents and students needed less technical support.

Martinez and Broemmel (2021) explored the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic on leaders' and teachers' sense of self-efficacy. More than half of the participants believed their teaching performance was good during this period. Additionally, 15% were neutral, and 27% reported feeling their performance was inadequate. Turkish teachers indicated similar feelings, reporting both positive and negative emotions. Technological skills improved over time (Karakaya et al., 2021).

Parents' Experiences

Social distancing orders and the closures of businesses and schools altered how students and their parents interacted during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Staying at home meant parents assumed responsibility for their children's education while also working from home, which became the norm (Janssen et al., 2020). Struggles with technology, information being taught, and juggling work and supervising children led parents to report feeling overwhelmed (Midcalf & Boatwright, 2020). The climate of uncertainty added to the frustrations and concerns parents experienced. Worries regarding food, finances, and health increased stress and anxiety

already felt as parents attempted to manage new responsibilities (Sahithya et al., 2020).

Several studies reported a difference in parents' perception of the impact the COVID-19 global pandemic had on their families (Bhamani et al., 2020; Janssen et al., 2020). Factors contributing to families' reactions were the age of the children and already existing family dynamics. Parents described positive impacts such as being at home, which fostered a sense of positive feelings and a sense of being safe together. Helping with schoolwork promoted bonding with children and decreased children's anxiety (Bhamani et al., 2020). Janssen et al. (2020) refuted this finding and suggested being together for long periods was the cause of irritability and conflict.

Achterberg et al.'s (2021) longitudinal study explored the effects on the well-being of parents and children during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Participants indicated more free time was available and felt increased reliance on each other due to being confined at home. However, this study did not establish a correlation between increased stress and the pandemic (Achterberg et al., 2021).

Pakistani parents thought their children's discipline was impacted due to a lack of socialization and routine during the COVID-19 global pandemic (Bhamani et al., 2020). Guardians believed schools provided adequate information despite the negative impact and reported no issues with technical difficulties. Adults in India pandemic was the cause of many aspects of stress, including financial stressors, and stress impacted their familial relationships. There were reported feelings of moderate pressure during the lockdown phase, with some continuing to feel stressed as a parent after parents lifted the lockdown. A small percentage (8%) sought professional counseling for support (Sahithya et al., 2020). School-age students' families in Florida reported signs of being at risk for anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and

depression. The family's economic hardships increased the risk of developing mental health concerns (McKune et al., 2021).

Adolescents' Experiences

Adolescent students faced additional challenges from staying home with their families (Janssen et al., 2020). Developmentally adolescents are working toward becoming more independent from their families. Students also can demonstrate resiliency in stressful situations. An autoethnography study of three teenage girls revealed the perceptions of adolescent girls learning remotely. Initial feelings of uneasiness regarding the changes experienced resolved as acceptance of the situation led to a positive learning experience (Schaefer et al., 2020).

Special Needs Students' Experiences

Students with special needs were among the most challenging groups to engage with via remote learning. Students with special needs have difficulty sitting in front of a computer screen, completing worksheets, and sometimes cannot speak for themselves (Fournier et al., 2020). Teaching students with disabilities necessitates flexibility, risk-taking, and innovative thinking (Fournier et al., 2020). Leaders in Turkey attempted to create an app with activities and lessons for students with special needs. It was, however, met with mixed reviews. The communities' unhappiness with the app served as a reminder that distance learning does not benefit all students (Akbulut et al., 2020).

School Leaders' Experiences

The COVID-19 global pandemic was far more deadly than previous pandemics and occurred during a period where computers allowed for increased interconnectivity throughout the world (Tourish, 2020). Educational authorities needed to make quick decisions under the most intense scrutiny while supporting their communities (Argyropoulou et al., 2021). People in

power included all school personnel who had the authority to decide policies and procedures involving parents, teachers, and students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Vogel (2018) conducted a phenomenological exploration of how principals defined leadership responsibilities. Principals thought the primary responsibility was supervising teachers in curriculum and professional development (Vogel, 2018). Responsibility for the well-being of staff and community members was a severe concern for leaders during the pandemic. Many leaders attempted to incorporate checking in on the community members and displaying an increase of sensitivity to the needs of others as part of the daily routine (Argyropoulou et al., 2021). Professional contact between leaders suffered during this turbulent time. Numerous leaders reported feelings of immense pressure and lack of sleep (Harris & Jones, 2020).

The COVID-19 global pandemic necessitated school leaders to alter their focus. Principals needed to give their communities a sense of certainty, be a source of hope, and foster resilience (Kaminskiene et al., 2021). The main areas of focus were physical, informative, and productive measures. Physical measures included cleaning, informative tasks meant providing information about the pandemic and virus, and productive steps included using protective devices. The economic status of the school had the potential to impact the measures put into place. During the pandemic, principals did not see their staff or students; however, they felt responsible for ensuring effective communication. Kavrayici and Kesim (2021) categorized leaders into two tasks (i.e., in-school and out-of-school) when coding the themes of duty and responsibility. When in-person learning occurs, schools provide for lower-level needs such as food. During school closures, getting food to the students is much more difficult.

Lower-Level Needs

To address students' basic needs, school leaders focused on access to food. Students from

low-income households depend on schools for nutrition. Countries chose different methods to maintain meals for students. Ireland increased the distribution of meals to approximately 250,000 students (Kayalar, 2020). The United States government relaxed the reimbursement regulations for school districts for their school lunch programs (Jablonski et al., 2020). The U.S. government provided no guidelines for implementing this policy, rather, they left the responsibility to local districts (Jablonski et al., 2020).

Weiner et al. (2021) conducted a study to understand how principals functioned to create a feeling of psychological safety for the members of their school community. Lack of psychological safety was characterized by leadership lacking clarity and having little autonomy. Teachers demonstrated limited care and concern for other staff members, including resistance to change, difficulty making decisions, and limited collaboration (Weiner et al., 2021). In Lithuania, principals found support by relying on each other and teachers (Kaminskiene et al., 2021). Schools with a higher psychological safety feeling performed better (Weiner et al., 2021).

Concern for Students

Several authors have discussed school leaders' concerns about the well-being and academics of students (Harris & Jones, 2020; Kayalar, 2020). Leaders understood the need to pivot to remote learning but worried about the success of this type of engagement. The concern stemmed from students' lack of necessary technological devices and infrastructure to access classes. Principals in Texas expressed dismay because of these existing inequities. They described the inability to create a safe place for their students as an insurmountable challenge (Varela & Fedynich, 2020).

In Turkey, courses were broadcast on television to combat the lack of internet. Classes were posted during the week and on weekends to reach the greatest number of students (Varela

& Feydnich, 2020). Many Asian and Pacific countries also used television stations to broadcast courses (Kayalar, 2020). New York City broadcasted lessons for pre-kindergarten through second-grade students on a local channel (New York City Department of Education, 2020). Leaders in Belgium were not able to pivot to remote learning. Instead, teachers mailed lessons and assignments to families. Belgium's government opted not to assist school leaders in developing an online platform (Kayalar, 2020).

Changing Policies and Guidance

Ethical dilemmas and the implementation of ever-changing governmental guidance were the sources of some of the school leaders' pressures. Government authorities issued guidance to schools delineating when closures should occur, to teach remotely, and what steps were needed to reopen for in-person learning. Governments released frequent guidance documents for leaders to implement (Fotheringham et al., 2020). Implementing new policies and continual oversight of school operations was challenging for leaders (Fotheringham et al., 2020). The guidance included social distancing, wearing masks, required cleaning materials, and the number of children in the classroom.

In England, school leaders received at least three policy updates daily (Fotheringham et al., 2020). New York experienced many positive cases of the COVID-19 virus in early March 2020, making it the epicenter of the pandemic in the United States (Mani et al., 2020). The governor of New York issued executive orders for schools to follow every 2 weeks. Due to the uncertain spread of the disease, the governor would only make decisions about school in 2-week increments. This practice confused parents and created additional pressures for school leaders who did not know to what extent plans needed to be drafted (Fotheringham et al., 2020; New York State COVID-19 Updates, 2020). Fotheringham et al. (2020) studied how types of

pressures affected school leaders in England. This study's recommendations included how government agencies released policies should be summarized, easily accessible, communicated with stakeholders, and written so consumers can understand the procedure (Fotheringham et al., 2020).

Ethical Dilemma

A moral dilemma existed with hourly employees or aides and assistants in classrooms (Miller et al., 2020). Teaching assistants serve as direct care staff working under the supervision of the classroom teacher. Considered to be an asset to the school, these employees often perform one-to-one aide functions (Miller et al., 2020). An option private school leaders were able to consider was to apply for the Paycheck Protection Program, a federal loan program for small businesses and schools (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2020). The Paycheck Protection Program loan was helpful for nonprofit and religious schools because it provided a financial cushion during challenging times (Finchum-Mason et al., 2020). If the loan was received, it could be used to cover the cost of payroll to prevent layoffs (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2020).

Well-Being

Concern for the well-being of school community members is not a new concept. School leaders' and teachers' responsibilities and accountability to the public have increased (Diotaiuti et al., 2020). The COVID-19 global pandemic was associated with a significant level of uncertainty, contributing to rising stress and anxiety levels. Well-being is an essential concept because it leads to job satisfaction and increased productivity and can influence the well-being of others (Dabrowski, 2020).

Diotaiuti et al. (2020) studied the stress level of 419 principals in Italy. They found about

half of the participants suffered from moderate to elevated stress levels, with female principals showing higher levels than their male counterparts. Liu (2020) studied mindfulness to help school leaders manage stress levels during the COVID-19 global pandemic. A limitation of this study was the amount of time the leaders had to learn how to use the practice. Despite this limitation, some participants reported mindfulness helped them remain calm in difficult moments.

Issues in Higher Education

Higher education leaders faced some commonalities and differences with leaders in the public school system. Common themes were concerns about equity, availability of technology, resources, training, and the well-being of the school community (Marshall et al., 2020). India, like other countries, has rural areas making online learning and teaching extremely difficult (Mukhter & Chowdhary, 2020). Mukhter and Chowdhary used an experimental method to examine the issues and challenges students and teachers faced in India during the COVID-19 pandemic. Three dominant themes emerged including: (a) experiences of being online, (b) challenges of online learning, and (c) perceptions of online learning.

Faculty needed to adjust course work to enable a new learning platform to continue learning in colleges and universities. Exploring faculty experience in higher education during the early weeks of the COVID-19 global pandemic suggested that experiences varied depending on knowledge and comfort level using technology (Marshall et al., 2020). More than half of the participants had no online teaching experience. The needs of the faculty are similar to public school teachers. Faculty members looked for professional development to aid them in learning the skills needed to teach online effectively and how best to support their students (Johnson et al., 2020).

Counterarguments

A counterargument in the literature is how educators' struggles existed before the COVID-19 global pandemic. Previously existing issues garnered increased public attention during the crisis (Stone-Johnson & Weiner, 2020). Stone-Johnson and Weiner further discussed the concerns of principals. Principals complained about the lack of independence for decision-making, with superintendents questioning their decisions. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, 2020) surveyed principals to investigate thoughts on working conditions. Findings showed principals were considering leaving the field because of working conditions, a lack of decision-making authority, workload, and lack of support (NASSP, 2020).

Leaders and teachers faced challenges in the education of students before the COVID-19 global pandemic. Some of the challenges school leaders shared globally differed by culture. Some cultures revere the position of teachers and school leaders, never questioning their authority (Karakaya et al., 2021; Kayalar, 2020; Kong et al., 2021). Resistance to change by teachers, continuous changes in regulations, high absenteeism, noncooperation of parents, and lack of appropriate and adequate equipment are similar obstacles leaders faced globally during the pandemic (Hayes et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2020; Kavrayici & Kesim, 2021).

Another counterargument was the abrupt closures of schools and disruption of learning did not need to occur (Ahlstrom et al., 2020). Sweden took a completely different approach to the COVID-19 global pandemic for education (Ahlstrom et al., 2020). Officials in Sweden closed secondary schools and universities only. Secondary schools and universities reopened in June 2020, months before the rest of the world, while preschools and lower grades remained open for in-person learning without closing (Ahlstrom et al., 2020). Government officials in

Sweden trusted citizens to comply with guidelines to prevent the spread of the virus (Ahlstrom et al., 2020). Preschool teachers held classes despite their fears and concerns but did so because of the core belief it was the teacher's responsibility to serve the children (Pramling Samuelsson et al., 2020).

During influenza outbreaks, the closing of schools is an accepted practice to reduce social interactions and disease transmission (Viner et al., 2020). Closures of schools have both positive and negative effects during a crisis (Bhamani et al., 2020; Viner et al., 2020). When schools close, parents need to make alternative childcare arrangements (Bhamani et al., 2020). Frontline healthcare workers might have to stay home if other daycare arrangements are unavailable. Lack of childcare resulted in shortages of healthcare providers during this critical period (Sahithya et al., 2020). Viner et al. (2020) argued school closures effectively prevented the spread of disease based only on influenza outbreaks because children often drive the transmission. No evidence was found to substantiate closures would impact the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

Iceland took a similar position to Sweden. Colleges and universities pivoted to remote learning, whereas primary schools and preschools remained open with restrictions on social distancing and the number of students (Dyrfjord & Hreiorasdottir, 2020). By the beginning of May 2020, the government in Iceland reopened schools without limitation; in contrast, schools in the United States did not reopen until September 2020.

