A FOUNDATION FOR LEARNING: PARENT'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE

MCMASTER CHILDREN AND YOUTH UNIVERSITY (MCYU)

ADDRESSING THE FACTORS THAT SHAPE PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE

MCMASTER CHILDREN AND YOUTH UNIVERSITY (MCYU)

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Lay Abstract

The McMaster Children and Youth University (MCYU) was founded at McMaster University in Hamilton Ontario, Canada. The MCYU delivers free educational programming to children and youth to empower and prepare youth, especially those at a socioeconomic disadvantage, to aspire to higher education (MCYU, 2022). Parents are invited to attend the lectures alongside their children, making parent involvement a key component of the program (MCYU, 2018; Paquin et al, 2018). This research addresses the following question: How do socio-ecological factors shape parental decision-making for childhood involvement in the MCYU? The results indicated that positive educational experiences in the lives of parents shape their approach to their children's education. Their life experiences have led to an intrinsic and extrinsic desire to learn, and the MCYU is an invaluable tool for parents to instill these values in their children through 1) education, 2) exposure, 3) enjoyment, and 4) engagement.

Abstract

The McMaster Children and Youth University (MCYU) was founded at McMaster University in Hamilton Ontario, Canada. The MCYU delivers free educational programming to children and youth to empower and prepare youth, especially those at a socioeconomic disadvantage, to aspire to higher education (MCYU, 2022). Parents are invited to attend the lectures alongside their children, making parent involvement a key component of the program (MCYU, 2018; Paquin et al, 2018).

Participation in educational activities, such as out-of-school programming, school-run field trips, or extracurriculars have been correlated with improved academic achievement and social adjustment (Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2014; Weininger et al., 2015). However, children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to participate in learning enrichment activities outside of school (Siddiqui et al., 2019). These barriers to participation have often been attributed to lower economic status (Chanfreau, et al., 2016; Farthing, 2014; Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2014; Siddiqui et al., 2019).

A grounded theory study was employed addressing the following question: How do socio-ecological factors shape parental decision-making for childhood involvement in the MCYU? Twenty parents who participate in the MCYU were interviewed and asked to complete an accompanying survey. After thorough data collection and analysis, the results indicated that positive educational experiences in the lives of parents shape their approach to their children's education. Their life experiences have led to an intrinsic and extrinsic desire to learn, and the MCYU is an invaluable tool for parents to instill these values in their children through 1) education, 2) exposure, 3) enjoyment, and 4) engagement.

This research may inform an expansion of MCYU type programs across Canada as well as aid the MCYU in reaching members of the community who are unable to benefit from the program. While the MCYU is for kids, the appeal for parents should be emphasized in future iterations.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my Supervisor, Dr. John Maclachlan for his guidance and encouragement throughout all stages of this project. I also want to thank him for providing me the opportunity to conduct this research on a topic that I am passionate about. This thesis would not have been made possible without his support.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the McMaster Children and Youth University (MCYU) was founded at McMaster University in Hamilton Ontario, Canada. The MCYU delivers free educational programming to children and youth in the topics of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) to empower and prepare youth, especially those at a socioeconomic disadvantage, to aspire to higher education (MCYU, 2022). By sharing new research and creating accessible programming, the MCYU hopes to bridge the gap between the university and the wider community, as well as break down challenges to pursuing a postsecondary education. Parents are invited to attend the lectures alongside their children, making parent involvement a key component of the program (MCYU, 2018; Paquin et al, 2018).

This study aims to address the factors that shape parents' decisions to participate in the MCYU. While extensive research has explored the factors that shape parent involvement in children's educational activities, limited research has been undertaken to explore the factors that shape participation in Children's Universities (CU's). To date, no research on parent involvement has been published on the unique context of the MCYU. This research may inform an expansion of MCYU type programs across Canada as well as aid the MCYU in reaching members of the community who are unable to benefit from the program.

A grounded theory study was employed addressing the following question: How do socio-ecological factors shape parental decision-making for childhood involvement in

the MCYU? Twenty parents who participate in the MCYU were interviewed and asked to complete an accompanying survey. Results indicated that positive educational experiences in the lives of parents shape their approach to their children's education. Their life experiences have led to an intrinsic and extrinsic desire to learn, and the MCYU is an invaluable tool for parents to instill these values in their children through 1) education, 2) exposure, 3) enjoyment, and 4) engagement.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 THE MCMASTER CHILDREN AND YOUTH UNIVERSITY

Participation in educational activities, such as out-of-school programming, school-run field trips, or extracurriculars have been correlated with improved academic achievement and social adjustment (Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2014; Weininger et al., 2015). However, children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to participate in learning enrichment activities outside of school (Siddiqui et al., 2019). These barriers to participation have often been attributed to lower economic status (Chanfreau, et al., 2016; Farthing, 2014; Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2014; Siddiqui et al., 2019). To address disparities in educational opportunities offered to students in higher and lower achieving schools, an initiative known as the 'Children's University' (CU) began in Europe in 1993 (Overton, 2010). A CU works to provide out-of-school activities to children and youth to develop new skills and learning that differs from a regular classroom environment (Siddiqui, et al., 2019). These programs foster the development of

self-esteem, resilience, social skills, and social action, as well as instill a motivation for high aspirations (EUCU.NET, 2014; Siddiqui, et al., 2019).

The MCYU is the first CU program in Canada, with a structure based on the model developed in Tubingen, Germany where professors deliver lectures to children at the university (Paquin et al., 2018). In this model, children, and youth, especially those at a socioeconomic disadvantage, are invited to experience the university setting and learn from experts about a broad range of disciplines (MCYU, 2018). While the MCYU Program was formed from European models, it centres on the concept of family-based learning to engage children, youth, and their parents in the university environment (MCYU, 2018; Paquin et al, 2018). In this way, the MCYU provides a distinct co-learning opportunity for families. The program also fosters community engagement by partnering with public schools, families, and organizations in the wider Hamilton community to provide education for different ages (MCYU, 2018; Paquin et al, 2018). By inviting families to the campus, the MCYU hopes to remove some of the barriers to pursuing post-secondary education that exist within the community (MCYU, 2018; Paquin et al, 2018).

2.2 GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

The City of Hamilton sits at the west end of Lake Ontario, bordered between the lake and the Niagara Escarpment. In 2016, the total population was 536,917, with the total population of the census metropolitan area (CMA) being 747,545 (Statistics Canada, 2017). The CMA consists of surrounding neighbourhoods extending to cities such as

Burlington and Grimsby (Figure 1). Although the MCYU has ties in the Hamilton community, the reach is further than this. Most of the participants reside locally, however, some families travel from neighbouring towns outside the city (Bier & Raha, 2020). Therefore, the CMA is a more accurate representation of the population accessing the MCYU.

