

Families' School Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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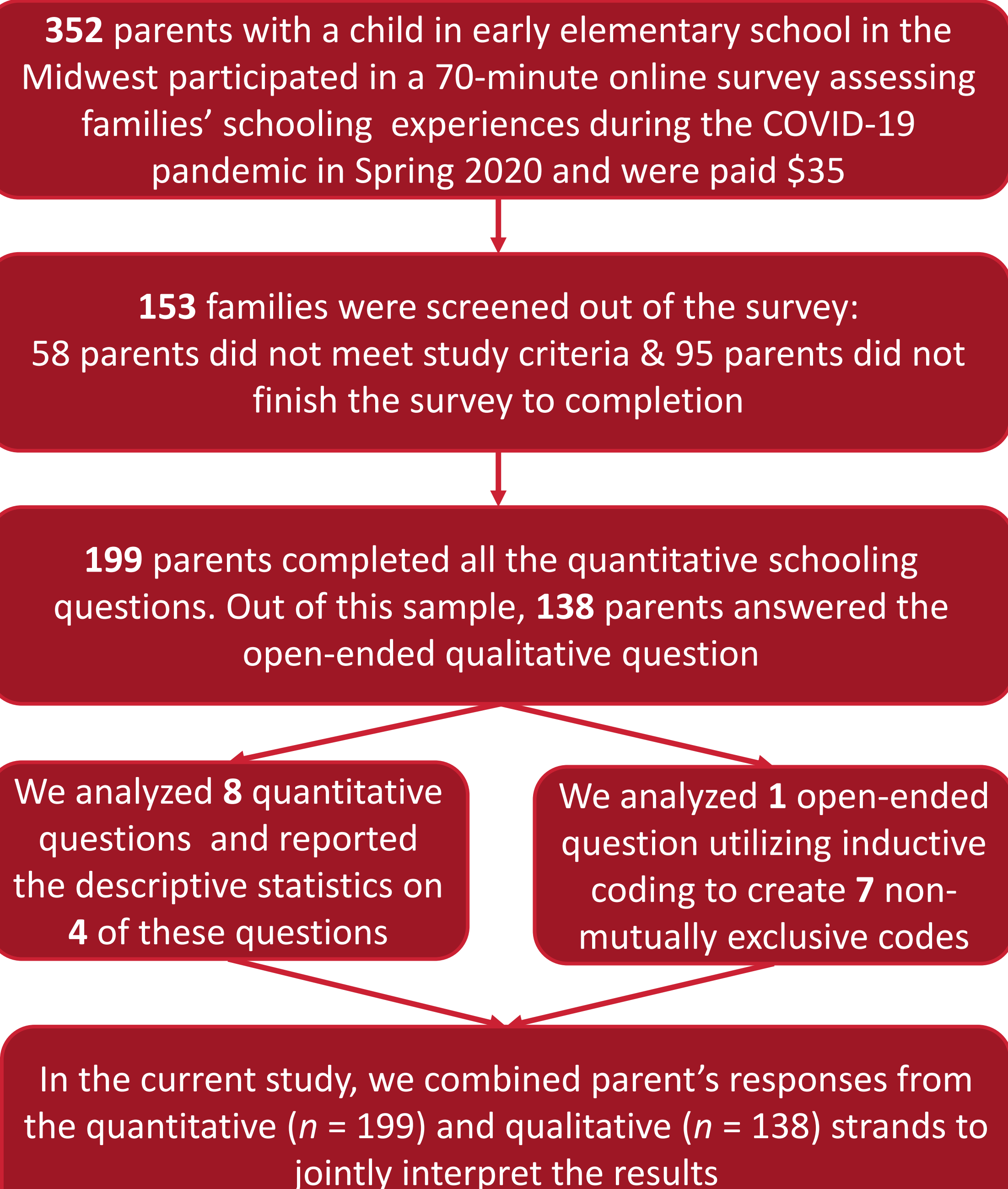
Introduction

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, parents of school-age children had to simultaneously assist in their children's learning while also working from home (Johnson et al., 2022). Concurrently, teachers had to quickly shift their instruction online and find ways to support students' learning remotely.

Given the drastic shifts in the provision of elementary education during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, this study describes families' educational experiences during the pandemic and stay-at-home orders.

The current study includes a convergent mixed-methods design by collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data concurrently and independently (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) to further understand families' school experiences during the unique phenomenon of a global health crisis.