Swedish principals reported similar issues to the rest of the world's challenges of absenteeism, anxiety, worry about students who remained at home, and uncertainty (Ahlstrom et al., 2020). The level of trust made a difference in the adherence to the guidelines by the populace (Ahlstrom et al., 2020). Teachers in Iceland shared concerns about becoming ill, parents not following the rules, lack of enough information from authorities, and extreme stress (Dyrfjord &

Hreiorasdottir, 2020).

In Sweden, an elevated level of trust existed between the government and the people (Ahlstrom et al., 2020). Teachers, principals, families, and students also had elevated levels of trust. A foundation of faith and belief has proven schools can build a resilient culture during a crisis (Ahlstrom et al., 2020). Iceland boasts of a similarly elevated level of trust between the people and the civil authorities (Dyrfjord & Hreiorasdottir, 2020). Dyrfjord and Hreiorasdottir (2020) reported teachers felt there was inadequate information provided by government official despite the level of trust. Teachers worked hard to keep the school open and thought their efforts were not appreciated. Kaminskiene et al. (2020) explained principals in Italy had a different perspective. In Italy, principals did not always adhere to the Ministry of Education's guidelines and made independent school decisions.

Education inequality existed before the COVID-19 global pandemic; therefore, the pandemic highlighted and exacerbated existing problems (Harris & Jones, 2020). In the United States, when the initial closures occurred, 15% of households and 35% of low-income families with school-age children lacked high-speed internet (Harris & Jones, 2020). New York City reported that 300,000 students did not have a computer in their home, nor did some have internet access before implementing remote learning (Miller & Williams-Isom, 2021).

Chapter Summary

The public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic was a direct cause of increased burdens placed on school leaders, teachers, and families (Fotheringham et al., 2020). Additionally, the pandemic forced the education systems globally to pivot to a remote learning model affecting over 90% of the student population (UNESCO, 2020a). The situation's complexity called for school leaders to employ crisis decision-making techniques.

In response to the crisis, the educational system changed the mode of instruction to emergency remote learning to teach students. Facing numerous challenges, limited guidance, lack of resources, issues with the digital infrastructure, and time management issues, teachers and school leaders continued to provide educational opportunities (Mukhter & Chowdhary, 2020). Concerns for the safety and well-being of others and the impact of the pandemic on academic achievement remained a constant concern.

Students and families experienced similar obstacles. The pandemic highlighted the inequities of the educational system. Many students lack the necessary devices and connectivity to engage with teachers (Mukhter & Chowdhary, 2020). Studies have evidenced increased student stress and anxiety (Schaefer et al., 2020). The issues spanned all ages of students, including students attending universities.

School leaders also experienced difficulties directly connected to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Responsibility for solving personal challenges and staff challenges fell to the school leaders. Under the ideal circumstances, leaders are at risk for work-related health issues, such as stress, burnout, and workaholism (Diotaiuti et al., 2020). The history of school shootings, deadly natural disasters, and social turmoil increased school leaders' pressures before the pandemic, and the pandemic only exacerbated these pressures. (Urick et al., 2021).

An overview of the current body of knowledge about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on parents, teachers, and school leaders was provided in Chapter 2. A gap in the literature exists about the pandemic's impact on the well-being of teachers, parents, and school leaders. This current study added to the body of knowledge by exploring the effect of feelings of well-being resulting from the pandemic on school leaders, teachers, and parents.

The literature review revealed similarities between findings, no matter the location of the

study. Members of the academic community felt disconnected and looked toward leadership to rectify the challenges. Despite previous pandemics, no concrete plans existed for a pivot to emergency remote learning resulting in a crisis for the educational system (Doucet et al., 2020). School leaders deeply felt the challenges constituents faced during this time and lacked the necessary resources to assist (Kaminskiene et al., 2021). The design and methodology used in this investigation of the impact the COVID-19 global pandemic had on the well-being of teachers, parents, and school leaders are discussed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The coronavirus (COVID-19) virus created turmoil in educational systems globally (Anderson et al., 2021). Governments ordered schools to pivot from traditional in-person learning to a remote learning platform to prevent the spread of illness. The transition to remote education required educational systems to implement a quick method to continue student learning. At the same time, school leaders, teachers, and parents dealt with increasing stress levels due to the state of uncertainty the COVID-19 global pandemic had created (Collie, 2021).

The focus of this study was the lack of strategic planning by educational leaders during the shift to remote learning and its effect on the well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders. The disruption of daily living affected all educational community members (Argyropoulou et al., 2021). Parents worked from home, managing work and teaching responsibilities; teachers managed their students and their family's needs; and school leaders were responsible for the well-being of the entire school community (Kong et al., 2021). The purpose of the study was to explore teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders' experiences and feelings of well-being during the shift to remote learning due to the COVID-19 global pandemic in New York during the period of the New York Pause. The methodology chapter outlines the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, and the research procedures.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How did the shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic affect the feelings and experiences of the well-being of teachers,' parents, and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State?

Research Question 2: What actions taken by educational authorities during the period of New York Pause positively affect the feelings of well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline

school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State?

Research Question 3: What actions taken by educational authorities during the period of New York Pause negatively affect the feelings of well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State?

Research Methodology and Design

The qualitative inquiry focuses on how individuals interpret life experiences, feelings, beliefs, and opinions about a specific event (Kousky, 2016; Merriam, 2009; Percy et al., 2015). Basic qualitative inquiry is used to explore the meaning of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being investigated (Merriam, 2009). The use of a basic qualitative design aligned with research questions was conducted to answer how participants felt their well-being was affected by the transition to remote learning during the New York Pause.

Rationale

Qualitative research uses direct methods to determine how people feel and think about an event (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Given, 2008). Historically, educational research practices have not explored the feelings and perceptions teachers, parents, and school leaders have experienced during a specific time (Quay, 2016). Qualitative research is essential in educational studies as a method to examine how people feel about a particular event (Quay, 2016). A basic qualitative design was selected over a quantitative model because the study aimed to investigate how the COVID-19 global pandemic affected the feelings of well-being experienced by participants.

Quantitative research is generally used to examine variables' relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). One purpose of qualitative research is to assist the reader in seeing an experience through the participants' eyes (Huttunen & Kakkori, 2020). Events cannot be examined in isolation. Using a basic qualitative design allows for exploring an event through the

perceptions of those who experienced the occurrence. Qualitative research offers an in-depth exploration of events, and the meaning participants assign to the event (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). A basic qualitative design aligned with the purpose of the study and was the appropriate selection.

Design

The study's design included semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to collect data. The use of questionnaires to collect additional data was considered. However, due to time constraints, it was not possible. In qualitative research, the main instrument for data collection is the person conducting the investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Questions for the semi-structured interview were developed and tested with subject matter experts (see Appendix A). Five subject matter experts reviewed and provided feedback on the instrument (see Appendices B and C). Additionally, field notes were taken during the interviews.

Role of the Researcher

Qualitative research explores and understands human experiences, with the researcher serving as the instrument to conduct the exploration (Merriam, 2009). Researchers gather data primarily by conducting interviews and observing participants discussing their feelings and perceptions about their experiences with a specific situation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Participants in the study were not selected from my place of employment. Choosing employees or parents from the school where I worked would be unethical due to the nature of our professional relationship. I did not offer any incentives to participants. Before beginning the interviews, I set aside personal beliefs and experiences to view the experience from the participant's perspective. Researchers may have feelings about the topic under investigation and must avoid influencing how participants answer questions. Epoche, the refraining from judgment

or bracketing, is an essential element of thematic analysis to reduce researcher bias (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moerer-Urhdal & Creswell, 2004).

Participants were given information about the study and were provided an informed consent document (see Appendix D). They had the right to withdraw at any time. All interview transcriptions were kept in a secured, password-protected location. Personal information was protected, ensuring readers could not identify participants or the schools they relate to, as such information may be perceived as a risk.

Research Procedures

The research procedures are discussed in the following section. An overview of the target population, sample size, recruitment procedures, participation, instrumentation, and data collection are provided. A detailed explanation of the procedures allows for replication of the study.

Population and Sample Selection

The target population was teachers, frontline school leaders, and parents who lived through the shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic in the Hudson Valley of New York State. Frontline school leaders were defined as leaders who are not working for an educational overseeing agency (e.g., the Department of Education). Delimiters were set for each group of participants. Teachers and school leaders needed to have been in their positions at least 2 years before the shift to remote learning. Parents needed to have children attending in-person schooling for at least 2 years within the same district or private school before the change. These selection criteria helped ensure comparisons of educational procedures before and after the pandemic was accurate.

School district administrators and executive directors were contacted via email (see

Appendix E) to obtain permission to recruit participants from their schools. Potential participants were asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix F) to determine eligibility for the study. Social media sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn were used for recruitment. Permission was sought from administrators of pages set up for different groups catering to parents and teachers to post on their pages (see Appendices G and H). The posting included a brief discussion of the purpose and a link to the demographic information questionnaire. Permission was obtained from two Facebook groups: (a) Pearl River Parents at Play and (b) Nanuet Parents Share). Posts were also made on my personal Facebook and LinkedIn pages.

Purposive sampling was the primary sampling method. This sampling method may be used to choose a group of people who experienced the phenomena under investigation. However, only two participants were recruited using this approach. As a result, emergent and snowball samplings were also used, resulting in 16 additional participants. Emergent sampling occurs when a participant offers another source of possible people interested in taking part in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Snowball sampling happens when a participant identifies another interested person(s) for participation (Patton, 2002).

To recruit participants, permission from several school districts was obtained (see Appendix I). After site approvals were received, individual invitation letters to participate (see Appendix J) were sent out. These letters included a link to the demographic information form. Recruitment on social media was accomplished by posting on community pages. No recruitment began until IRB approval was received (see Appendix K). Respondents' demographic documents were reviewed, and those who met the eligibility criteria were grouped by category. A total of 18 participants completed the interview process, including six participants from each classification: (a) teachers, (b) parents, and (c) frontline school leaders.

Once participants were selected, an informed consent packet was sent via email. Each participant was contacted via telephone to review the consent form and answer any questions. Signed consent forms were returned via email or fax. Interviews were not scheduled until consent forms had been returned. The interview was scheduled after receipt of the signed informed consent document. No incentives were given for participation in the study.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants to meet ethical standards. The consent included the research procedure, purpose, risks, benefits, the research questions, and the right to withdraw at any time (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). The informed consent documents were kept in a locked box in my office.

Instrumentation

Semi-structured interviews and observations were the instruments used in the study. Interview questions were written because no established tool existed for this type of interview. Basic qualitative studies rely on information collected from semi-structured interviews with participants. Questions focused on surfacing people's feelings and beliefs about an experience or event (Percy et al., 2015).

The interview protocol consisted of eight semi-structured, open-ended questions. Using semi-structured questions kept the participant focused on sharing information relevant to the focus of the research (Peoples, 2021). A field test of the interview questions affirmed the content validity of the interview questions (Zamanzadeh et al., 2015).

Five subject matter experts were recruited who met the criteria to participate in the study (The panel consisted of two teachers, one parent, and two frontline school leaders. Interview questions were updated based on the panel's feedback. Subject Matter Experts 1 and 2 made

suggestions that were incorporated into the final interview protocol. Subject Matter Expert 2 suggested adding a Likert scale survey, but a survey was not included due to time constraints.

Interview protocol was sent to participants via email days before the meeting to allow them time to reflect and think about their experiences. The next step was to conduct the interviews via Zoom and record them for transcription. Permission for recording was included in the informed consent document. Transcriptions were completed using a computer transcription program called MAXQDA. The use of MAXQDA allowed for systemic analysis, which improved the study's validity. Using the computer software provided standardized analysis for each interview and transparency of the process. (Radiker & Kuckartz, 2020).

Each interview lasted approximately 60 - 90 minutes. After transcription, a copy was sent to the participant to ensure the correct information was transcribed. Member checking is used in qualitative research to increase the study's credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Interviewees were asked to review the transcribed data to correct any errors and add further comments they would like to share.

Setting the tone for the interview and putting the participant at ease remained an essential first step (Peoples, 2021). Creating a comfortable setting allowed the interviewee to relax and focus on answering the questions. Putting the participant at ease in the early moments of the interview improves the quality of their responses (Kvale, 2011). To set the tone, interviews began with allowing the participant to ask questions and then a restatement of the purpose of the study. Interview questions were then presented. Once the interviews were concluded, the participants were asked if there were any questions or if there was anything else they wanted to share. The participants were then thanked for their assistance and reminded they would be contacted to review the transcription.