The CMA is ethnoculturally diverse, with 25.5% of the population being first-generation immigrants, and 25.5% of the population being second-generation immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2017). Housing prices in the City of Hamilton are increasing, and the range of socioeconomic statuses is high. In 2015, the median total income of households in the Hamilton CMA was $75,464; lower for the City of Hamilton ($69,024) and higher for Burlington ($93,588) and Grimsby ($93,145) (Statistics Canada, 2017). The City of Hamilton is also home to four different school boards, over 200 elementary and secondary schools, and six higher education facilities (City of Hamilton, 2018). In 2016, 28.4% of people in Hamilton aged 25 to 64 had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 27.6% had a college diploma or other non-university certificate (Statistics Canada, 2017).
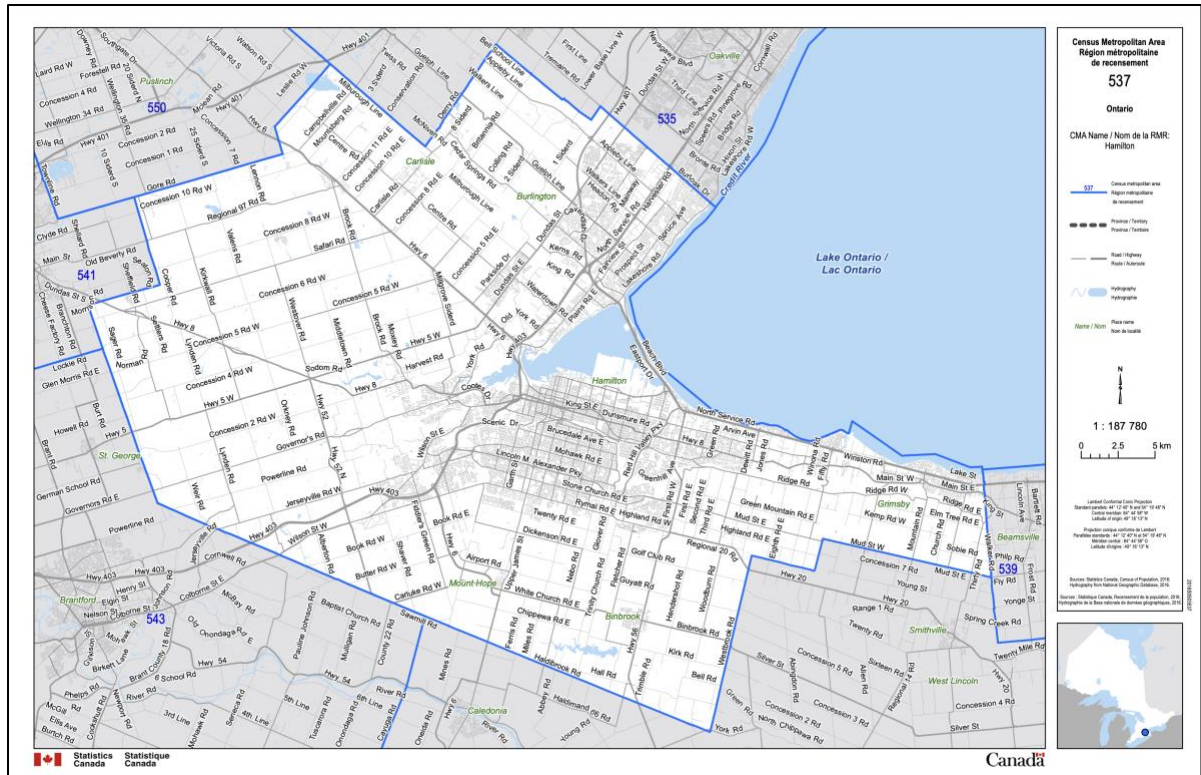
Figure 1: Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of Hamilton [CMA], Ont. (Statistics Canada, 2017).

2.3 PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent engagement has become an important feature of the MCYU model (Beier & Raha, 2018). Studies continuously confirm that parent involvement can play a positive role in shaping children's educational outcomes (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Feinstein et al., 2004; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995; Lareau, 1987; Schlee et al., 2009). Parent involvement can support children's knowledge development, contribute to children's own sense of efficacy in school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995), and reduce rates of student absenteeism (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Parent involvement has held inconsistent meanings in the literature (Fan & Chen, 2001). In children's schooling, involvement may

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include parent-teacher meetings, participating in school activities, offering help with homework, and teaching children about the importance of education (Bæck, 2010; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). It has also been interpreted as the value parents place on their children's educational progress (Lareau, 1987), or the ways in which they convey those values and aspirations for their children (Fan & Chen, 2001).

The MCYU invites parents to become involved in their children's education in different ways, including co-learning opportunities, facilitating at-home conversations, and leveraging community resources. Studies confirm that the ways in which parents are involved in their children's education are influenced by several different factors (Bæck, 2010; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995). In the context of the MCYU, a current barrier impacting parent involvement is finding the time to engage in the program. This is especially true for families living in Hamilton's priority neighbourhoods, which represent socioeconomically under-resourced communities (Paquin et al., 2018). Low-income families or single-income households face demands that potentially make it more challenging to engage in their children's education (Paquin et al., 2018), such as inflexible working hours or limited access to transportation (Lee & Bowen, 2006). It is important to note that although participating in the MCYU may be difficult for low-income parents, the challenges they face do not negatively reflect their values and hopes for their children's education. Both higher and lower-income parents have high aspirations for their children's educational success and generally want to participate in their learning (Childs, et al., 2017; Lareau, 1987). Working-class parents

often direct the responsibility of learning to teachers, whereas middle-class parents may see education as a shared experience, becoming more involved in their children's learning both at school and at home (Lareau, 1987). Variations in income are useful in understanding levels of parent involvement, and further research is needed to explore other factors that influence parent participation in the MCYU.

2.4 CULTURAL CAPITAL

One perspective for understanding parent involvement in education comes from sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Lareau, 1987). Cultural capital is a form of capital obtained through embodied (knowledge), objectified (material goods), or institutionalized (qualifications) means that promote social mobility (Bæck, 2010; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Dika & Singh, 2002). Bourdieu's theory suggests that an unequal access to resources due to factors such as class, gender or race leads to the reproduction of the dominant class (Dika & Singh, 2002). This occurs within a system in favor of those who possess inherited cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). This capital can be exchanged for wealth and power through the education system (Bæck, 2010). For instance, credentials ensure the reproduction of cultural capital by preserving the distribution of powers through a continuous re-distribution of people and titles (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Additionally, parents with higher education usually live in neighborhoods with higher quality schools and institutional resources (Feinstein et al., 2004), and can better exercise their education in the home, acting as a vehicle for social reproduction (Bæck, 2010). For parents,

cultural capital in the form of their children's education represents their ability to promote their children's educational success (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Bourdieu's theory is useful in understanding how inequalities to accessing educational opportunities can be reproduced in families.

A central component of Bourdieu's theory is the term "habitus," which refers to a set of dispositions individuals have based on cultural norms and beliefs (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; O'Shea, 2014). An example of how habitus may influence parent involvement is when parents with low levels of education are less involved in their children's school. This may occur if they have limited knowledge of the school system or have had negative educational experiences themselves (Lee & Bowen, 2006). In contrast, parents with a higher education may be more equipped to facilitate their children's learning, as they are more familiar with the educational system and what resources they can draw upon (Feinstein et al., 2004; Spera et al., 2009).

2.5 SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL MODEL

Another concept for understanding parent involvement is the socio-ecological theories model, first created as a conceptual model for understanding human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The theory describes a set of interconnected systems, referred to as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and the chronosystem; each acting as systems of influence (Kilanowski, 2017; Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Bronfenbrenner's initial theory places the individual (microsystem) at the center of the surrounding systems, representing their immediate surroundings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The mesosystem includes the interactions beyond immediate settings and the relationships between different microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The exosystem comprises settings where an individual is not directly involved but is still impacted by community contexts or social networks (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Kilanowski, 2017). The macrosystem includes societal, cultural, or religious influences, and the chronosystem represents changes to an individual over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1986; Kilanowski, 2017).

The theory is useful for considering how different environments shape decision-making, and in this context, parent participation in the MCYU. Based on Bronfenbrenner's theory, Epstein and her colleagues outlined six major ways that parents can be involved in their children's schools including: 1) parenting (preparing children for school), 2) improved communication of schools 3) parental involvement at schools, 4) participating in learning activities at home, 5) parental decision-making, and 6) collaboration with the community (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Erdener & Knoeppel; 2018). *Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Model* demonstrates how parent involvement can take place in several different environments. In addition, Epstein suggests that children's academic success can be influenced by how families, schools, and communities work together to facilitate home-school partnerships (Epstein, 2016; Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018). Not only are the experiences within the home, school, and community significant, but the interactions between each of these environment's matter (Epstein, 1986; Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018). This study uses the socio-ecological model to inform the data collection and analysis

process, as it is hypothesized that parent involvement in the MCYU is shaped by parents' environments and the interactions between them.

2.6 EXTRINSIC & INTRINSIC VALUES

Two central themes discussed in this paper are extrinsic and intrinsic values related to educational motivation. Extrinsic motivation refers to motivation to do something to obtain some external good, whereas intrinsic motivation stems from the enjoyment or interest of the task itself (Hennessey et al., 2015; Serin, 2018). Intrinsic motivation in educational activities stems from the desire to learn (Fan & Williams, 2010). Social environmental factors can shape one's extrinsic motivations, such as the expected reward of the task, evaluation, or competition (Hennessey et al., 2015). Intrinsic motivations may also be socially and culturally dependent, where intrinsic motivations arise only after extrinsic motivations are met, such as basic economic and safety needs (Hennessey et al., 2015). This research provides an overview of how extrinsic and intrinsic factors determine parents' educational aspirations for their children and influence their decisions to seek out opportunities like the MCYU.