Procedural Diagram



Theme 1: Families' Perceptions of Schooling

Code	Description	Quotations
Negative experiences with school and teachers (n = 28)	Parents struggled with online schooling due to lack of support and communication between schools and families	"[The] school has done little to nothing...to continue to educate her" "Could've done a better job of explaining things, just assumed we would know"
Positive experiences with school and teachers (n = 33)	Parents reported strong collaboration and communication skills between schools and families	"The schools have been fantastic setting up lessons and providing support tools" "I believe our school district did a great job providing the tools we need to succeed"
Parent concerns that education quality is less at home (n = 18)	Parents felt online learning was geared towards reducing learning loss rather than furthering children's education	"I don't think the kids learned near as much as they should have" "My child got nothing out of it and has basically been on break since spring break. I cannot imagine how much he has lost by being out for so long"

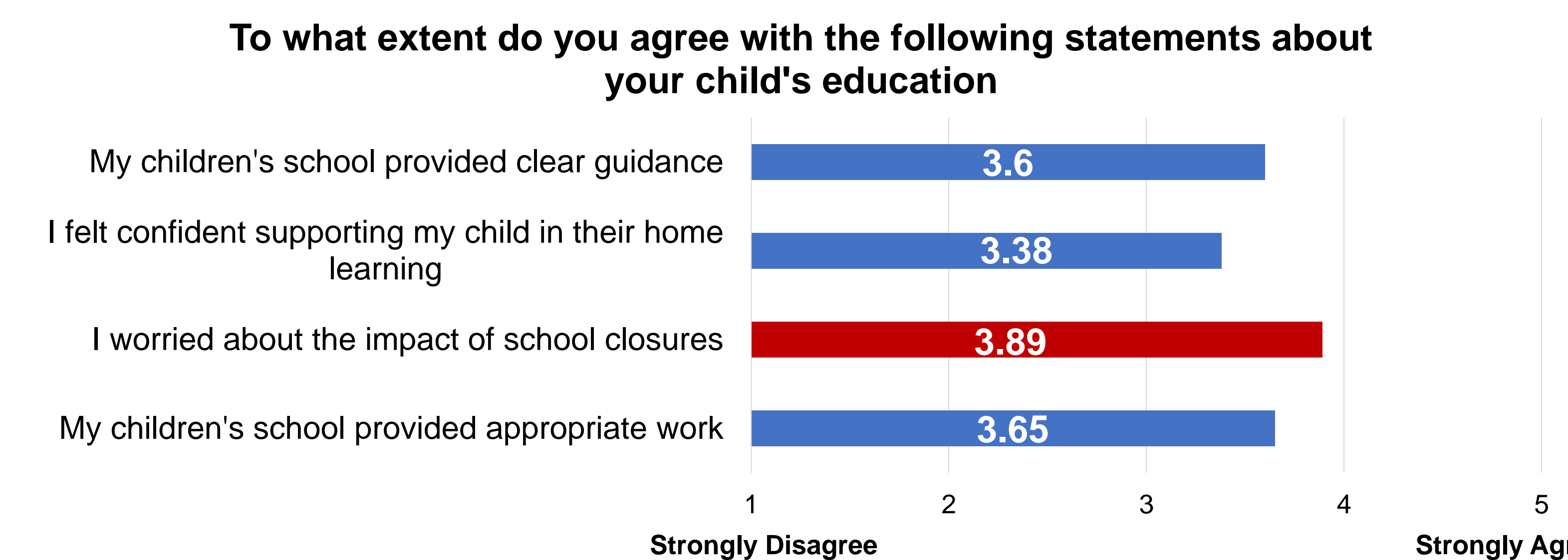
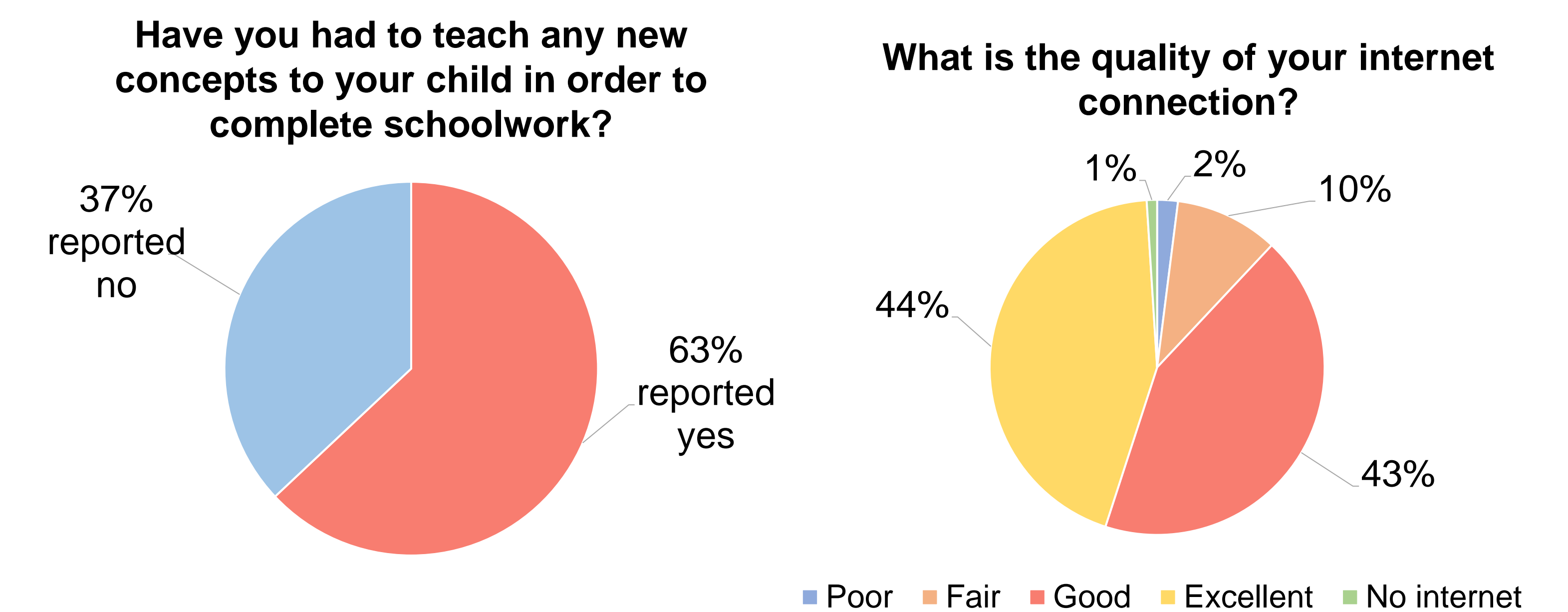
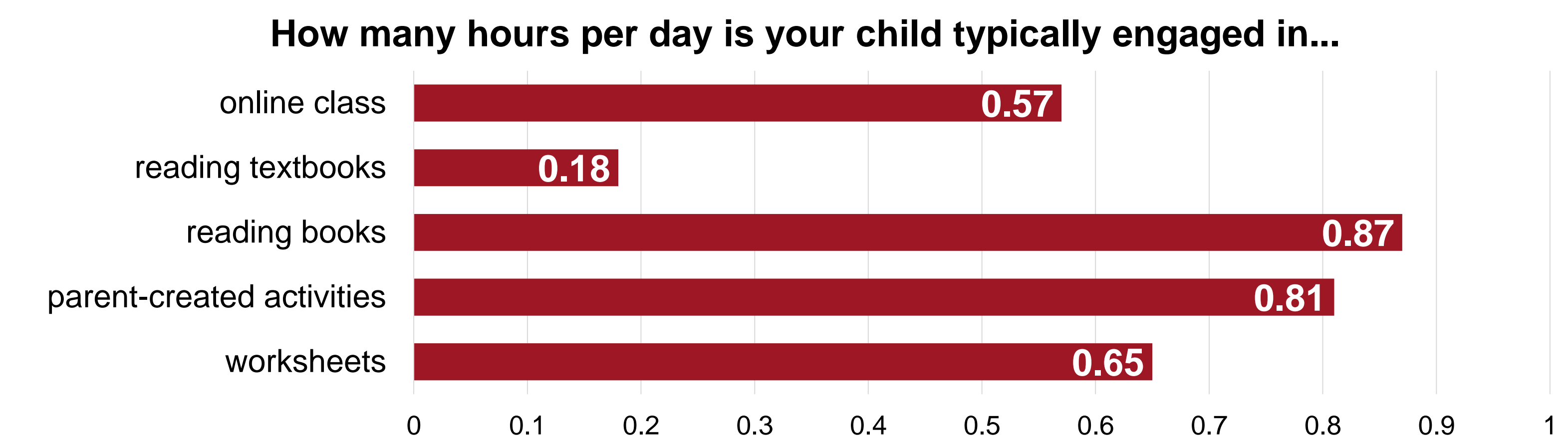
Theme 2: Children's Experiences and Behaviors