Data Collection

Qualitative research offers the academic community a method to gain insight into how community members experienced these changes and assist future decision-making. The researcher is the tool to gather the data (Neubauer et al., 2019). Data were collected through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. Interviews are one of the most common methods to collect data in a basic qualitative study. Qualitative research provides the chance to gain knowledge by understanding people's experiences during a specific time.

Data Preparation

Before analysis began, data needed to be organized. Interview transcriptions were discussed in a follow-up interview or via email with the participants to ensure accuracy. This member checking allowed the participants to review their responses to confirm accurate representation of their views and clarify or add to any of their answers (Busetto et al., 2020). The data were grouped by collection method including: (a) interviews, (b) field notes, and (c) observations. Excel spreadsheets were organized for the coding of the data. A legend was formatted for entering identified themes.

After the data were organized, Epoche was completed. Epoche sets aside any predetermined conclusions. To accomplish this, Moustakas (1994) recommended the researcher describe personal experiences or feelings about the phenomena in writing. After the Epoche process, data were read and reviewed to gain insights. Before breaking the data into thematic units, the data were read several times, and the recorded interviews were watched.

Data Analysis

The data analysis model used focused on inductive thematic analysis. Inductive analysis uses data to create themes. No predetermined themes were used, and my personal beliefs were

set aside during the analysis (Percy et al., 2015). Assigning a theme or code to each data segment helps explain its meaning (Schreir, 2014). Data analysis began with creating a list of statements where participants expressed the effect the COVID-19 global pandemic had on their sense of well-being. All data were thought to possess equal information. Overlapping and repetitive statements were eliminated as part of the process. This process systematically necessitates examining all data (Schreir, 2014).

Steps were taken to determine if the highlighted segments answered the research questions. Segments not connected to the research questions were set aside, and the remaining elements coded. The code names emerged from the content in the data. Step 3 involved reducing the codes by combining them into similar clusters. Step 4 centered on the development of themes. Themes were combined with common clusters. Direct quotes from participants served as support for themes (Percy et al., 2015). Codes were entered into spreadsheets for cluster development, with each code assigned a color. The computer program MAXQDA was used to identify codes, clusters, and themes. Using a computer program increased validity and reliability. The program builds on the transparency of the process and efficiently reorganizes codes (Gibbs, 2014).

After organizing codes, the next step involved composing a written narrative explaining participants' perceptions of their lived experiences. Data analysis was completed to allow for the emergence of themes by linking ideas together to answer the research questions. The final step involved presenting the themes visually in figures and tables (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are essential components of a research study. When reliability and validity are present, they contribute to the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Validity

and reliability are critical in a qualitative study because researcher bias can affect the data analysis (Brink, 1993). The essence of qualitative research is vastly different from quantitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believed reliability and validity were not appropriate tools to measure the rigor of qualitative work. Lincoln and Gubba offered credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability instead as the measurements to be used.

Although it differs from quantitative studies, qualitative research uses rigorous methods to ensure the study's trustworthiness. Generalizing qualitative analysis may be challenging due to studying a specific event and its effect on the participants. Triangulation is used to gather data from different sources to explore if similarities may be found and to increase the reliability and validity of a study. Data were collected from three participants: a) teachers, b) parents, and c) frontline school leaders.

Credibility

Credibility is a measure of the accuracy and trustworthiness of the research findings and a way to measure trusting the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). When the intent and design of the study is clear to the reader and participant, an agreement exists on the themes developed, and the credibility of the reported results increases (Given, 2008).

Several techniques increase credibility. Sufficient time must be allocated for interviews and member checks to verify data and perceptions (Given, 2008). Triangulation of the data is another method. Triangulation occurs when different data sources produce similar themes and patterns (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To triangulate the data, each group's findings were compared on a spreadsheet. Emergent themes were looked at for similarities and common phrases. All similarities and differences were noted and included in the results reported.

Transferability

Transferability means the study provided sufficient details to be replicated in another population, resulting in similar findings (Given,2008). To ensure transferability, participants are carefully selected to ensure they are members of the population being studied (Given, 2008). Eligibility for participation in the study required participants to meet predetermined criteria. These criteria were established to eliminate subjects who were not part of the educational community during the COVID-19 global pandemic. An additional requirement was for participants to have been part of the community for at least 2 years prior so there could be a comparison of experiences. Transferability of the study is also limited. Recruitment primarily occurred using a personal social media account, as well as the use of snowball sampling. Snowball sampling further limits replication as personal recommendations from participants cannot be duplicated.

Dependability

Dependability implies the research results can be connected to the study's data and findings (Given, 2008). In qualitative research, changes in the study's design may occur during the investigative portion. Researchers use transparency and report any variation from the original design to demonstrate dependability (Given, 2008). To increase dependability, a log (inquiry audit) of the entire process was maintained (Given, 2008). Additionally, the use of three groups allowed for a comparison of the data from different sources. Using multiple sources increases the dependability of the findings (Jentoft & Olsen, 2019).

Confirmability

Confirmability measures the truthfulness of the study's findings, including accurately describing the participants' perceptions, avoiding bias during thematic analysis, and aligning the

results with the study's purpose (Given, 2008). Participants were asked to review the transcripts and make any corrections or additions to ensure the accuracy of the data. Another way to increase confirmability is when personal feelings and prejudices are set aside during the analysis phase (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A reflexive diary was kept during the research process. The purpose of keeping a diary is to maintain a personal accounting of the decision-making process, thoughts, and feelings during the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1982).

Ethical Considerations

This qualitative study addressed educational authorities' lack of strategic planning during the shift to remote learning and its effect on the well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders. Qualitative research explores and investigates how people feel and experience a specific event (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Participants were recruited from New York. No participants from my place of employment were included to prevent a conflict of interest. Because the study consisted of human subjects, all principles of the Belmont Report were included in the study's design. Recruitment of participants began once the IRB approval from the American College of Education (ACE) was received. Interviews were only scheduled once the informed consent document was completed.

The Belmont Report set forth three principles: respect, beneficence, and justice. These principles were established to protect the right of human subjects. Abuse of human subjects was noted, especially after World War II (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).

Respect

Respect for persons involves the right of an individual to choose to participate or not, and

special protections for vulnerable populations (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Informed consent was provided to all participants to ensure adherence to this principle. Additionally, all questions from participants were answered before the beginning of the interview, and all participants had the right to withdraw at any time.

Beneficence

The risk versus benefit of participation was also assessed. All identifying information was kept confidential to protect the identity of the participants. The results do not include the names of participants or their places of employment. Data were stored in a locked file and password-protected computer and will be destroyed 3 years after the study is completed. Papers will be shredded, and the data permanently erased from the computer's hard drive.

Justice

Participants were not solicited or included from my place of employment because this presented a conflict of interest. Employees may also feel the supervisor has a sense of power over their future. No incentives were offered to participate in the study. Participants could withdraw from participating at any time without fear of reprisals.

Chapter Summary

The COVID-19 global pandemic impacted educational systems globally (Anderson et al., 2021). The study was conducted to explore the impact COVID-19 had on teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders' perception of their well-being. A qualitative design was selected as an appropriate methodology because the investigation described how people experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The role of the researcher and research procedures included semi-structured interviews and field notes. Ethical considerations ensured the rights of

participants were strictly upheld. Recruitment of participants only occurred after the IRB from the ACE was approved. Interviews for data collection were scheduled after the informed consent form was signed. The study included built-in strategies to ensure credibility, dependability, transferability, and trustworthiness. Research findings and data analysis results are discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Research Findings and Data Analysis Results

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the status of COVID-19 as a global pandemic leading to school closures worldwide. Students' daily activities abruptly changed, all in-person learning ceased, and student learning pivoted to a virtual platform (Vivechana & Bimala, 2021). Globally, teachers needed to adapt and develop a method to teach using technology quickly. Although some teachers were experienced in using technology, many lacked the skills necessary to effectively use this method (Trust & Whalen, 2020). Parents' roles changed as they became the in-person teacher, and the home became the focal point for all activities (Kong et al., 2021).

Educational authorities' lack of strategic planning during the shift to remote learning affected the well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders. Establishing a well-formatted online class requires planning and confirmation that students have the tools for proper engagement in learning (Rajamma & Sciandra, 2020). The purpose of this study was to explore teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders' experiences and feelings of well-being during the shift to remote learning due to the COVID-19 global pandemic in New York during the period of the New York Pause. The research questions that guided the study were:

Research Question 1: How did the shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic affect the feelings and experiences of the well-being of teachers,' parents, and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State?

Research Question 2: What actions taken by educational authorities during the period of New York Pause positively affected the feelings of well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State?

Research Question 3: What actions taken by educational authorities during the period of

New York Pause negatively affected the feelings of well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State?

This basic qualitative study was conducted to explore the lived experiences of parents, teachers, and frontline school leaders during the early days of the COVID-19 global pandemic, which is referred to as the period of the New York Pause. The focus was to investigate the effect shifting to remote learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic had on participants' sense of well-being. Included in this chapter are an overview of the data collection methods and data analysis methods, results and identification of themes, and a discussion of reliability and validity. A chapter summary completes the research findings and data analysis chapter.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted from the end of November 2021-January 2022. The target population was teachers, frontline school leaders, and parents who lived through the shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic in New York. Recruitment was conducted using social media sites (see Appendix C) and educational settings. Interested participants were asked to complete a Google Form (see Appendix F). The form collected demographic information and allowed screening of the participants to ensure they met the required parameters.

Purposive sampling was initially attempted, but an insufficient number of participants responded. Snowball and emergent sampling were then used and resulted in 18 participants with six members of each group (i.e., parents, teachers, and frontline leaders). Participants who met the criteria received an email describing the study, the researcher's contact information, and the informed consent form. If participants had any questions or concerns, answers were provided via email or a telephone call before completing the informed consent document. One participant

dropped out because they did not wish to appear on camera during the Zoom call. Participants were sent the informed consent document via email, and a telephone conversation was scheduled to discuss its content. Once it was signed and returned via email, the interview was scheduled. The 18 participants sent back their informed consent forms via email. Interview questions were emailed to participants 4 days before the interview.

The need for social distancing during the COVID-19 global pandemic required using an online platform to conduct interviews. Zoom was selected due to its ease of use and security features. This virtual platform allowed both a visual and audio component. Oliffe et al., (2021) studied the benefits and challenges of using Zoom as a platform for qualitative studies. Benefits included reduced cost for recruitment because no travel is needed, the ability to work from home, expansion of recruitment possibilities, and the comfort for participants of being in their own space. The challenges identified included how a different setting might influence the responses, technical issues, and missing some nonverbal body language signals that can be observed when face-to-face.

Participants

Participants were sought from the Hudson Valley in New York. To qualify for participation, parents needed to have children at in-person learning for a minimum of 2 years before the pivot to remote learning in the same school district. Teachers and frontline school leaders needed to have been in the same position for the same 2-year period.

Interview and interview protocol was developed and reviewed by subject matter experts The interviews began with an explanation of the purpose of the study and a review of the informed consent. Participants were told why the topic was chosen, its importance, and some personal information to help put them at ease and set the interview's tone. Before the formal

interview began, participants were reminded they were being recorded and asked if they had any questions.

Formal recording and transcribing began with participants sharing information about themselves. Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes. Participants were thanked again at the conclusion and reminded they would receive a transcript for member checking. All parent participants reviewed the document and made no changes. One teacher participant completed the process and made no changes. After completing their review, two school leaders responded, and one made revisions. Revisions were made in the transcript before the beginning of the data analysis. No further follow-up was needed. There was no deviation from the original data plan.

Unusual Events Encountered During Data Collection

An unusual event encountered was frontline school leaders' difficulty answering interview questions. During the interview, nonverbal signals included a reluctance to share their true feelings. These signals were especially noted in the discussion of any actions taken by educational authorities that may have negatively affected their sense of well-being. Further discussion of the issue is explored in the data collection and limitations of the study. Demographics provide some of the background information about the participants. This information may contribute to the perceptions of the participants.

Participant Demographics

All participants participated in the same educational setting (e.g., school or district) for at least 2 years in New York and New York Pause. Parents needed to have a minimum of one child (see Figure 4). The number of children ranged from one to four. The youngest child during the investigative period was 4 years old and had been attending her program full time since she was 2 years old (see Figure 5). Years of experience teaching ranged from 5 to 10 years

Demographic information was collected from participants. Participants had a different number of children, of various ages, and grades. Two participants had only one child, two participants had three children, and one participant had four children. The participant who had four children had one set of twins. Presence of twins allowed the participant to compare experiences within the same grade with different teachers. Having two students in the same grade with different teachers allowed this participant to compare the differences between teachers within the same district. Most participants had children in the elementary grades, with only one eighth-grade student.

The teachers' group was made up of teachers who had 5-24 years of experience. Two teachers had 20 years of experience, one had 5 years, one had 10 years, one had 17 years, and one had 24 years. Titles of frontline school leaders varied between districts. The leader's responsibilities with the title CSE/CPSE Chair Plus included teacher observations in nine elementary schools, professional development for the district, and working on an administrative team answering directing to the assistant superintendent. Duties of the director of special education included all the special education services in a high school and overseeing a self-contained living skills program.