3. METHODS

The intent of this study was to develop a theory to accurately reflect the experiences and opinions of current MCYU parents. With that goal in mind the methodology of this project was informed by grounded theory, an inductive approach to building theory from empirical findings by thoroughly comparing and analyzing data

(Charmaz, 2014; Hay, 2015). In this method, the process of data collection and analysis are interrelated, as analysis begins from the start of data collection. Data analysis is used to guide subsequent interviews and observations (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The specific methods were informed by Kathy Charmaz's constructivist lens; a version of grounded theory that combines key strategies such as coding, memo-writing, comparative analysis, and theoretical sampling, while also assuming the analysis will reflect the participant's and researcher's own lived experiences (Charmaz, 2014; Phoenix et al., 2020). While grounded theory methods provide both systematic and flexible guidelines for qualitative researchers, it is essential that the analysis remains 'grounded' in the data (Charmaz, 2014).

3.1 SAMPLING

Purposive sampling was employed to recruit parents whose children had participated in the MCYU Family Lecture Series Program in order to uncover rich information of the case study population (Hay, 2015). Approval to conduct this study was granted by the McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB; approval number 5203). Recruitment began in June of 2021 when a verbal announcement was made by a facilitator during an online MCYU Lecture inviting parents to participate in the study. This initial announcement was followed by a series of emails inviting parents to participate. Anyone who registered to attend an online lecture from January 2021 to May 2021 was invited to participate. During this time, all events at McMaster University were held online due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Tighe, 2020). The initial desired sample size

was twelve to fifteen participants and was revised to twenty participants to gather sufficient data and fill conceptual gaps, as informed by grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2014). With this goal in mind, twenty-five email addresses were selected at random to be contacted. The response rate of each round of recruitment determined the size of each subsequent round, until the desired sample size of twenty participants was achieved. In total, seven rounds of invitation emails and five rounds of follow-up emails were sent between the months of June and October of 2021. Each round of recruitment was a new random sample of twenty to forty email addresses. Participants were chosen based on a first come, first served basis. An interview time was scheduled if parents responded to the email expressing an interest in participating.

3.2 SAMPLE

The interview sample included 20 participants comprised of 17 mothers and 3 fathers. Previous research has indicated that mothers tend to be more involved than fathers when it comes to their children's education (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018). To be eligible to participate in this study, participants needed to speak English and have access to a computer as all interviews were conducted remotely due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The accompanying survey data provided additional demographic information regarding the participant sample. The optional online survey was completed by 18 of the 20 parents. *LimeSurvey,* a survey service provided at McMaster University, was used as the platform to collect and store the responses. The responses were later uploaded to

NVivo (released in March 2020) a software used to organize qualitative data (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2020).

The following information pertains to notable data obtained from the survey: 3 of the 18 participants stated that English is not the primary language spoken at home, while 3 additional participants stated that multiple languages are spoken at home, including English. In addition, 17 of the 18 participants stated that they attended some form of postsecondary education (15 of those participants attended university and 2 attended college). More than one quarter (30%) of the participants who attended postsecondary education had either completed or were working towards completing a doctorate degree.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the main method of data collection and took place from June 2021 to October 2021. Data was collected over a four-month period for transcription and initial analysis to take place (Charmaz, 2014; Watling et al., 2017). The interviews were conducted online via the Zoom platform to abide with the Hamilton, Ontario public health guidelines of the Covid-19 pandemic (McMaster University, 2021). An open-ended interview guide was used to structure the interview process yet allow for flexibility of responses (Hay, 2015). Additionally, the development of an open-ended interview guide was used to avert forced responses into narrow categories, following grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014). The interviews were audio and video recorded upon consent, and the principal investigator transcribed the interviews by hand. The interview transcripts were then stored on *NVivo* (released in March 2020).

The interview questions were informed by Urie Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological theories model (SEM) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), with an emphasis given to earlier versions of the model. While the theory was first presented as a conceptual model for understanding human development, the SEM has been used in other contexts. For instance, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have applied the SEM to consider the factors that impact violence prevention (CDC, 2022; Kilanowski, 2017). In their adaptation, there are four overlapping rings labeled as the *Individual, Relationship, Community* and *Societal,* (Figure 2) demonstrating that factors are interconnected and influenced by another (CDC, 2022). The CDC's model was used to frame the interview guide of this study; therefore, the questions were structured into four sections: Individual, Relationship, Community and Society.
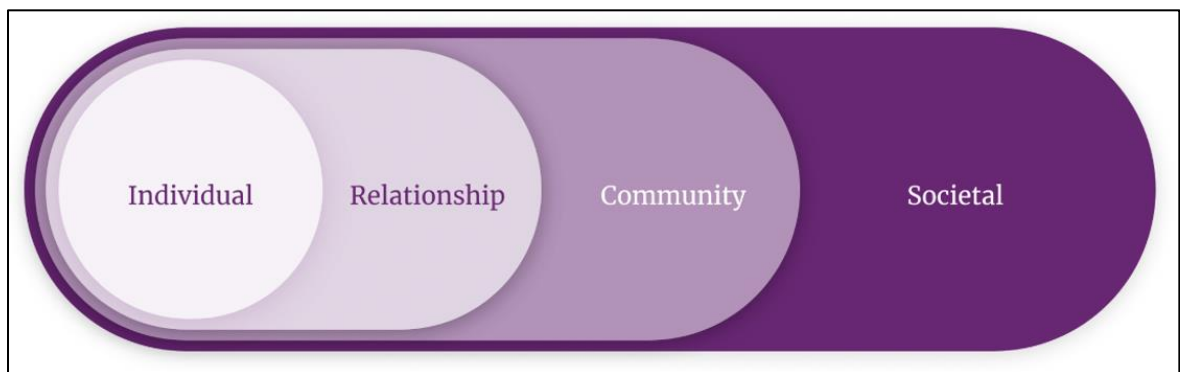

Figure 2: The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention (CDC, 2022).

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Interviews were read, compared, and reflected upon to ensure a thorough analysis took place. Figure 3 visualizes the data analysis process, where the outer rings represent

overlapping phases, each with different steps. The red arrows reflect the iterative process, as the steps were repeated and refined until a theory was formed.

Data analysis occurred from June 2021 to March 2022 and involved two main phases: "initial coding," and "focused coding" (Charmaz, 2014). A code is a short label that depicts what is happening in the data (Charmaz, 2014). Coding is the process of categorizing data into themes to describe, analyze and organize data (Hay, 2015). In the initial coding phase, "line-by-line coding" was employed to code for actions and meanings to account for a deeper understanding of the participant's opinions and experiences (Charmaz, 2014). Also referred to as "process coding," these codes used gerunds (words ending in "ing") to describe either the actual or conceptual actions of the participants (Saldaña, 2021). Line-by-line coding, as stated by Charmaz, is a useful coding strategy for gaining an in-depth understanding and analysis of the data (2014). Line-by-line process coding enabled the codes to remain grounded in the data and accurately reflect the participant's responses. Through repeatedly comparing, synthesizing, and analyzing the initial codes, focused coding was employed. This process involved identifying common codes within the data, which led to the development of initial themes. Refinement of the themes and categories continued to occur after data collection, until a theory was developed.

During the process of initial coding and focused coding, multiple meetings with a wider research team took place to discuss the main findings and guide the researcher in the coding process. The principal investigator also participated in extensive memo-writing between data collection and analysis, in line with grounded theory methods

(Charmaz, 2014). Memo-writing served as a useful step in identifying major themes through the process of written reflection. The researcher engaged in aspects of theoretical sampling through revisions of the interview guide, building upon questions to get to focused categories from emerging theories in the data (Charmaz, 2014; Gentles et al., 2015). Finally, theoretical saturation of this study was reached when no new theoretical insights emerged from the data, and comparisons were conceptualized with no new patterns (Charmaz, 2014).