Code	Description	Quotations
Difficulty with children's social engagement (n = 24)	Parents reported on the lack of educational experiences and social interactions with teachers and peers	"... social activities between students would have also been beneficial" "[Children need] more interactive learning" "Our student would've benefited from daily streamed education not pre recorded"
Difficulty with behaviors, attention, and educational engagement (n = 35)	Parents reported children struggled with outbursts, frustration, inattention, and motivation	"We have had many meltdowns, tears, and behaviors related to not being at school" "[It] has been a struggle to keep my son engaged" "The main struggle was to motivate the kid to follow with her homework"

Theme 3: Parents' Experiences with Online Learning

Code	Description	Quotations
Parents struggle with technology and available resources (n = 33)	Parents reported struggling with having the proper technology and lacked necessary resources to aid their children's learning	"There were not nearly enough resources for our family regarding schooling, and the resources given were not accessible to all" "We shared one computer for three kids"
Parents struggle with teaching and working from home (n = 50)	Parents struggled with teaching their child's lesson plans as well as assisting their children while simultaneously working from home	"It was nearly impossible to fully give three children the education that they needed during the day while also trying to work" "I am not a teacher...I am not qualified to be a teacher. If I wanted to homeschooling I would already be doing it"

Descriptive Analyses



Discussion

Overall, some parents reported negative experiences with remote education, whereas others reported strong collaboration and communication with their child's school. Parents reported that children engaged in various school-related activities less than one hour per day, on average, as well as reported worry about the impact of school closures on children's education and behaviors in the open-ended questions. Two thirds of parents reported the need to teach new concepts, which was a concern in the qualitative strand.

This information can be used to inform stakeholders and policymakers on how to support parents and students during uncertain and stressful times. Furthermore, these findings can be used to create resources aimed at supporting students' learning as the pandemic continues to impact children's educational experiences. A next step includes linking families' experiences in the current study to a follow-up questionnaire completed one year later.