Data Analysis and Results

An inductive thematic analysis was used for data analysis. The inductive thematic analysis method allows the data to guide the development of codes and themes, rather than the researcher choosing preset ones (Percy et al., 2015). The steps consisted of preparing the data and identifying the segments answering the research questions. In preparing the data for analysis, the first step was to set aside personal beliefs to ensure only the feelings and experiences of the participant were considered (Husserl, 1960). The data preparation included uploading the Zoom

recordings into MAXQDA, a computer software program for transcription and analysis. Data recordings and transcriptions were kept in a computer file folder on a password-protected desktop computer and in the password-protected MAXQDA computer software. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and sent to the participants for member checking to ensure accuracy.

Data analysis began with creating a list of relevant statements about the effect the COVID-19 global pandemic had on participants' sense of well-being. Transcripts and videos were reviewed multiple times to increase familiarity with the data. In preparation for further analysis, transcripts were separated into MAXQDA parents, teachers, and frontline school leader groups. Participants' words are the critical elements of the data requiring in-depth exploration (Finlay, 2012). All segments considered to have meaning were identified during this step (see Table 1).

Table 1

Segments Identified as having Meaning

Research question	Meaningful segments
Research question 1: How did the shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic affect the feelings and experiences of the well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders located in the Hudson Valley of New York State?	We didn't know what was going on. I was getting chest palpations just from the uneasiness of not knowing the future. I was afraid of running out of food. I felt like a failure as a parent. I was worried about everybody and everything.

Research question	Meaningful segments
Research question 2: What actions taken by educational authorities during the period of New York Pause positively affected the feelings of well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State?	I felt very supported at work, especially with the professional development to help me keep up with the technology. The school had great communication. They kept us in the loop of all decisions. All the feedback I got from parents was positive. They appreciated what we were trying to do and realized we were struggling too which was very nice. The principal reached out to check on us.
Research question 3: What actions taken by educational authorities during the period of New York Pause negatively affected the feelings of well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State?	A lack of communication with the school led to my anxiety about the work my son had to do. I think it was very frustrating that State Ed (NYSED) was so neutral for a long period and did provide guidance. We were nervous about not doing the right thing because everything kept changing. Some administration didn't understand what things were like in the buildings.

The next step after identifying segments was comparing them to see if they answered the research questions (See Table 2). Segments not answering the research questions were set aside. During this phase, the codes were developed and finalized in Step 3. Codes were reviewed numerous times to increase the study's validity, and the computer program MAXQDA was used to analyze the data (Finlay, 2012). In Step 4, the research questions were answered in a written narrative explaining the major themes found.

Table 2

Data Analysis Codes Leading to Theme Development

Participant quote	Words/phrases	Codes collapsed	Final theme
For me, as a mother, there was always a sense of fear that came over me the whole time.	Uncertainty was scary Unknown Unexpected Unprecedented	Scared	Fear
I just can't catch up, catch my breath.	Never encountered Unknown Heart pounding	Unknown Uncertainty Overwhelmed Can't breathe	Anxiety
It was unrelenting, days and weeks blended. It was a different & difficult time. I think everyone was just so stunned.	Unrelenting Isolation Hard Difficult Overwhelming	Unrelenting Difficult Stunned Isolation	Other emotions
The school tried to do a lot of virtual events. The principal emailed us and met with the kids weekly on zoom for an assembly.	Email Zoom Telephone calls	Communication was key	Communication
I felt staff was stressed with not knowing how to do telehealth affected us all because we were trying to help them, and we were working 12-hour days. So, it affected us negatively. We were just exhausted trying to figure it out as we went along.	Not knowing how to do it The teacher got thrown to the wolves Everyone did the best they could	No experience Unprecedented Never happened before	Lack of time to prepare and plan
The teacher never spoke to my kids once. She didn't feel comfortable on camera.	Never saw teacher I didn't know what was happening	No communication	Lack of Communication

The central theme of the research questions focused on perceptions of well-being. After participants shared personal information, they were asked to describe their perception of positive well-being. Most of the participants' beliefs contained parts of this definition. Table 3 provides examples from the participants' descriptions. The final themes emerging from the data analysis were fear, anxiety, other emotions, communication, lack of time to prepare and plan, and lack of communication.

Table 3

Participants' Definition of Positive Well-Being Parents	Teachers	Frontline school leaders
It's a little bit of everything	Understanding who you are as a person, a sense of clarity and calmness	State of positive good health, social-emotional, and being able to cope with stressors
I think of a calm, happy low, anxious state	Overall contentment	Everyone is okay, consistency
It is your whole well-being; mental, physical, and spiritual	Spiritual, mental, and physical wellness	Putting family first, being happy
A sense of balance	Balance, a place of calm	Feeling of contentment
Feeling safe, secure physically and mentally	Physically and mentally, being able to function	Overall good physical and emotional health
Collaborative in all three social-emotional categories	Balanced feelings	Spiritual, physical, and mental health

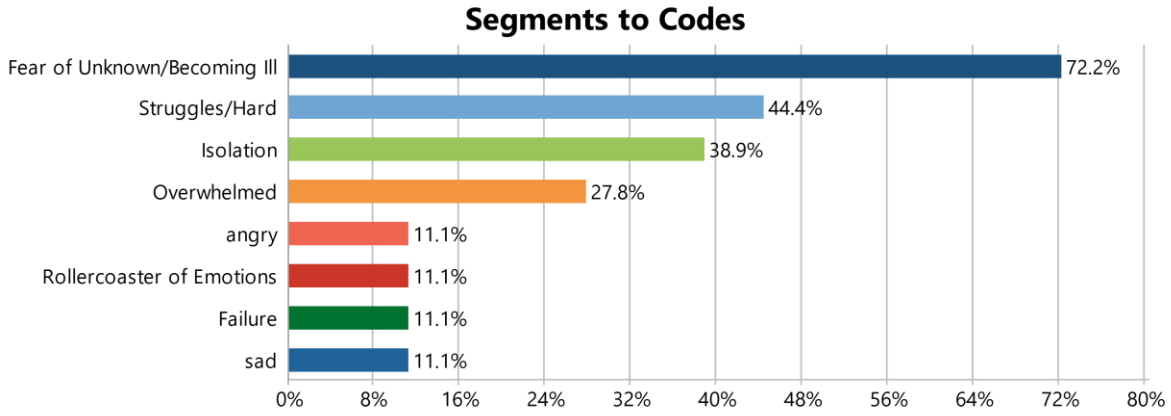
Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was: How did the shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic affect the feelings and experiences of the well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders located in the Hudson Valley of New York State? This research study was conducted to explore the effect the shift to remote learning had on the participants feeling of

well-being during the New York Pause. Words become the source of the data researchers analyze, with the researcher serving as the tool (Mayer, 2015). Figure 4 depicts the emergent segments derived from data related to how participants felt the time of New York Pause affected their sense of well-being.

Figure 4

Frequency of Segments Leading to Codes



Note. The segments identified were combined with these codes and further collapsed into three themes. All participant interviews were included in this analysis.

Fear of the unknown and becoming ill was the most dominant segment identified by the participants. Struggling with the new mandates and lockdown issues were often coupled with the feelings of being hard was the second most common. A third was feelings of isolation. Emergent segments were first coded and then further collapsed into three themes: fear, anxiety, and other emotions (see Figure 5). Participants identified many different emotions. The thematic analysis

led to the reduction of codes to three major themes. Fear and anxiety were the two most dominant emotions, with the others being grouped.

Figure 5

Collapsed Themes

Note. Other emotions include a sense of failure, anger, sadness, overwhelm, isolation, and hardships.

Fear

A sense of fear was the most prominent emotion identified by all 18 participants. Fear included many facets; some did not know if food and supplies would be available, what if someone caught the disease, and what would happen next. Leader 6 explained:

> I was really nervous, scared of running out of food, and what was going to happen next. I was getting chest palpations just from the uneasiness of not knowing the future and being scared for the future and myself and what would happen to me if I caught it. What would happen to my children and husband?

Anxiety

Anxious feelings were the second most prominent emotion identified by all participants. Feelings of anxiety may occur during crises because of the possible dangers accompanying the situation. Parent 6 stated:

> I think I immediately sank into an anxious state; I was very, very worried about first, and foremost, everyone's health. Like, no one wanted to get this thing. I definitely became anxious and panicked about how we were going to do this and work and sustain our household.

Other Emotions

Participants identified many other emotions felt during the New York Pause. Examples included feeling isolated, hardships, struggles, being overwhelmed, sad, angry, and being on a rollercoaster of emotions. Parent 4 said, "I feel like my emotions were a rollercoaster from March through June. It was really crazy. The 2-week thing really toyed with how I felt; it just lasted 2 weeks, then 2 more, and it just kept going." Teacher 6 explained isolation by saying, "You know I really miss seeing my friends, I miss going to work, I miss going to school, and being trapped with the same people all of the time is not for my self-esteem." Parent 1 shared some of her feelings of the time by saying, "It was a lot of days to fill for the kids, and it was unrelenting because the weekdays blended into the weekends, which blended into the next week, and there was no break in sight, it was just a struggle."

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was: What actions were taken by educational authorities during the period of New York Pause that positively affected the feelings of well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State? The second research

question focused on the actions educational authorities took that positively impacted the participants' feelings of well-being. All participants agreed effective communication promoted positive feelings of well-being Parent 4 stated, "Two of the teachers were incredible; they were easy to reach and gave a personalized touch to her lesson to engage the students." Teacher 2 appreciated the feedback from parents, noting, "All the feedback from parents I got was positive. It was really appreciated because they realized we were struggling too, and it was very nice." All participants agreed that communication positively impacted their feelings of well-being. When providing examples of positive impact, statements began with descriptions of communication. Communication did not have to be verbal to have a positive effect; emails, texts, and letters were all mentioned. Parents also mentioned nonverbal communication, such as teachers' smiling at the student on Zoom, and principals popping into zoom sessions wave hello.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 was: What actions taken by educational authorities during the period of New York Pause negatively affected the feelings of well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State? The intent of this question was to ask participants to identify actions taken by the educational authorities that negatively affected their well-being. This question posed significant difficulties for the participants to answer. School Leader 3 stated, "I don't blame anyone, we didn't have clear guidelines on how to move forward, and that is just the state's way." Teacher 3 compared the situation to being "on a hamster wheel." Stuff would quickly change, and stress would increase until we could figure it out. That was no one's fault, everyone was supportive, but we all felt we had a bunch of question marks over our heads. The dominant themes were lack of communication (see Figure 6) and time to prepare and plan. Parent 1 shared:

> The spring of 2020 was a total disaster for everybody. Still, I honestly don't envy the educators at all because this was completely thrust upon them with no plan or preparation, no anything. So, everybody was trying the best they could, and I was trying to be as gracious as I could be under the circumstances.

Lack of Communication

The COVID-19 global pandemic was a source of tremendous hardships for the educational community (Niemczyk et al., 2021). Most participants reported some form of lack of communication was a source of negative feelings. Parent 6 recalled, "My son, who was in eighth grade at the time, never saw or spoke with his teacher at all. Teachers in his school were not required to teach live remotely. His teacher simply posted readings and assignments to complete." Parent 3 recalled being concerned, saying:

> Because my daughter does struggle, and her extra help was not as regular as it should have been. I expressed some concerns to her teacher, but there wasn't much help or specific communication to help me. I only received generic communications.

Lack of Time to Prepare and Plan

The lack of time to prepare and plan to shift to remote learning has been recognized as a global problem. Teacher 5 concurred, saying:

> It was very stressful to try to learn new ways of doing things constantly and that things were constantly changing. There was just so much information coming at us all the time, and then we had parents and others who felt we weren't doing the right thing. It was a constant state of stress and tension.

School Leader 5 expressed similar thoughts noting:

> Any day as a school leader, you make some people happy and others not. But during a

pandemic, it is so much more highlighted, and the effect of social media takes it to another level. There are many on social media disagreeing with you, and they have many unrealistic expectations, and unfortunately, you tend only to see and hear the negatives.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity serve as the quality assurance measures for quantitative studies. Qualitative studies assess the quality or rigor in terms of trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) measured trustworthiness based on credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity. In the study's design, the strategies used were delineated. It is not always possible to use all the strategies, because some may not be appropriate given the situation (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The purpose of the basic qualitative study was to explore teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders 'experiences and feelings of well-being during the shift to remote learning due to the COVID-19 global pandemic in New York during the period of the New York Pause.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the participants' experiences and feelings of well-being during the New York Pause. The interviews lasted at least 60 minutes to establish sufficient engagement with the participant and obtain thick descriptions of their experiences to increase credibility. At the beginning of each interview, the purpose of the study was reviewed with the participants. The discussion continued until they understood the study's purpose and answered all the participants' questions. Member checking was used to confirm the accuracy of the data collected. Participants were asked to review the transcriptions and make corrections or additions. Corrections and additions were added based on participant feedback.