It is important to note that while grounded theory methodology was employed throughout this study, part of the data analysis process was in line with thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method to identify and analyze themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The specific phases include 1) familiarizing yourself with the data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) identifying themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) naming themes and 6) producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While this study followed an iterative approach to data collection and analysis, elements of thematic analysis, such as 1) familiarizing yourself with the data, was done after data collection. Therefore, this study was informed by both grounded theory and thematic analysis methodology.
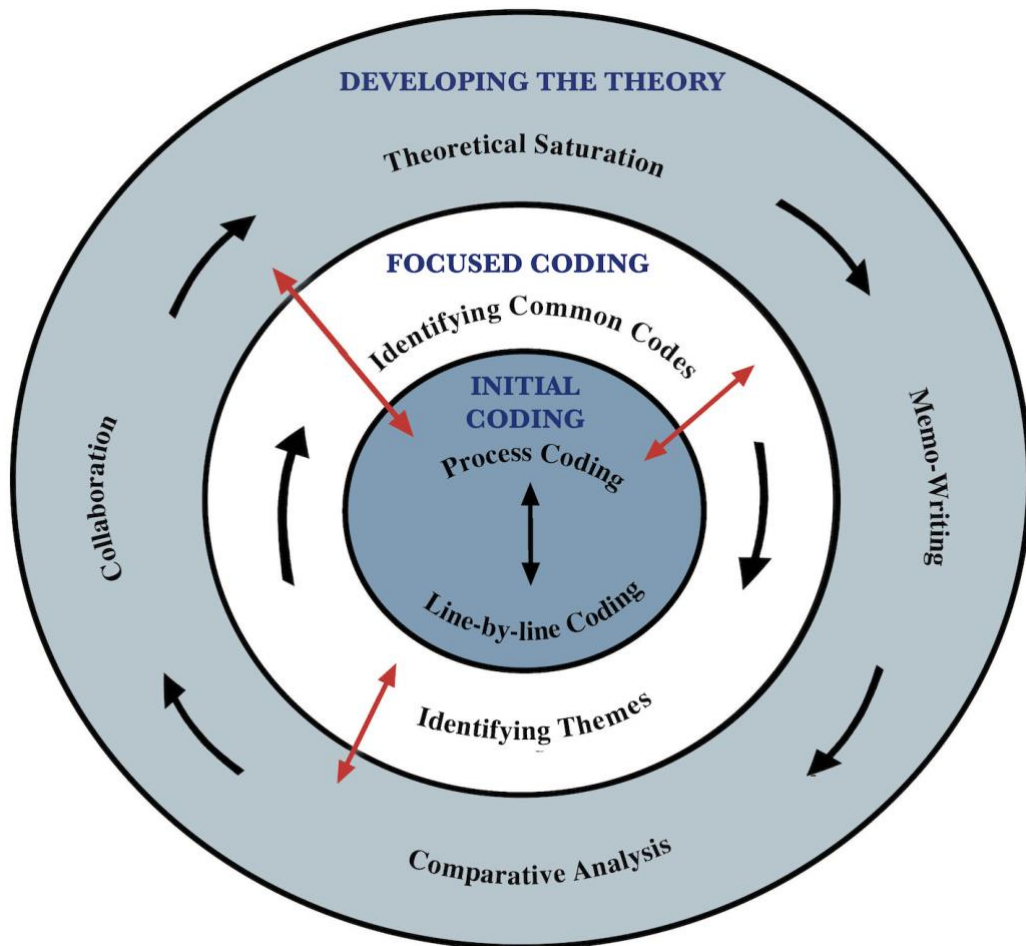
Figure 3: The data analysis process in grounded theory. Each ring represents a different phase of data analysis: initial coding, focused coding and developing the theory. The process begins in the innermost ring and moves towards the outermost ring. The red arrows represent the interconnected process where phases may be repeated until a theory is developed.

4. RESULTS

The results theorize that positive educational experiences influence parents'

approach to their children's education. Parents' educational experiences were organized

into three environments: the home, school, and the community, each offering intrinsic and

extrinsic values of learning. The MCYU is a tool for parents to instill these values in their children through 1) education, 2) exposure, 3) enjoyment, and 4) engagement (Figure 4).
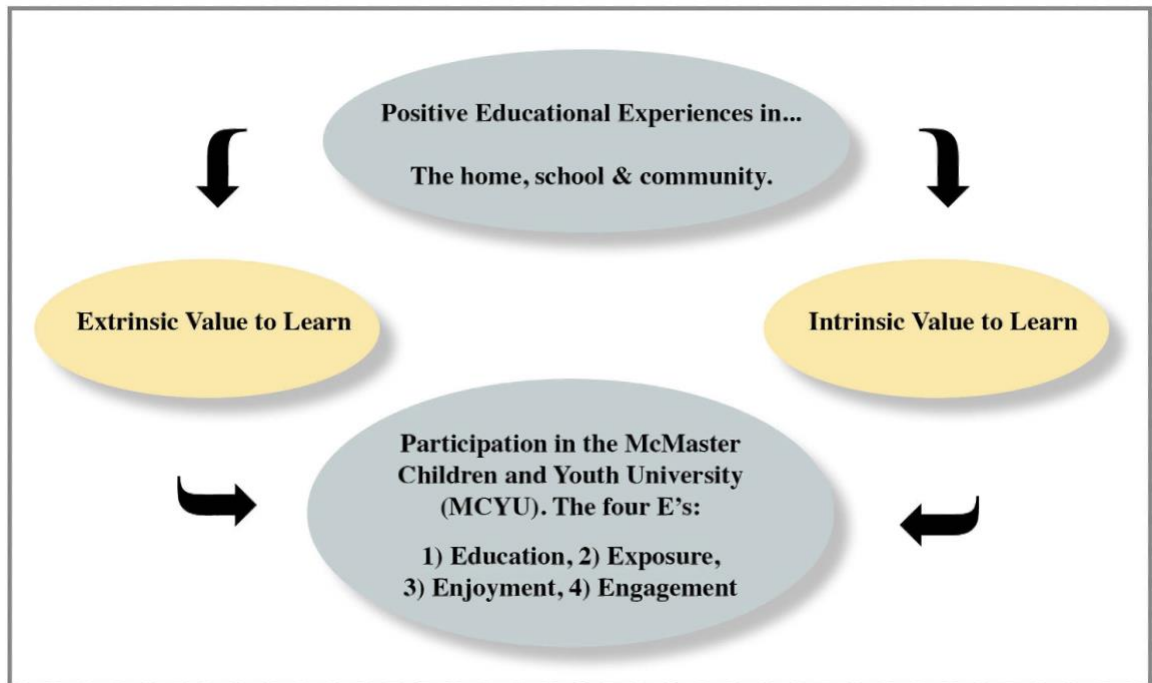
Figure 4: A Model of Parent Participation in the McMaster Children and Youth University (MCYU): From Experience to the Four E's.

4.1 THE HOME

Positive educational experiences in the home environment includes learning, either through parents or family members, that leads to positive values of education for participants. In this study, 18 of the 20 participants shared that their families had a role in shaping their positive values of education. For many parents, the value of education was modelled through their family's postsecondary attainment.

> I come from a family that is highly educated. My mom's a teacher, my dad's a doctor, my uncle is a tenure track Dean in engineering, so I come from a family that values education, that is highly educated. My husband has a university degree and he's highly educated. Yeah, I guess it's just what you're exposed to as well, and I was exposed to a lot of it.

For those few participants who did not have family members who attended postsecondary, this did not appear to be a determining factor of their family's value of education as participants were still encouraged to succeed in school.

> So, my parents didn't go very far in school, but my dad was [studying] to try to do better after all, and he always tried to push us to be working hard in school and do our best. So definitely we tried hard, me and my brother to actually succeed in school.

4.1.1   EXTRINSIC VALUES

Many participants shared how their parents actively encouraged them to attend postsecondary school by emphasizing the positive implications of doing so. Examples of these positive implications included changing one's social class or becoming successful.

> My father always reminded me that if I were to get an education that no one can take that away from me. And it's a way out of poverty.

> My parent's kind of ingrained in my head that education is important and without an education you're going to end up with kind of, you know, those jobs that look not so desirable. You won't have a choice, so if you're not educated you kind of get what's handed to you as opposed to you being able to choose what you want to do and where you can be, and with a great education you can do anything.