Data triangulation was achieved by comparing the participant responses from the three groups to determine if overlapping themes emerged. Teachers, parents, and frontline school

leaders answered the same questions from their perspectives, and personal lived experiences. A commonality of themes emerged, adding to the validity of the study. Data saturation occurs when no new ideas are revealed during the data collection (Charmaz, 2006). To ensure saturation had been reached, after the fifth member of each group was interviewed, one additional member was added to see if new information emerged. No new ideas were revealed during this interview, so data collection was completed.

Transferability refers to the ability of the study to be replicated in another population resulting in similar findings. Sufficient details were provided in the methodology section; however, transferability is limited due to recruitment procedures. Recruitment was accomplished via personal social media postings and snowball sampling. A narrowly defined group of teachers and school leaders were recruited from a small geographical area of New York.

Dependability and confirmability contribute to the trustworthiness and truthfulness of the study. Additionally, dependability is acknowledged in qualitative research; circumstances could change the original design (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Any deviation from the original design would be discussed when analyzing the data to ensure dependability. There was no deviation from the original plan for the study. Confirmability in a study verifies the accuracy of the information collected in the data. To increase confirmability member checking and setting aside the personal beliefs and feelings of the researcher were used.

Researcher bias is also a critical element potentially affecting the trustworthiness of a study. A researcher often selects a topic of interest resulting in personal opinions and viewpoints (Given, 2008). To avoid issues of researcher bias, both during interviews and data analysis, reflexivity was used. Reflexivity is acknowledging one’s bias and feelings on a specific topic (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). A reflexive diary was kept during the process.

Chapter Summary

The preceding chapter discussed the results of the basic qualitative study investigating how the lived experience of the time of the New York Pause affected the feelings of the well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews of 18 participants, including six from each group (i.e., parents, teachers, and frontline leaders). The analysis identified the themes of fear, anxiety, and other emotions as impacting participants' feelings to answer Research Question 1. Good lines of communication with schools and leaders were identified as having a positive impact on feelings of well-being, which answered Research Question 2. In contrast, the answer to Research Question 3 was the lack of communication and time to prepare and plan were seen as negatives. Chapter 5 includes further analysis of the participants' perceptions of how the impact of the New York Pause impacted their feelings of well-being. The findings are also analyzed in the context of the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 2, concluding with recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

COVID-19 pandemic has been described as an unprecedented event affecting all aspects of daily living (Poncela et al., 2021, Sahithya et al., 2020, Vivechana & Bimala, 2021). The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore teachers,' parents,' and frontline school leaders' experiences and feelings of well-being during the shift to remote learning due to the COVID-19 global pandemic in New York State during the period of New York Pause. The problem was lack of strategic planning by educational authorities during the shift to remote learning affected the well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders. Eighteen participants from three groups engaged in a semi-structured interview. Questions focused on exploring the participants' perception of how the pivot to remote learning affected their sense of well-being.

Thematic analysis of the interviews generated codes and themes. The themes were collapsed, leading to the key findings for each research question. Six themes were identified including: (a) fear, (b) anxiety, (c) other emotions, (d) communication, e) lack of time to prepare and plan, and f) lack of communication. Results were discussed in detail in Chapter 4. The following sections discuss findings, interpretations, and limitations. Recommendations and implications for leadership are also discussed. A brief conclusion summarizes the key findings that capture the study's essence.

Findings, Interpretations, and Conclusions

A gap in the literature exists because few studies have addressed the effect of a disaster on educational communities' sense of well-being before the COVID-19 global pandemic (Huremovic, 2019). The pandemic has underscored the importance for school leaders to be well versed in effective crisis management techniques and the multifaceted role schools play in the

lives of their communities (Grissom & Condon, 2021). Gainey (2009) included in the definition of crisis management the ability of the organization to have a plan to manage and be prepared to handle a crisis. The findings add to the body of knowledge discussed in Chapter 2. The disruptions from the pandemic continue to be studied to prepare and plan for other crises.

Research Question 1

The first research question stated: How did the shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic affect the feelings and experiences of the well-being of teachers,' parents, and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State? Three dominant themes emerged including: (a) fear, (b) anxiety, and (c) other emotions. Most participants from all groups shared similar concerns. Participants expressed fear of becoming ill and not knowing what would happen next, how the disease spread, and if a cure existed. The consensus of the participants was these feelings negatively affected their feelings of well-being. Discussions of fear and anxiety were often combined in the same sentence when participants described their thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

The other emotions identified included: (a) sense of isolation, (b) feelings of being a failure, (c) sadness, (d) overwhelmed, (e) struggles, and (f) being on a rollercoaster. Participants often related these emotions to the dominant themes of fear and anxiety. Feelings of fear, anxiety struggling, hardship, isolation, overwhelming, anger, failure, and sadness had negative connotation. Teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders agreed that the pivot to remote learning negatively influenced their sense of well-being.

Research Question 2

The second research question asked what actions taken by educational authorities during the period of New York Pause positively affected the feelings of well-being of teachers, parents,

and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State? All participants who thought positive actions existed agreed these actions focused on communication. Interview results from teachers and frontline school leaders revealed feelings of support from their supervisors. Support came via checking in phone calls, emails, and special zoom sessions. Not all parents felt the same way; some reported nothing helped the situation. A deeper inquiry revealed these parents had minimal contact with their child's teacher.

Research Question 3

The third research question examined what actions taken by educational authorities during the period of New York Pause negatively affected the feelings of well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders in the Hudson Valley of New York State. Two dominant themes emerged from the interviews including: (a) lack of time to prepare and plan and (b) a lack of communication. When there were open and continuous lines of communication, most participants felt it positively influenced their well-being; however, when open lines of communication were missing, 91.7% of the participants expressed that missing contact with the school affected them negatively. Missing information and not knowing what was coming or what to expect increased their feelings of anxiety.

Lack of timing to prepare meant different things to the participant groups. Teachers expressed concerns about not having time to plan lessons or a methodology for delivery. Front-line school leaders did not have guidance from state authorities about expectations. Parents worried about having devices and materials for their child and the ability to manage home, school, and work responsibilities simultaneously. About 33% of participants reported lack of time to prepare was a cause of their negative feelings.

Findings in Context of Theoretical Framework

This study was conducted to explore how the shift to remote learning affected the feelings of well-being of teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders during the period of the New York Pause. The theoretical framework for the study was a blend of Maslow's (1943) theories of unmet needs and crisis leadership theory. These theories are in alignment with the study's purpose. The literature cites the use of Maslow's ideas when addressing the needs of students in crisis (Doucet et al., 2020; Netolicky, 2020). Fisher and Royster (2016) applied Maslow's (1943) theories to create a hierarchy of needs for teachers. In both examples, the basic needs of food, safety, equipment, and supplies must be met first before learning and teaching can be accomplished.

Maslow identified stress as an obstacle to fulfilling basic needs. Until those basic needs can be achieved, stress will continue and become chronic (Dames, 2019). Stress is a feeling that can positively and negatively affect a person, depending on the individual. Individuals also do not remain in a static state, implying individuals' feelings may change from moment to moment (Janssen et al., 2020). Teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders all spoke of the many negative emotions they felt. Concerns existed about how food would be obtained and how they struggled to manage work, children's schooling, and home life. Teachers and school leaders were concerned about having the supplies at home to create lessons and worried if students had the necessary supplies to participate and learn.

The COVID-19 global pandemic has been described as unprecedented and the cause of the most significant negative impact on educational systems globally (Ayyilidiz & Baltaci, 2020; Gonzalez et al., 2022). Crises require leaders to engage in strategic thinking while remaining calm, open-minded, and able to solve problems quickly (O'Connell & Clarke, 2020). Exemplary

communication skills are also required because leaders are expected to provide the information needed to remain safe (Urick et al., 2021). Thus, the COVID-19 global pandemic was a challenge for educational authorities.

Teachers, parents, and school leaders discussed their struggles with fears, anxiety, and the unknown related to the initial days of remote learning. Many participants spoke of worrying about how to get food and what would happen to their families if they became ill. Teachers and school leaders also shared concerns related to having the proper supplies to engage in a learning environment, the constant changing of the rules, and not knowing when they would be able to return to the classroom. All participants agreed when information and lines of communication were open, their feeling of well-being improved. Parents who were in contact with their child's teachers via Zoom, email, or text messaging reported a positive impact on their well-being versus those who did not. Teachers also thought their well-being was positively affected when their administration communicated with them and provided learning opportunities to help them.

Frontline school leaders were in a different position. These participants often referred to communication from colleagues and the governor of New York's daily press conference as positively influencing their well-being. By contrast, front-line leaders felt the lack of communication negatively impacted feelings of well-being. One leader expressed disappointment in the state department of education because of a lack of guidance from the department was received. These findings are in alignment with the theoretical framework's concepts.

Limitations

Theofanidis and Fountouki (2019) described limitations of a study as weaknesses in the study's design beyond the controls of the investigation. Adequate information was provided to

allow for replication of the study; however, the transferability is limited. Recruitment of participants occurred primarily via personal social media postings and postings on local social media parent and teacher groups. Purposive sampling was initially attempted but did not lead to enough participants. Snowball and emergent sampling were then implemented, which led to the recruitment of sufficient participants. Due to the recruitment method, participants were all located in one area of New York State. The participant recruitment geographic area was suburban, with a mix of socio-economic groups. A limitation of the study existed because no lower socioeconomic families were represented. Recruiting was primarily accomplished through social media and the referral from a participant. The lack of materials (e.g., computers and internet access) was not mentioned by any parent participant.

Both credibility and confirmability of the findings depended on participants' responses and were assumed to be honest. Various techniques were employed to increase credibility. The allotment of sufficient time for the interviews and member checking enhances the credibility of a study (Given, 2008). During the interviews of frontline school leaders, several participants had difficulty answering some of the questions. The problem was a reluctance to discuss educational authorities' actions that may have negatively affected their sense of well-being. Several front-line leaders answered there were no issues and would only say everyone was doing the best they could under the circumstances. Nonverbal signals were interpreted as a reluctance to share true feelings about their supervisors' actions and directions.

Researcher bias may also exist in qualitative studies affecting the trustworthiness of findings. During the data analysis phase, bracketing was employed to minimize bias. Bracketing is used to acknowledge one's prejudice and feelings and set them aside (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Notes about personal feelings and thoughts were also maintained in a journal.

The use of a qualitative design is another limitation of the study. Qualitative research seeks to explore and gain knowledge from peoples' experiences during a specific period. The researcher is the tool used to gather the data (Neubauer et al., 2019). Due to time constraints, the study was limited to 18 participants, with data collection occurring for 7 weeks. Additional time would have allowed for a more diverse sample size, which could add to the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. This qualitative study explicitly focused on the perceptions of teachers, parents, and front-line school leaders and would be difficult to apply to a different population. Different types of populations experienced other challenges and would require specific questions to explore what their perceptions and experiences were during the same period.

Recommendations

This basic qualitative study explored teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders' experiences and feelings of well-being during the shift to remote learning due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Schools are acknowledged as providing more than educational opportunities for their students; however, school personnel are not given the same respect as other professionals. The pandemic highlighted and increased the daily work and stress school personnel experienced. Further research and policy changes for educating school personnel are needed to adapt to the educational communities' current issues.

Research Recommendations

Historically the COVID-19 global pandemic was not the first pandemic to affect educational systems (Zhao & Watterston, 2021). Natural and man-made disasters have also affected local communities' schools, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and school shootings with equally devasting effects (Mutch, 2020). Despite these events, educational

authorities have not developed a strategic plan or trained staff on how to respond to the needs of their communities. Mutch (2020) studied the impact of earthquakes in Canterbury, New Zealand, and bush fires in Victoria, Australia. Based on interviews with principals, teachers, support staff, parents, and community members, Mutch found the principal's duties changed to crisis manager; and teachers took on multiple roles to support children and families. Mutch further concluded similarities exist in how schools needed to respond to the COVID-19 crisis as they had in other types of disasters. This study's recommendations include exploring the influence of remote learning on students' social-emotional development and the mental health of teachers, parents, and school leaders.

Gonzalez et al. (2022) studied school readiness losses in young children in Uruguay. They concluded the pandemic impacted several of the development domains. Herman et al. (2021) examined teacher stress, coping, and wellness during the pandemic. Gonzalez et al.'s (2022) and Herman et al.'s (2021) studies focused on future planning to better assist the students in making gains in the areas affected by the pivot to remote learning. These two research studies validated the importance of well-being, especially during and after a crisis. How a teacher copes has been shown to influence students' learning (Herman et al., 2018). Teachers are the workers in the field of education. Frontline school leaders affect their teachers' health and well-being (Herman et al., 2021), similar to teachers' influence on their students. The first recommendation is for future studies to focus on teachers' and school leaders' ability to cope in a crisis. This information could provide valuable insight into school community members' educational planning and coping strategies.