A notable finding of the study was that 6 participants were first-generation immigrants, and 4 participants were second-generation immigrants. For most of these participants, being an immigrant or a child of immigrants was an indicator for holding positive, extrinsic values of education in the home.

> I am a child of immigrants. My mother's side Swiss Canadians that came, they were scientists and on my father's side, lots of sciency people as well from Japan…and both those immigrant families held higher education in high esteem and those values were, were passed on to me of course.
>
> As first-generation immigrants they were quite fixated on the fact that I needed to have higher education in order to be successful and to, you know, build on the foundation they gave me…so, it was definitely valued.

4.1.2 INTRINSIC VALUES

For many participants, their experiences in the home environment shaped intrinsic values of education. Some parents developed a value for learning through family activities where learning occurred naturally and was something to be enjoyed. Other participants were encouraged by their families to pursue an education because it leads to benefits like becoming a more rounded person.

> My dad was a scientist with sort of a bent towards biology and ecology, and he and I would spend a long time, like a lot of time together in nature and he would show me salamanders and talk about habitat and talk about the ecosystem, and so…that really marked my life.
>
> So, I just think they always raised us that it wasn't really optional, that that's what you did after high school, and so it wasn't really a questioning about it. So, I guess that shaped my views as well, like I've always told my children that your university or college years are your time to explore and to learn about yourself, but it's fine if that's not career driven, it's more just to become a better, rounded person.

In a few interviews, the distinction between holding intrinsic and extrinsic values was not always clear. For example, one participant mentioned that education was not valued in her home environment, but when she witnessed a family member pursuing a degree and "improving" where [they were]", it shaped her views of education to be positive.

My grandfather was very, very successful and he barely finished high school, but he did go to night school, and he did get his accounting degree, so that was kind of cool. So, I think I saw that as a child, that you can go back to school…and you know sort of improve where you are with your life, so that was really positive. But at the same time education really wasn't valued.

4.2 THE SCHOOL

In addition to the home, the postsecondary environment formed positive values of learning for participants. In the interviews, when asked about their attitudes towards higher education, 16 of the 20 participants shared that they attended postsecondary schools and advocated that it was a positive experience. For many participants, their postsecondary attendance was evidence of how they value higher education, and all 20 participants expressed wanting their children to attend some form of postsecondary education.

I'm a very big supporter of higher education and believe it's very important for my kids. I've, well, I've got 3 degrees so maybe that's evidence of how I think it's important.

I strongly support higher education. I myself, I have a master's degree and a PhD in sciences, so I fully support higher education.

As a parent I would want her to do better, to ensure that she does go to university, and she has a career that she loves to do. That's it, better future for her life.

Many participants formed positive values of education through their own postsecondary experiences where they enjoyed learning and attending lectures.

I think when I went to university it was great, like I loved it. I loved you know when I woke up in the morning I couldn't wait to get into class and to, listen. So, I mean even now, like if I can attend a lecture at Mac, I do so. I think it's just great.

I loved university; I mean I'd go back again in a heartbeat if I could.

A few participants did not label their postsecondary experience as only positive if they faced challenges in attending, such as affording tuition fees or balancing a busy schedule. Participants' motivations for pursuing education, regardless of these challenges, were for perceived positive outcomes, therefore, these educational experiences are still categorized as such.

> I've learned learning skills and perseverance, and you know, failing and coming back and redoing things very early in my life so…I think that's it; I think that's it, yeah, and that's what I'm trying to instill in my kids. So similarly, I mean my current family, my husband is kind of from the same social economic background, and similarly was always supported to succeed and was ambitious and yeah, so we continue that trend, and we support each other so he finished his MBA with you know one 5-year-old and a small baby at home. So, it's that, it's just, you know, learning hard work pays off.

4.2.1 EXTRINSIC VALUES

For many participants, they view attending postsecondary school as a positive educational experience because it leads to extrinsic values such as gaining marketable skills or a desirable occupation.

> "But I have an interest in this area." Okay. Well, that's a hobby, not a marketable skill. So, that would be my slant. Postsecondary in every level is extremely valuable as long as it's useful to the person in society.

> For most occupations, high school education is just basic, and if you want to pursue any kind of profession or a trade or anything of that nature, you have to continue with your education beyond the basics.

4.2.2 INTRINSIC VALUES

Additionally, many participants expressed positive attitudes towards attending a postsecondary school, such as gaining new tools to aid in critically evaluating oneself or providing a space to explore and be creative.

> I think it can open doors and I think it helps you to sort of critically evaluate yourself and the world around you in a way that you might not do if you didn't have that experience.

> Beyond just the educational component, I think it is an invaluable opportunity for people to explore and be creative and come up with new ideas and I think it really does help form who we are as people. So, I think it's made me a richer person than I would have been without it.

Regardless of whether the values of higher education were extrinsic or intrinsic, the participants expressed the belief that higher education leads to positive outcomes. Parents' positive values of postsecondary education are influenced by their first-hand educational experiences and by recognizing the benefits of obtaining a postsecondary education. As a result, parents want their children to value education and attend postsecondary school.

4.3 THE COMMUNITY

The final environment was categorized into *the community*, referring to any educational experiences that took place in the participant's surrounding physical and social environment. This environment could include the global and local community, as some participants are immigrants to Canada or have travelled the world. These experiences have contributed to the formation of participants' positive valuing of education.

4.3.1   EXTRINSIC & INTRINSIC VALUES

For many there is a shared value of education that has been shaped by the community environment, particularly through experiencing barriers to educational opportunities. The connection to specific intrinsic and extrinsic values are unclear, as they appear to be equally linked to both.

In the following quotes, the community experiences could have shaped either intrinsic or extrinsic values, as "[starting] a better life" and "the wonderful things that can happen" may hold many meanings.

> I've worked in lots of different environments, and you see people that are oppressed and, and you see people that have grown up with different opportunities. I mean the environment that I live in here right now, I've got a lot of people from all over the world…they've been extremely lucky because they've been able to get out because they've had an education to be able to come to Canada and start a better life here.

> We've lost a little bit of that - the wonderful things that can happen, the magic that can happen within communities when people really come together and connect with each other.

Many participants who immigrated to Canada stated that educational opportunities in their country of origin were few, but their strong values were a motivator to pursue educational experiences. Again, the connection to either intrinsic or extrinsic values is not clearly defined.

> I'm actually from South America, and I grew up in a tiny village where educational opportunities were very few. And my father always encouraged us to pursue education, no matter what, at all means.

> I completed my postgraduate in a foreign country and with very limited resources at that time and I was working as well as paying for tuition fees because I value education. Similarly, when coming to Canada with my single child at that time, I was a newcomer, I had no job, but still I value education and higher education and that's why I started saving money for her to be able to pay for her university tuition fees later on.

Additionally, many participants shared experiences where they had witnessed communities, either locally or globally, who faced barriers to education. These experiences shaped their perceptions that education is valuable and should not be taken for granted, implying both intrinsic and extrinsic values.

> I experienced some time in Brazil…and that was eye opening because suddenly things I took for granted in Canada, like a Public Library, there was none… It was because they couldn't afford the book, there was no library. They had to come in and leaf through a book and then leave…you look at sort of like education deserts or equity deserts, and then you look at something beautiful like [MCYU] and there's just a sense of appreciation and, and a hoping that it continues and being grateful that you and your family are able to be a part of it.

> I think that people come from a country where they don't have as many opportunities or life hasn't been as easy and they don't take for granted the chance at an education.

In another way, many participants discussed how culture has influenced their values of education and their approach to it. In the quote below, there were clear extrinsic factors motivating the participant to value education, such as attaining high scores at school. However, the overall values of education that the community holds could be both intrinsic and extrinsic.

> Through my whole life it's been about you know, scores at school and education and how important it is, so I'm sure that that shaped, shaped the importance of education to me and then I'm passing that onto my kids. So, would I tie it to culture? I certainly would. I think. And that's just my experience from seeing other Asians versus non-Asians and where they kind of rank education and how

important it is to them, not that it is dis-important to other cultures, but I think the Asian community seems to put it much higher.

The community environment represents the surrounding social and physical environment for participants that impacts their views of education. Participants' community environments have shaped their attitudes towards education to be positive, primarily through experiencing barriers to education and seeking out opportunities that are available.