Education and Policy Recommendations

The shift to remote learning was difficult for many educational community members. Further complicating the problem was teachers did not know how to use the applications to provide remote instruction. Districts struggled to implement different online platforms while simultaneously providing professional development opportunities for the staff. The second recommendation is that teacher preparatory and school leadership programs should include the instructional use of online applications.

A benefit of online programs is the increased engagement of parents. The study findings indicated communication is a factor positively affecting well-being. Parent-teacher communication is essential for the success of students. Increasing engagement is more critical than ever with an increase in both parents working, single parents, and nontraditional families. Traditional in-person conferences and meetings with limited parent participation may be done online, giving the working parent or those with limited access to transportation more options. The third recommendation is to incorporate online and other technologies to increase family engagement.

The fourth recommendation is for an addition to the educational program for school leaders. Crisis management is discussed but needs far more attention than previously given. Crises are becoming more complex and range from active shooters to managing natural disasters and a pandemic. School leaders must be able to develop strategic plans for all types of situations and develop educational programs for their staff to become well prepared. This recommendation requires a change in the curriculum for school leadership.

Implications for Leadership

Providing educational opportunities for students is a complex task. Measuring accountability in public education has been an ongoing debate for years. The COVID-19 global pandemic highlighted inequities already existing in the educational systems. Both the importance and difficulties in the roles of teachers and school leaders also became more evident as parents and families assumed the tasks of instructing their children. Educational systems must respond to the changing needs of communities both locally and globally while simultaneously being able to respond to crises of all types.

This study investigated how the pivot to remote learning affected teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders' perception of their well-being. Results indicated participants felt a positive influence on their well-being when leaders communicated effectively. Having information alleviated fears, concerns, and anxiety about the unknown. Sources of information were the leaders. Teachers and parents received information from frontline leaders. Still, district leaders and those in private schools looked to educational authorities on the state and federal levels for guidance (*State Office of Religious and Independent Schools-SORIS,* n.d.).

Mbhiza (2021) described the COVID-19 global pandemic as the catalyst for changing the educational paradigm in the history of education. Recommendations from this study called for educational leaders to unite and establish workgroups to guide the shift in how education is provided. The most significant implication for educational authorities to heed is to develop a strategic plan for dealing with a disaster. Education for teachers and leaders must include methodologies focused on how to teach on a virtual platform and assess the students' learning.

A potential positive social change is that the inequities in the educational systems must be resolved to ensure all students receive equal learning opportunities. The response of the

educational systems to the COVID-19 global pandemic varied at times due to the economic status of the schools and the students (Doucet et al., 2020). Studying how different countries responded may provide some insights into practical solutions. Understanding the lived experience and the influence remote learning had on the educational community members may also guide future educational policies.

Conclusion

This basic qualitative study investigated how the shift to remote learning influenced the feelings of well-being of teachers, parents, and front-line school leaders during the New York Pause. Data analysis was completed, and six dominant themes were identified in answer to the research questions. Teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders felt the period of New York Pause negatively affected their sense of well-being. Open and continuous lines of communication made participants feel better, while a lack of communication and time to prepare had a negative influence.

Blending Maslow's (1943) theories and crisis leadership theories served as the theoretical framework for the study. Teachers worried about their students and their families, and frontline leaders were concerned about their staff and the community. Teachers and frontline leaders viewed their role as more than just providing education, instead, they expanded their role to check on and ensure families were meeting their basic needs (Poncela et al., 2021). The literature described this phenomenon as Maslow before Bloom (Mutch & Peung, 2021). This phenomenon applied Maslow's (1943) theory that lower-level needs must be met before higher ones could be addressed. Students and their families could not focus on learning while they worried about their health and safety. Educational leaders could use the study results to improve

teacher and leader preparation programs by including intensive crisis management courses and pedagogy on teaching remotely.

Implications for leadership include the need for government officials to recognize the importance of having educators create the guidance and methods of delivering educational opportunities to communities, not governmental appointees. Educational authorities should engage in strategic planning to establish a way to prevent the upheaval and disruptions this pandemic brought to the world's academic communities. Exploration into the promotion of well-being at work also needs leadership's attention. Leaders influence the mood of those surrounding them; similarly, teachers may affect their students and families.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

The interview will begin with the interviewer setting tone. The participant will be provided with an overview and the purpose of the study. The informed consent will be reviewed, and any questions or concerns will be answered. The participant will be reminded that the interview will be recorded and asked to review the transcript for accuracy. The interviewer will then share why this topic is important to her and some personal information about the doctoral journey. The participant will then be asked to share information about themselves. Before asking the interview questions, the participant will be asked if they have any questions or concerns.

1. Tell me a bit about yourself
2. Would you please describe your perception of a positive feeling of well-being?
3. How do you feel the period of New York Pause impacted your feelings of well-being?
4. What or who helped you get through this time?
5. How are you feeling now?
6. Did any actions from (your children's schoolteacher or leadership, or educational authorities positively affect your feelings of well-being?
7. Did any actions from (your children's schoolteacher, leadership, or educational authorities negatively affect your feelings of well-being?
8. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Based on responses, follow-up questions may be:

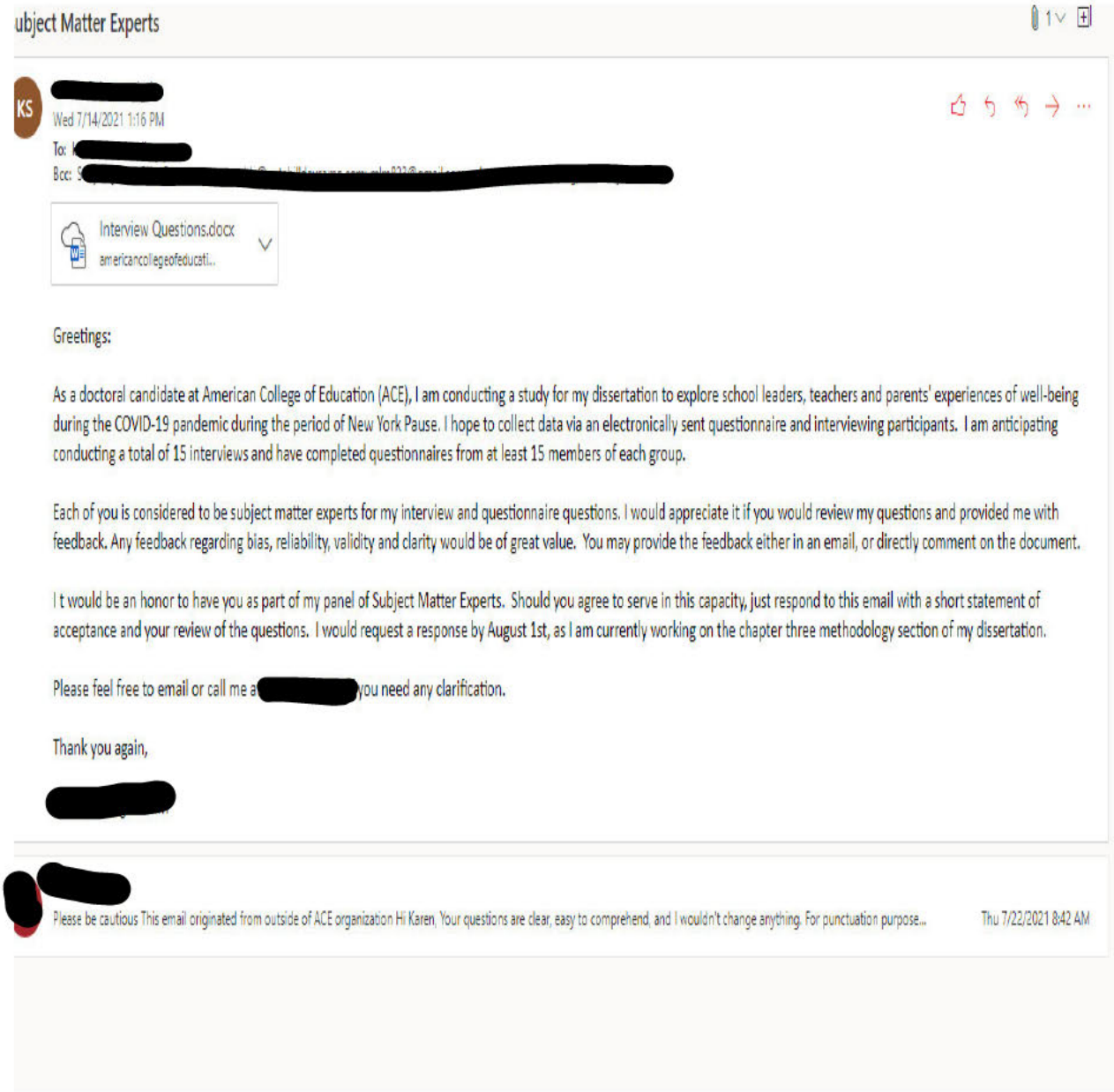
- Would you mind clarifying what you meant when you said xxxxx
- Would you mind describing in more detail what you thought and felt when XXXX happened?

- To clarify, did you mean xxx when you said xxx
- Would you please tell me a bit more about xxx?
- Could you explain that in a bit more to me

The interview will conclude by asking the participant if they have anything further, they would like to share. A reminder will be given to expect a call to review the transcript for accuracy and if there is anything additional, they would like to share. The participant will be thanked for their time and participation in the study.

Appendix B

Invitation to Subject Matter Experts (Interview Questions)



ubject Matter Experts

KS [redacted]

Wed 7/14/2021 1:16 PM

To: [redacted]

Bcc: [redacted]

Interview Questions.docx

americancollegeofeducati...

Greetings:

As a doctoral candidate at American College of Education (ACE), I am conducting a study for my dissertation to explore school leaders, teachers and parents' experiences of well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic during the period of New York Pause. I hope to collect data via an electronically sent questionnaire and interviewing participants. I am anticipating conducting a total of 15 interviews and have completed questionnaires from at least 15 members of each group.

Each of you is considered to be subject matter experts for my interview and questionnaire questions. I would appreciate it if you would review my questions and provided me with feedback. Any feedback regarding bias, reliability, validity and clarity would be of great value. You may provide the feedback either in an email, or directly comment on the document.

I t would be an honor to have you as part of my panel of Subject Matter Experts. Should you agree to serve in this capacity, just respond to this email with a short statement of acceptance and your review of the questions. I would request a response by August 1st, as I am currently working on the chapter three methodology section of my dissertation.

Please feel free to email or call me a[redacted]you need any clarification.

Thank you again,

[redacted]

[redacted]

Please be cautious This email originated from outside of ACE organization Hi Karen, Your questions are clear, easy to comprehend, and I wouldn't change anything. For punctuation purpose... Thu 7/22/2021 8:42 AM

Appendix C

Feedback From Subject Matter Experts (Interview)

Expert 1

From: [redacted]
Sent: Friday, July 30, 2021 6:16 PM
To: Karen Schragenheim <karen.schragenheim4623@my.ace.edu [redacted]
Subject: Re: reminder [redacted]

Interview QuestionsHow are you doing now?
Suggested Adjustments.

1. is fine
2. Please describe what is a positive feeling of well-being for you. **(feelings and perceptions are difficult to analyze)**
3. How do you think the period of NY Pause impacted your life.
4. What or who helped you get through this time? How did they help you?
5. How are you doing now?
6. Did any actions from your children's school teacher, administration (leadership?), or educational authorities have a positive effect on your well-being
7. Did any actions from your children's.....have a negative effect on your well-being? What was the negative effect?
8. Is there anything else you would like to elaborate on that affected you during the Pandemic?

Follow up questions

1. good
2. change felt to thought

rest is fine. Call me when you can

Expert 2

[redacted]
Mon 7/26/2021 4:36 PM
[redacted] aren Schragenheim
Sarah Notes - Interview ...
16 KB

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of ACE organization

Hi Karen,

See attached ... and happy to chat once you've reviewed.