4.4 SHAPING THE APPROACH: THE FOUR E'S

The key reasons parents attend the MCYU have been categorized into four themes: The Four E's. A combination of educational experiences in the home, school and community leads parents to seek out experiences for their children that 1) are educational, 2) exposes them to new things, 3) are enjoyable and 4) are engaging.

4.4.1   EDUCATION

Wanting to provide educational experiences for their children was a central theme for parents. Of the 20 participants, 14 shared that they continuously seek out educational opportunities for their children, which led many to the MCYU. Their positive values of education influence their decision to participate in activities where their children will develop these same values.

> We prioritize education, learning, exploring. So those are where kind of our values are as a family. And so, I think based on those we seek out similar opportunities and, and activities for our children.

For many parents, the MCYU is valued as an opportunity for their children to gain new knowledge and be further educated.

> I was hoping that it would just introduce new concepts to them and give them like something new to think about and understand that there are many different things in the world that are available to them.
>
> It's challenging kid's perceptions, it's getting people to be creative, it's getting a bit of knowledge.
>
> I think a lot of the topics were very educational and very informative. They were very relevant and salient with the times.

Participants also shared how the MCYU teaches their children about topics in a way that they themselves may not be able to do as effectively.

> I do believe that it's [something that] I get involved in because I want my kids to learn and to find some fun ways to discover many topics possible. And [sometimes] I don't have enough myself to just like, enrich them, so.
>
> You guys were better able to explain covid and things like that to them than necessarily we were able to. So, I know they came away with a lot of extra knowledge for that.

For 15 participants, the MCYU is an opportunity for their children to learn about unique topics. These topics are different from those taught in a regular classroom environment, and parents value the opportunity for their children to learn from experts.

> Exposure to things that they wouldn't see in an elementary level, right? And for them to tie connections to big words like "engineering" right? And anthro-, anthropology? Anthropology.
>
> You get exposed to different ideas and concepts and education opportunities that you wouldn't get in a regular school environment.
>
> I think I like the fact that he gets to hear from a variety of different experts.

Participants are involved in the MCYU because they seek out opportunities that are educational for their children. The MCYU is an invaluable tool where children can gain new knowledge and learn about unique topics.

4.4.2   EXPOSURE

The second theme driving participation in the MCYU is exposure. Parents want to expose their children to a variety of educational environments, but more specifically a university setting. Of the 20 participants, 13 stated that exposing their children to a university environment is seen as a valuable opportunity.

Many participants shared that exposing their children to university makes higher education more attainable for their children and helps to break down barriers.

> I think that, you know, just making it a concrete something, a place that he's been makes it that much more attainable… and not like this, you know, mysterious far-off thing.

> I think it's great because we got a chance to go on campus and go into some of these buildings. I mean, it makes university less scary. It makes higher education less daunting.

Almost all the parents who participated in the MCYU online during the Covid-19 pandemic shared that attending in-person was a key driver for participating. Only 6 of the 20 participants expressed positive attitudes towards lectures moving to an online environment. Parents expressed that exposing their children to the university often created enthusiasm about participating as their children gained greater comfortability.

> You know, we're looking forward to seeing some of those classes start again in person. I think that's part of the elements that my son really enjoyed. His first experience of going to the university. Like "oh my God. This is a classroom dad. What's happened? This is where you learn?" and so, you know, this excitement was encouraging.
>
> First of all, I think it's about being, well, the last year was not really reflective, but about being physically at a university. And kind of getting that feel of what it is like to be in an auditorium and be engaged in you know, questions and answers and to listen to somebody who has something to say. So, I think those are all very important qualities and something that they're getting used to very early, and then it is normal once they are older.
>
> So, we were participating in a lecture hall, and that's exactly what I would have done when I was in university, and got to see what it looks like, what it feels like to be there, the size, the distance from the Professor…just to gain comfort in that environment and to see what it looks like.

For many participants the MCYU is a valuable resource that exposes their children to a variety of subjects and careers, allowing them to think about their options earlier in life. A total of 11 participants shared that they value the opportunity for their children to be exposed to potential careers at the MCYU.

> It definitely has opened her eyes to a variety of career options.
>
> You know, so to expose those younger people to a variety of different ideas is more important than spending all the time on something they know. I think it's more important, exposure to a variety of ideas.

Most participants shared that their children were also involved in educational opportunities outside the MCYU. In general, parents want their children to be exposed to a variety of different settings where they can gain new skills.

> The first one [that I] value is just opening his mind to other environments…And I always think it can open another, another perspective.

> I see a difference, you know the way I was growing up I had a very, I had a very limited view of the world as such. But [with] my kids taking part in these other activities outside of school, I feel they have more avenues to relax and kind of, you know, if they, if they wish to bus to some other field, then, they have the opportunities now.

Exposing children to the university environment was a main factor for participating in the MCYU. For parents, exposing their children to university is a way to instill their own values of education into their children by breaking down perceived barriers, creating enthusiasm and gaining familiarity.

4.4.3   ENJOYMENT

Another theme found through participating in the MCYU is that of enjoyment. In various ways, participants expressed their desire for their children to enjoy learning and develop a love for it. Parents not only see the MCYU as an activity for their children to enjoy, but as a place to develop a love for learning. Many parents want to instill in their children that education and learning is to be enjoyed.

> I think it's important to value education so the kids will value it and eventually like, try their best. I'm lucky [because all] of my kids are avid learners and just love school, so I don't have to do much. But probably also because I always tell them that this is something important and something that we want them to enjoy as much as they learn.
>
> I've learned learning skills and perseverance, and, you know, failing and going - coming back and redoing things very early in my life so… I think that's it; I think that's it, yeah, and that's what I'm trying to instill in my kids…learning hard work pays off, and that's it. Enjoying, enjoying what you do. Enjoying education. Enjoying learning.

For some parents, the desire for their children to enjoy learning was expressed through their own values of lifelong learning. Some parents see that enjoying learning is an important ingredient for pursuing an education throughout one's life.

> I've really enjoyed it. I - I've got a love of learning, lifelong learning, and I'm hoping that through the MCYU program, he too will have a love of lifelong learning.
>
> I think this society we live in, and I grew up in, is very goal oriented with respect to education…Not accepting that maybe education could be part of your life. Not, not a means to an end, but just something to enjoy, and guide you. Yeah, I believe our society very much is like that…linear, linear through education, with the aim of getting something that pays you a lot of money.

Participants want their children to enjoy learning and to enjoy education. The MCYU is a way for parents to instill this in their children, as most of the participants expressed that their children enjoyed attending the MCYU.

4.4.4 ENGAGEMENT

The final theme that led parents to participate in the MCYU was engagement. Not only does the MCYU engage children's interests, but it engages families in a unique learning opportunity. Parents see the MCYU as an invaluable tool for engaging their children's interests in education, something they value to do themselves.

Parents expressed that the MCYU is engaging because it captures the interest of both children and parents in topics that might be seen as challenging. A goal of the MCYU is to teach the topics in such a way that families remain engaged.

> When [the lecturer] starts talking to kids, they freeze. They just cannot look away. She's so engaging and so she does not talk down to them. That was the other thing about the MCYU, it doesn't talk down to kids.

By engaging children's interests, the MCYU helps children to draw new connections and wonder about the world in different ways. Parents value the ways in which their children become engaged in the learning process by developing their own ideas and questions.

> I have a feeling it plants the seeds of like, inquiry, so that they can look at the world and wonder about the world and ask big questions. Because often the material that is presented can be what might be considered very complex topics but because it's explained in terms they can understand or at least partially understand, then their brains start to think and grasp with these ideas, these big ideas, and then it's always beautiful and surprising…the creative and amazing connections that they create for themselves. So, it's like a lesson that it's never really too young to plant big ideas in children and big questions.

> If I recall the way that she learned when she was there, I really liked her ability…her ability to express herself but also be very inquisitive. So, she's a kid who's usually a little bit quiet like she's more of a listener than anything but MCYU I felt really had them engaged, so she'd be asking questions, very thoughtful questions.

A central theme that emerged from the data was that parents value the intergenerational learning component at the MCYU. Parents expressed that attending the lectures alongside their children allowed them to also learn new things, become involved in their children's education and discuss the topics as a family afterwards.