S. ☺

[redacted] *ng hours. Please do not feel obligated to reply outside of your normal work schedule ***

Expert 3

[redacted]

Fri 7/23/2021 3:04 PM

To: Karen Schragenheim

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of ACE organization

Hi!
I have no corrections. Looks good to me

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 23, 2021, at 12:50 PM, Kar[redacted]rote:

Expert 4

[redacted]

Fri 7/23/2021 4:40 PM

To: Karen Schragenheim

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of ACE organization

Hi Karen,

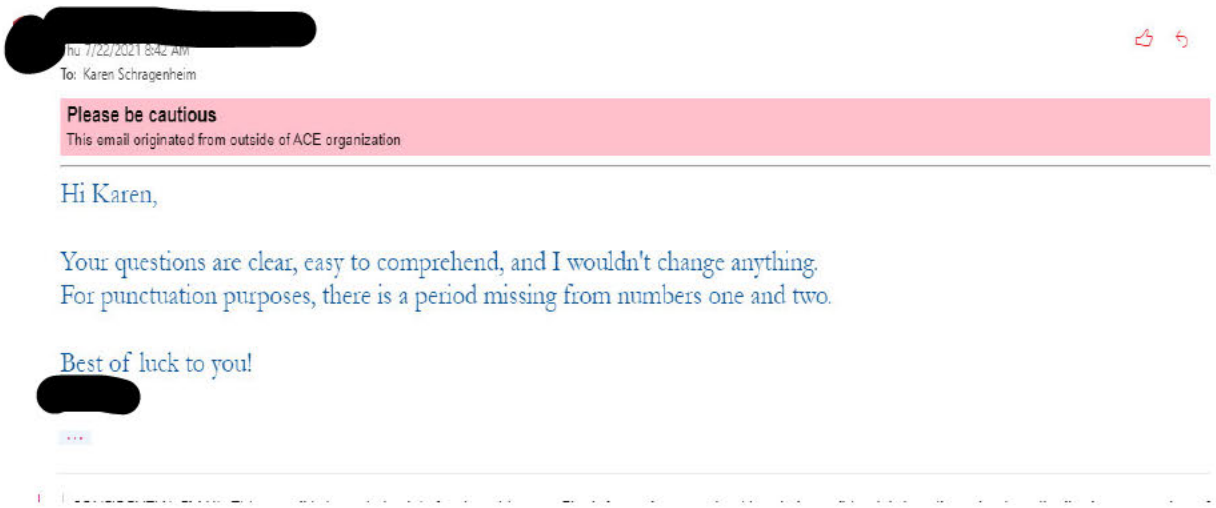
I think that you have good questions that are open-ended and allow for participants to share as much or as little as they wish. The follow up ones will allow you to clarify and dig deeper as needed which will, I imagine, help you thrush out the information that you want to focus on. If a participant doesn't have a child though they wouldn't be able to answer questions 6 or 7 but I'm not sure if the focus on your research is specifically on parents, in which case that is a moot point.

Sorry for the slow reply, this week was a little crazy, but I'm sorry to have held you up!!

[redacted]

[redacted]

Expert 5


[redacted]
Thu 7/22/2021 8:42 AM
To: Karen Schragenheim

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of ACE organization

Hi Karen,

Your questions are clear, easy to comprehend, and I wouldn't change anything.
For punctuation purposes, there is a period missing from numbers one and two.

Best of luck to you!

[redacted]

Appendix D

Informed Consent

Prospective Research Participant: Read this consent form carefully and ask as many questions as you like before deciding whether you want to participate in this research study. You are free to ask questions before, during, or after participating in this research.

Project Information

Project Title: Well-Being of Leaders, Teachers, and Parents

Researcher: Karen Schragenheim

Organization: American College of Education

Email: [redacted] **Telephone:** [redacted]

Date of IRB Approval: November 16, 2021

Please note that this research study has been approved by the American College of Education Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB approved this study on November 16, 2021. A copy of the approval letter will be provided upon request.

Researcher's Dissertation Chair: [redacted]

Organization: America College of Education

Email:

Introduction

I am Karen Schragenheim, a doctoral student at the American College of Education. I am doing research under the guidance and supervision of my Chair, [redacted]. I will give you some information about the project and invite you to be part of this research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the study. If you have questions, ask me to stop as we go through the information, and I will explain. If you have questions later, feel free to ask me then.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to explore teachers, parents, and frontline school leaders' experiences and feelings of well-being during the shift to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic in New State during the period of New York Pause. You are being asked to participate in a research study that will assist with seeking to answer how the shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic affects the feelings and experiences of well-being. Conducting this qualitative study will help to guide educational authorities in the future and add to the current body of knowledge regarding remote learning.

Research Design and Procedures

The study will use a qualitative methodology and phenomenological design. The study will comprise 15 to 20 participants, at least five teachers, five parents, and five school leaders. The study will involve participation in a 60-to-90-minute Zoom interview that will be recorded. After the interview is transcribed, a debriefing session will allow you to review the content and clarify or add anything you deem necessary.

Participant Selection

You are invited to participate in this research because your experience as a teacher, parent, or school leader can contribute much to the discussion about the lived experience during the New York Pause, and you meet the criteria for this study. Participant selection criteria includes at least 2 years of experience in your professional title before the shift to remote learning or having children in school for at least 2 years before remote learning.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate. If you choose not to participate, there will be no punitive repercussions.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

Participation is voluntary. If you wish to end your involvement in the research study, you may email me explaining why you are opting out of the study. There will be no repercussions for leaving the study.

Procedures

We are inviting you to participate in this research study. If you agree, you will be asked to participate in a 30-to-45-minute Zoom interview that will be recorded. The type of questions asked will range from demographical perspectives to direct inquiries about the topic of your lived experience during the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on your feelings of well-being.

Duration

The interview portion of the research study will require approximately 60 to 90 minutes. If you are chosen to be a participant, the interview will be scheduled at a time convenient for the participant and will be conducted via Zoom. Before an interview, you will be asked to provide permission to have the interview recorded to have accurate data transcripts. A follow-up debriefing session will take approximately 15 minutes.

Risks

The researcher will ask you to share personal and confidential information, and you may feel uncomfortable discussing some topics. You do not have to answer any questions or participate in the discussion if you don't wish to do so. You do not have to give reasons for not responding to any question.

Benefits

While there will be no direct financial benefit to you, your participation will likely help us learn more about how teachers, parents, and school leaders felt during the time of New York Pause. The potential benefits of this study will aid the educational community in providing remote learning better should it be needed in the future.

Confidentiality

I will not share information about you or anything you say to anyone outside of the research. During the defense of the doctoral dissertation, data collected will be presented to the dissertation committee. The data collected will be kept in a locked file cabinet or encrypted computer file. Any information about you will be coded and will not have a direct correlation, directly identifying you as the participant. Only I will know your assigned number and will secure your information on a password-protected computer and locked file box.

Sharing the Results

At the end of the research study, the results will be available for each participant. It is anticipated to publish the results so other interested people may learn from the research.

Questions About the Study

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, contact me a[redacted]. This research plan has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the American College of Education. This committee's role is to ensure research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to ask questions of this group, emai[redacted]

Certificate of Consent

I have read the information about this study, or it has been read to me. I acknowledge why I have been asked to be a participant in the research study. I have been provided the opportunity to ask questions about the study, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I certify I am at least 18 years of age. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print or Type Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

I confirm that the participant was allowed to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant in the research study have been answered to the best of my availability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the permission has been given freely and voluntarily. A copy of this Consent Form has been provided to the participant.

Print or type name of lead researcher: _____

Signature of lead researcher: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E

Permission for Recruitment of Participants (Districts)

Dear *fill in the name*

My name is Karen Schragenheim, and I am a doctoral candidate at the American College of Education (ACE) writing to request permission to recruit participants for my study from *fill-in site*. I will be using the information for my dissertation research related to the well-being of leaders, teachers, and parents during the coronavirus pandemic. The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study will be to explore the effect of COVID-19 on school leaders, teachers, and parents' well-being during the period of New York Pause.

Additional Information:

Participants numbers – a total of 15 to 20 participants, at least five from each group of school leaders, teachers, and parents

Principal Investigator: Karen Schragenheim

[redacted]

Dissertation Chair: [redacted]

Email:

I appreciate your attention to is request and prompt response. Thank you for your time and consideration of my request.