> It's been an opportunity for me to…have interesting conversations with my son about some of these topics later. You know, and it's, it's been an opportunity for us to explore some topics that you know, possibly we wouldn't have explored before.

Engaging children in learning can be difficult to do, but parents praise the MCYU for captivating their children's minds and developing a curiosity within them. The MCYU

also provides an opportunity for families to engage in a co-learning opportunity. In these ways, parents see the MCYU as an invaluable opportunity to keep their children engaged in the learning process; the ultimate aim being to value education.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study addressed the factors that shape parent participation in the MCYU through the analysis of twenty online interviews and eighteen accompanying surveys. Informed by grounded theory methods, data collection and analysis took place congruently to identify emerging themes and construct a theory of parent participation. It is theorized that positive educational experiences in the lives of parents influences their approach to their children's education. More specifically, positive educational experiences in the home, school, and community created intrinsic and extrinsic values of learning that parents seek to instill in their children. The MCYU is a tool for parents to instill these values through 1) education, 2) exposure, 3) enjoyment, and 4) engagement.

5.1 THE HOME, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY

The results highlight the impact that different environments have on shaping participants' values and experiences. This aligns with Bronfenbrenner's SEM that states human development is shaped by evolving interactions between a developing individual and their surrounding environment (1979). This study discussed a three-level model: the home, the school, and the community. While not a holistic representation, the home, school, and community are examples found within the five systems of Bronfenbrenner's

theory (Kilanowski, 2017). The home and school have traditionally been combined into the microsystem, the closest and strongest system of influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Kilanowski, 2017) while the mesosystem includes the interrelations of these different settings occurring at the microsystem (Kilanowski, 2017).

The results demonstrate the significance of these two systems, as participants made clear, strong connections between their current values of education and their experiences at home and school. Almost all participants were encouraged in their home to value education for extrinsic or intrinsic rewards, leading them to adopt this attitude. For participants who had attended postsecondary schools, their experiences were predominately positive, experiencing first-hand extrinsic or intrinsic benefits, instilling strong values of higher education. The few participants who did not attend postsecondary school saw how this environment can create positive outcomes for others, shaping their postsecondary aspirations for their own children. Many participants also made connections to their community, an example found within the exosystem, a system impacting an individual through external forces (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1986). The community shaped parents' positive attitudes towards education through experiencing barriers, resulting in a greater appreciation of opportunities available in their community. Participants sought out the MCYU because they had either experienced a lack of opportunities or recognized the value and wanted to be a part of it.

Bronfenbrenner's model was adapted to a three-level model to reflect the results of this study, as the home, school and community were central in shaping the positive educational values of parents. This demonstrates that although the home, school and

community environment may look different for participants (e.g., culture, class, location)

a significant factor of participation in the MCYU is having positive experiences within

these environments.

5.2 UNDERSTANDING THE FOUR E'S: EDUCATION, EXPOSURE, ENJOYMENT & ENGAGEMENT

The four E's of participation can be better understood by looking at Bourdieu's theory

of cultural capital. It is plausible that parents utilize the MCYU as a vehicle for social

reproduction, where parents with higher educational capital or socioeconomic resources

are motivated to participate in the Program for the accrual of more capital. In the study,

90% of parents have at least one postsecondary degree, and 25% of participants have or

are working towards a PhD. In comparison, the population of people in Hamilton aged 25

to 64 that had a bachelor's degree or higher in 2016 was 28.4% (Statistics Canada, 2017).

The survey data also revealed that 55% of participants have an annual household income

greater than $100,000, where this reflects only 27% of the Hamilton population in 2015

(Ontario Federation of Labour, 2015). Only a small portion of participants shared that

they participated in the Program because it was free. Therefore, the MCYU participants

represent a smaller portion of the Hamilton population that are highly educated and have

a generally higher income.

The interview results revealed that 6 participants were first-generation immigrants,

and 4 participants were second-generation immigrants. In 2016, 47% of Hamilton's most

recent immigrant population (2011-2016) aged 25 to 64 years had a bachelor's degree or

higher (Statistics Canada, 2017). In Canada, immigrants have a higher ratio of attending

postsecondary school, specifically university (Childs et al., 2017; Vaccaro, 2012). Regardless of the income or educational attainment of parents, Canada's immigrant populations have high rates of postsecondary attendance, suggesting that parents' aspirations are important in shaping their children's educational pathways (Childs et al., 2017). For some participants, they experienced barriers in accessing educational opportunities in their home country before immigrating to Canada. Bourdieu's theory suggests that the more cultural capital an individual has, the greater their advantage is in obtaining more capital (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Although many participants now have what Bourdieu defines as embodied, objectified, or institutionalized capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), they previously faced barriers in accessing educational resources. For minority parents, education is often seen as a vehicle for upward mobility (Spera et al., 2009). In Canada, many immigrant families overcome disadvantages in attending postsecondary because parent aspirations are strong (Childs et al., 2017). Research has shown that parents, regardless of their ethnicity, generally have high aspirations for their children's education (Spera et al., 2009). In addition, parents who had positive experiences in school are more likely to be involved in their children's schooling and to communicate these educational values to their children (Fan & Williams, 2010). The results highlight the importance of parents' positive values of education in shaping their children's educational pathways. The findings also contribute to existing literature surrounding parent involvement in children's education. The results of this study highlight how the home, school and community are important environments for influencing parent involvement in the context of the MCYU. If we are to understand why

parents seek out opportunities, it is important to recognize that individuals come from different backgrounds and have unique lived experiences. Additionally, creating positive educational experiences is necessary for shaping positive values of education later. Regardless of whether these values are intrinsic or extrinsic, it is important that children have experiences that will positively shape their values of education in their adult years. The MCYU is a way for parents to not only instill their own positive values in their children, but also a way to create positive educational experiences. The MCYU is unique in that it is a tool for parents to learn alongside their children, therefore, they are not only participating in their children's schooling but experiencing a learning opportunity. Strengthening home, school, and community partnerships could better reach more members of the community.

Bourdieu's theory offers a possible explanation for why parents seek out opportunities like the MCYU. Their extrinsic motivations to pursue postsecondary education, such as obtaining a good job and gaining marketable skills, are ways to ensure their children acquire cultural capital. In addition, intrinsic motivations such as enjoying learning and fostering creativity are needed for children to pursue education long-term. Therefore, the motivation for parents to participate in the MCYU, whether extrinsic or intrinsic, is to gain cultural capital. It is possible that the MCYU is simply a means to acquire further capital through the four E's: education, exposure to the university, enjoyment, and engagement. Parents' positive educational experiences increased their cultural capital. Therefore, they value education because it is a means to acquire cultural capital. Expansions of Bourdieu's theory have focused on the positive implications of obtaining

different forms of capital (e.g., social, cultural) (Schlee et al., 2009). This extends to James Coleman's theory of social capital, suggesting how individuals must take pro-active measures to advance their opportunities within their community, whereas Bourdieu emphasizes the inequalities that impact one's ability to do so (Dika & Singh, 2002; Lee & Bowen, 2006).

The MCYU looks to help alleviate the inherent challenges which inequalities produce that hinder one's participation in higher education. In fact, part of the program's mission is to reach members of the community that are at a socioeconomic disadvantage, or more aptly, have less cultural capital. While the desire to acquire cultural capital in the form of education is not inherently wrong, the concern is when it disproportionately advantages some, while disadvantaging others. Rather than reproducing inequalities, the MCYU is a way to help children and youth be inspired and prepared to pursue education regardless of any barriers they may face. As demonstrated in this research, challenges are reduced through the four E's. This research has demonstrated that positive educational experiences in the home, school and community instill a greater valuing of education. The program encourages academic curiosity and supports learning in the home, school, and community through 1) education, 2) exposure, 3) enjoyment and 4) engagement. While it is for kids, the appeal for parents should be emphasized in future iterations. The creation of positive learning experiences for families is a priority of the MCYU and CU programs more broadly. Parents appreciate and recognize this priority.