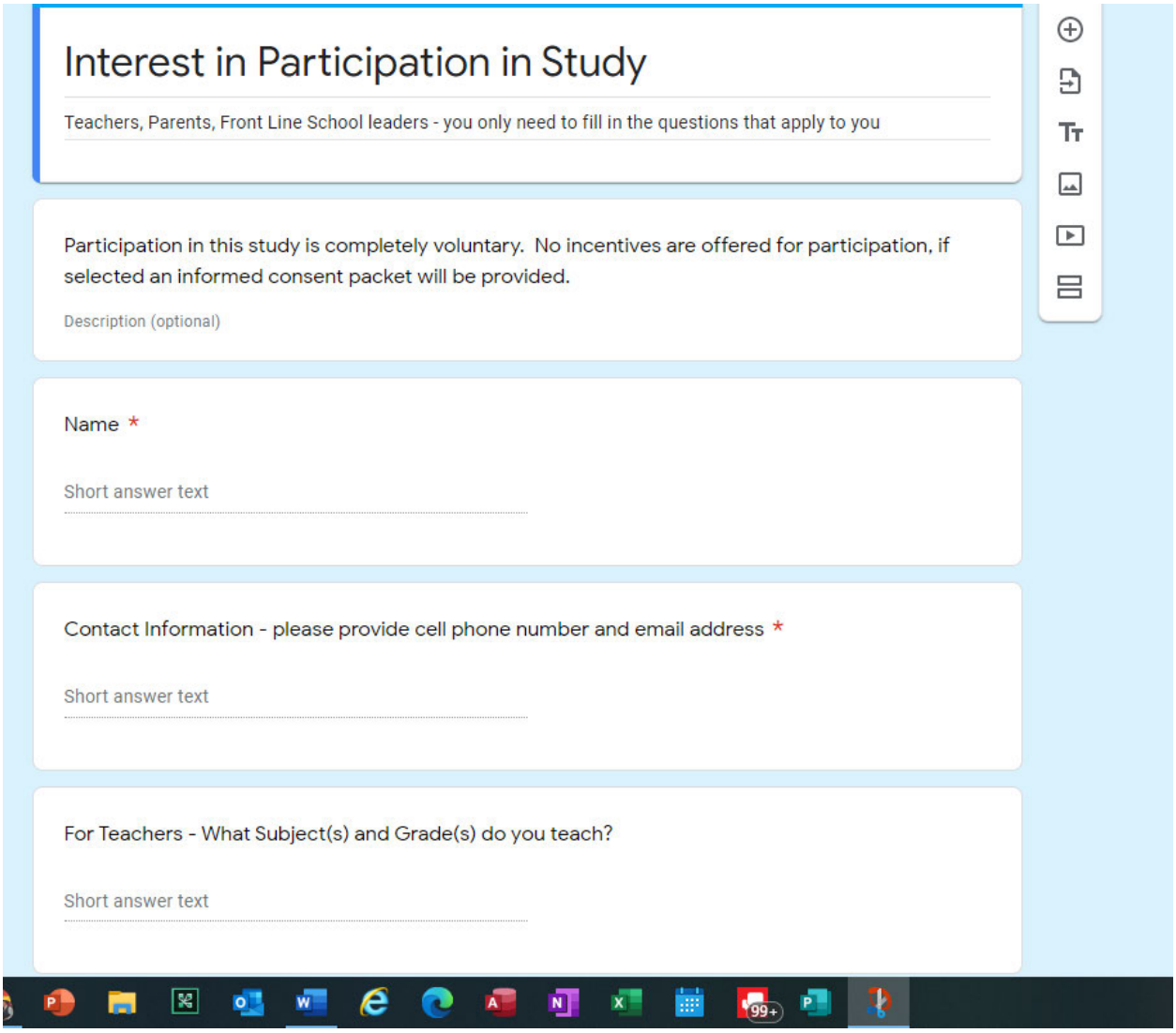
Regards,

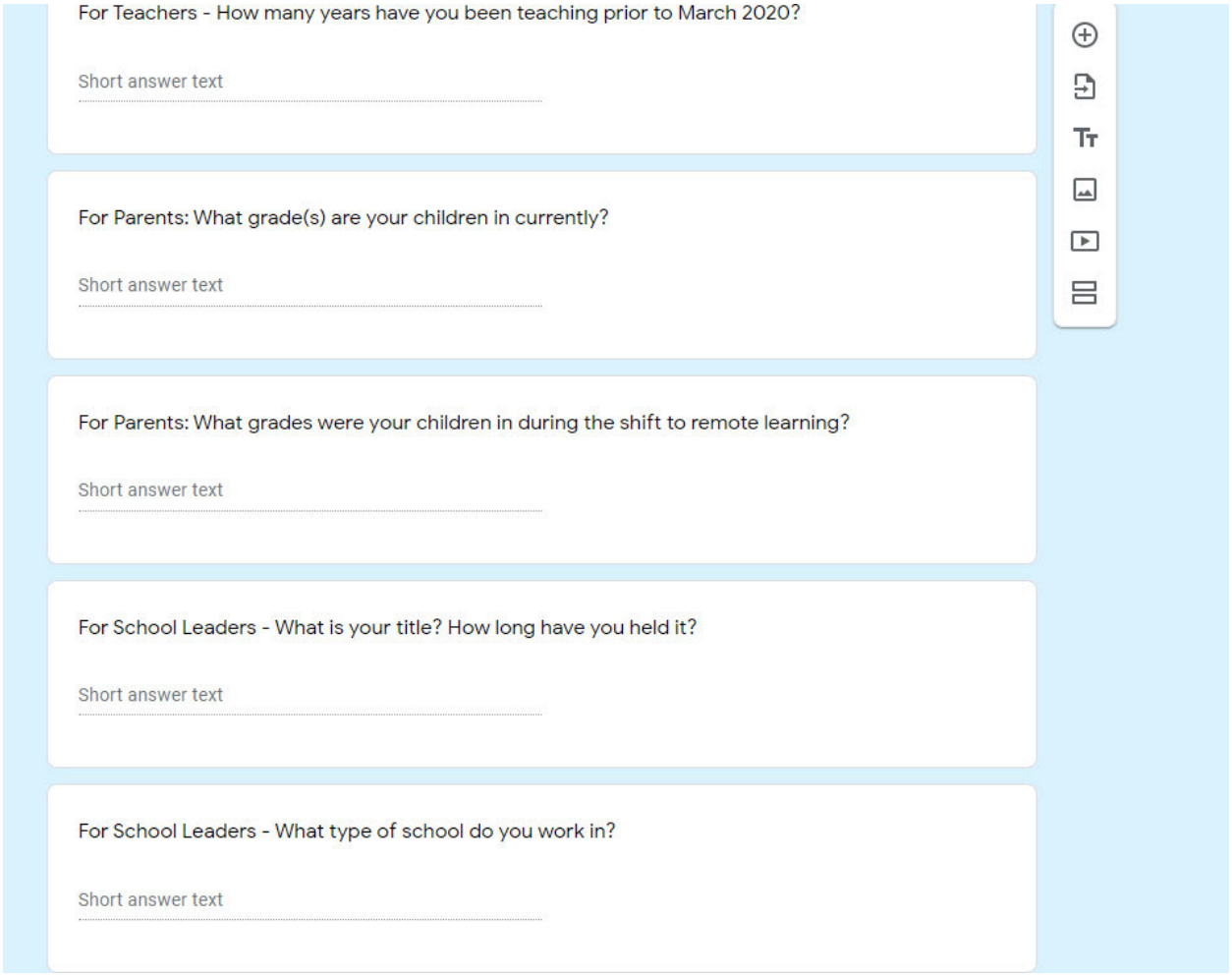
Karen Schragenheim

Doctoral Candidate

Appendix F

Demographic Questionnaire (Google Forms)



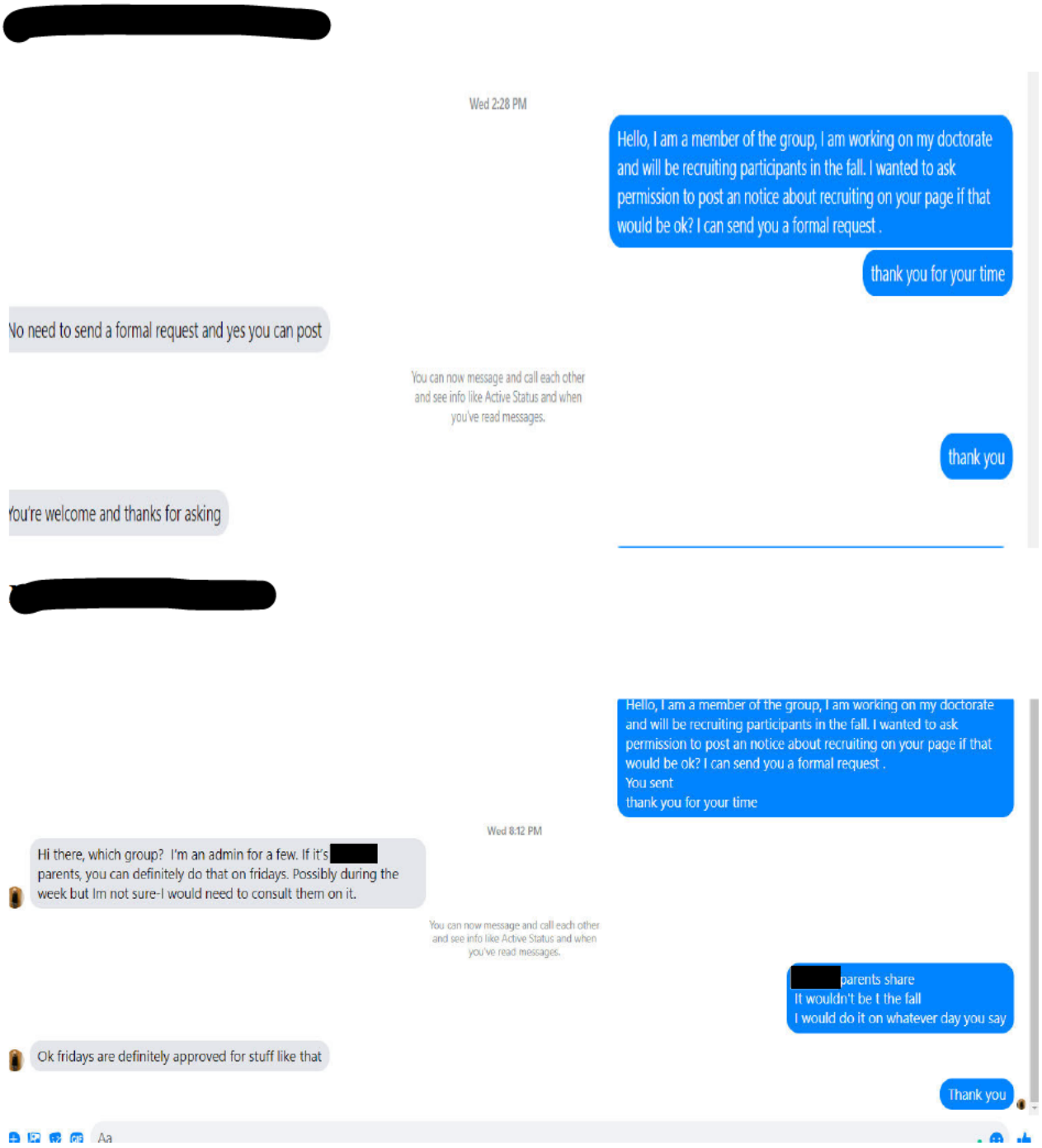


Thank you. If selected you will be contacted shortly.

Any questions can be emailed to Karen.Schragenheim4696@my.ace.edu

Appendix G

Permission Requested and Granted from Two Facebook Groups (Informal)



Appendix H

Social Media Recruitment Posting

Hello, *fill in the community's name*

I am a doctoral student at the American College of Education and a resident of your community. I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to participate in a dissertation research study. I am studying the effect COVID-19 had on the feelings of well-being of school leaders, teachers, and parents during New York Pause (the early days of the pandemic). I will be conducting interviews via Zoom. Each interview will last between 60-90 minutes, and there may be one brief follow-up to review the interview transcription.

To be eligible, you must have either been in your position for at least 2 years before the shift to remote learning or have children in school for at least 2 years before the remote learning.

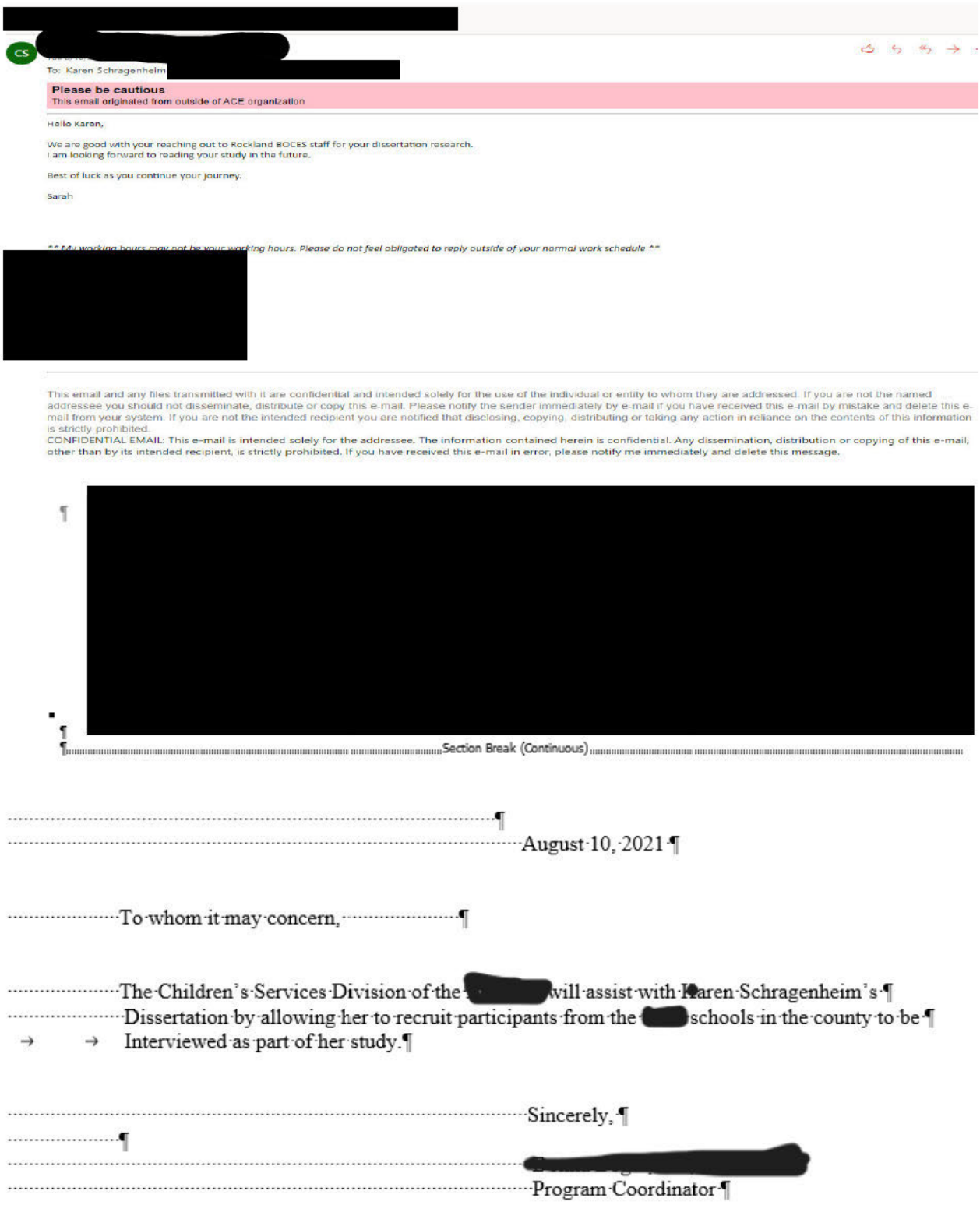
Your participation in the study will be voluntary. If you wish to withdraw from the research at any time, you may contact me using the information below.

I may publish the results of this study; however, I will not use your name nor share identifiable data you provided. Your information will remain confidential. If you want additional details about the study, please private message me.

Insert Link for Participant Questionnaire

Appendix I

Permission for Participant Recruitment



[redacted]

CS [redacted]

To: Karen Schragenheim [redacted]

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of ACE organization

Hello Karen,

We are good with your reaching out to Rockland BOCES staff for your dissertation research.
I am looking forward to reading your study in the future.

Best of luck as you continue your journey.

Sarah

*** My working hours may not be your working hours. Please do not feel obligated to reply outside of your normal work schedule ***

[redacted]

This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you are not the named addressee you should not disseminate, distribute or copy this e-mail. Please notify the sender immediately by e-mail if you have received this e-mail by mistake and delete this e-mail from your system. If you are not the intended recipient you are notified that disclosing, copying, distributing or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this information is strictly prohibited.
CONFIDENTIAL EMAIL: This e-mail is intended solely for the addressee. The information contained herein is confidential. Any dissemination, distribution or copying of this e-mail, other than by its intended recipient, is strictly prohibited. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify me immediately and delete this message.

¶

[redacted]

¶

¶ Section Break (Continuous)

¶

August 10, 2021 ¶

To whom it may concern, ¶

The Children's Services Division of the [redacted] will assist with Karen Schragenheim's ¶
Dissertation by allowing her to recruit participants from the [redacted] schools in the county to be ¶
→ → Interviewed as part of her study. ¶

Sincerely, ¶

¶

[redacted]

Program Coordinator ¶

Appendix J

Recruitment Letter

Date:

Dear --------

I am a doctoral student at the American College of Education. I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to participate in a dissertation research study.

I am studying the effect COVID-19 had on the feelings of well-being of school leaders, teachers, and parents during New York Pause (the early days of the pandemic). I will be conducting

interviews via Zoom. Each interview will last about 30 minutes, and there may be one brief follow-up to review the interview transcription.

To be eligible, you must have either been in your position for at least 2 years before the shift to remote learning or have children in school for at least 2 years before the remote learning.

Your participation in the study will be voluntary. If you wish to withdraw from the research at any time, you may contact me using the information below.

I may publish the results of this study; however, I will not use your name nor share identifiable data you provided. Your information will remain confidential. If you would like additional information about the study, please contact the following:

[redacted]

Dissertation Chair: [redacted]

Please contact me if you meet the criteria above, are interested in participating in the study, and would like to be included in the potential participant pool.

Thank you again for considering this dissertation research opportunity.

Appendix K

IRB Approval

[redacted]