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APPENDIX
1.1 APPENDIX A – RECRUITMENT POSTER

1.2   APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

McMaster University

DATE: _____   **LETTER OF INFORMATION/CONSENT**

Understanding the Determinants of Participation at the McMaster Children and Youth
University (MCYU)

PLEASE CAREFULLY READ THROUGH THE ENTIRE DOCUMENT. IF YOU
HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT THE STUDENT PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
@ mackeyh@mcmaster.ca

Student Principal Investigator: Hannah Mackey
                                                 Department of Geography
                                                 Faculty of Earth, Environment & Society
                                                 Email: mackeyh@mcmaster.ca

Research Supervisor: Dr. John Maclachlan
                                                 Industry professor
                                                 Faculty of Earth, Environment & Society
                                                 General Sciences Building 230
                                                 905.525.9140 x24195
                                                 Email: maclacjc@mcmaster.ca

Who is conducting this research?
The student principal investigator is Hannah Mackey, and she is conducting research for
her Master's Thesis in Geography. Her research is supervised by Dr. John Maclachlan, an
Industry Professor in the School of Earth, Environment & Society.

Purpose of the Study:
- To understand the socio-ecological determinants that impact participation for
  children and youth.
- To understand parent's perceptions of the university institution and the role it has
  on their child's development.

- To identify barriers to participation to inform the MCYU of what impacts attendance in order to reach children, youth and families who are unable to participate.

Who can participate?
- Parents who have at least one child currently OR previously involved in the MCYU Family Lecture Series.
- English speaking participants.
- Participants who have access to either a computer OR telephone.

What will happen during the study?
- You will be asked some demographic/background information in a questionnaire prior to the interview. The questionnaire will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. The questions are intended to provide demographic data (e.g., age, gender, race, partial postal code, etc.).
- You will be asked to attend a virtual interview (Zoom) with the researcher to verbally answer a series of questions. The student principal investigator has prepared the questions and topics for the interview ahead of time.
- You will be asked questions relating to your participation with the MCYU and different factors that impact your ability to attend.
- You will be asked questions about your personal experiences/beliefs and how they shaped your decision to participate.
- Upon giving consent, the interview will be audio recorded and/or video recorded.
- The interviews are designed to take approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour.
- Upon giving consent, you may be asked to attend a follow-up interview at a later date.
- If you NO LONGER participate in the MCYU program, there will be additional questions pertaining to your reasons for leaving.

Potential Benefits
- You will contribute to research that will inform the MCYU of how to reduce barriers to increase educational opportunities for children, youth, and families in the community.
- You will contribute to research that seeks to identify current inequalities to educational opportunities.
- You will gain experience participating in current research at McMaster University to contribute to knowledge creation and data production.

- You will help to expand knowledge of Children's University Programs in Canada to develop effective strategies for implementation and awareness.
- Participants may not benefit from participating in the study.

Are there any risks to participating in this study?

It is unlikely that you will experience any social or psychological discomfort in answering any of the interview questions. However, some questions in the questionnaire relating to household income, race and educational credentials are more sensitive and personal, and you have the right to decline from answering any questions that make you uncomfortable or you do not wish to share. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions, you may ask the interviewer to skip it and move onto the next question. If you experience any additional discomfort throughout the interview process, please let the interviewer know. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

This study will use the Zoom platform to collect data, which is an externally hosted cloud-based service. Please note that whilst this service is approved for collecting data in this study by the McMaster Research Ethics Board, there is a small risk with any platform such as this of data that is collected on external servers falling outside the control of the research team. If you are concerned about this, we would be happy to make alternative arrangements for you to participate via telephone. Please talk to the researcher if you have any concerns

Compensation

If you participate in this study, you will receive a $30.00 e-gift card to Amazon. If you withdraw from participating in this study *during* the interview, you will still receive the gift card.

Confidentiality

- All efforts will be made to ensure that data collection and analysis is kept confidential. Please talk to the researcher if you have any questions or would like further elaboration on this.
- No personal identifiable information will be shared with anyone other than the student principal investigator, the research supervisor (Dr. John Maclachlan), and a research collaborator (Dr. Rebecca Collins-Nelsen).
- Personal information such as name and email will be provided to the researcher upon initial consent to participate in the study for interview scheduling and identification. This information will be removed from the data before analysis and presentation of findings. At no point will this information be made available to the public. *Note: Some demographic information (e.g., partial postal code,*

socioeconomic status, year of birth, etc.) will be kept for demographic analysis of the study but will not be linked to you in any way.

- All personal information including name and year of birth that is recorded during interviews will be stored on a secure server (MacDrive) and a USB stick stored in a secure location by the researcher. Information will be kept for one year after the interview takes place (as reference for analysis) and then deleted.
- The oral consent log will be kept by the student principal investigator in two secure locations (MacDrive and a USB stick). The oral consent log will be kept for one year, and then deleted off both locations.
- Audio and/or video-recordings of the interview will be transcribed onto NVIVO. After transcription of the audio recordings take place, the recordings will be deleted.
- When the interview data is transcribed and analyzed using the computer software tool NVIVO, all responses will be inputted anonymously.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no penalties from withdrawing from this study, and you can do so at any time. If you do not wish to answer certain questions in the interview you do not have to, but you can still participate in the study by answering other questions. If you withdraw during the study and do not wish to participate, your responses up to the point of withdrawal will not be considered for analysis and will be deleted. You can also withdraw or change your responses after the interview up until January 1st, 2022, when the student principal investigator will begin the analysis of the results.

Information about the Study Results:

It is expected that this study will be completed by April 2022. If you would like a brief summary of the results or have any questions about the study process, please let the student principal investigator know and she can personally send you a summary of the findings.

Questions about the Study:

If you have any questions relating to the study or need more information, please contact Hannah Mackey at: mackeyh@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

- I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Hannah Mackey of McMaster University.

- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.
- I confirm that I am eligible to participate in this study
- I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time or up until January 1st, 2022.
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I agree to participate in the study.

You will be asked by the student principal investigator to answer the following consent questions prior to the interview:

1. Do you agree that the interview can be audio recorded?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No

2. Do you agree that the interview can be video recorded?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No

3. Do you agree to using the Zoom platform for your interview?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No, I would like to request a telephone interview.

4. At what email do we send your $30.00 Amazon e-gift card to?
_____

5. [ ] Would you like to receive a summary of the study's results?
Please send them to me at this email address
_____
Or to this mailing address:
_____

6. Do you consent to being contacted about a follow-up interview if needed and understand that you can decline the request?
[ ] Yes, please contact me at:
_____
[ ] No

1.3   APPENDIX C – INTERVIEW GUIDE AND QUESTIONS

McMaster University

Individual/Microsystem

Key Topics to Address:

- Education history
- Personal beliefs
- Attitudes towards education

Questions:

- *Can you tell me a bit about your attitudes towards higher education?*
- *What benefits do you assume your child is getting from being involved in the program?*
- *What aspirations do you have for your child's future when it comes to education?*
- *Do you experience any barriers to participating in the MCYU?*

Relationships/Mesosystem

Key Topics to Address:

- History of education in the family
- Influence of peers
- Influence of co-workers

Questions:

- *In what ways has your family shaped your own views of education?*
- *How did you come to learn about the program?*
- *Do you have any friends that attend the MCYU?*

Community/Exosystem

Key Topics to Address:

- School
- Workplace
- Neighborhood

Questions:

- *Can you tell me about your current neighborhood and the proximity to educational programs?*
- *Are you involved with other educational programs outside of the MCYU?*

- *Do you think your involvement with the MCYU would change if you lived in a different community?*
- *How has your work impacted your child's ability to attend the MCYU?*

Society/Macrosystem

Key Topics to Address:

- Culture
- Institutions
- Services

Questions:

- *Do you have access to services in your community? Services may include health care, childcare, libraries, transportation, etc.*
- *How do you think society has shaped your personal attitudes towards participation with the MCYU?*
- *Are there physical barriers (e.g., transportation, distance) that you face in participating with the MCYU?*

Additional Questions

*For parents who no longer involve their children in the MCYU

- *Why does your child/children no longer participate in the MCYU?*
- *Did you and/or your child/children experience any barriers that impacted your ability to participate?*

Closing the Interview:

- *Is there anything else that you would like to add to the interview that you have not yet discussed?*

Summarizing and Cross-Check:

- *Would you agree that the main factors that impact participation for you are….?*