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Module Title: Digital Skills And Research Methods

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Assignment Title: Research Article

S1:

The chosen research paper that will be discussed today, is;

'She didn't know how to go back': School attendance problems in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic- A multiple stakeholder qualitative study with parents and professionals'.

This Research Article was Authored by; Bronte McDonald, Kathryn J.Lester and Daniel Michelson, which was Received on the 20th of June 2022 and Accepted on the 21st of October in the year of 2022.

The paper explores the nature of SAPs (School Attendance Problems') and stakeholders' service priorities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is counted as the first step in a larger research programme that aims to develop novel interventions for families with primary-school aged children experiencing SAPs. However, due to the fact that much previous research has been either survey based or limited to single-stakeholder perspectives (Cunningham et al.,2022; Heyne et al.,2020; Reid,2016) this study sought to assimilate complex, real-world perspectives from multiple stakeholders in southern, England.

This study apprehended the manifestation of school attendance problems in the context of COVID-19 and inquired into important issues. Said issues have been previously echoed and reported to the point wherein social care workers have been deployed to handle said issues and mental health professional have committed to research such as; In reference to a study 'Child mental ill health and absence from school, England 2021 to 2022' this study echoes similar ideas of the effect on mental health as it states that the children's mental health is amplified if said children have other co-existing vulnerabilities such as special educational needs and disability, these are some of the factors explored in other existing studies (Office for National Statistics,2025).

Consequently, whether this was the expression of children who were either already struggling with anxieties, SEN children or even reports of divergences between parents and school staff this was overall found to have negatively impacted the mental health of children, parents and staff contributing to financial worries and even health anxieties.

Further echoed (GOV.UK,2026) school attendance is vital for children's learning, wellbeing and wider development. It is a strong protective factor for all children and young people, supporting long term educational outcomes as well as safeguarding them from many harms. The

'Children's social care national framework' provides visibility on how the health and social care sector inputs their awareness and advocacy on this matter which evinces the importance this has on the health and social care sector in general.

S2:

This research paper pursued to investigate with following questions in mind, such as;

What the factors associated with SAPs for primary school-aged children within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic were, What the Informal and formal sources of support have been introduced to help address (new or persistent) school attendance problems and whether these have been effectual .

Therefore, this research paper aimed into drawing on multiple stakeholders' perspectives in order to understand the factors towards the manifestation and growth of school attendance problems within the ages of primary school children, its relation to COVID-19 and identifying promising community-based intervention strategies by looking into what other intervention approaches may be helpful for children and families affected by SAPs.

S3:

Within research, there are multiple methods that can be used to gather data, such as; Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method. Therefore, within the purpose of understanding data collection;

'Qualitative Data' according to (Surendran,2026) is defined as, non-numerical data, commonly collected through interviews, conducting focus groups and in statistics can also be known as 'categorical data'. The type of data that can be arranged through attributes and properties of things and in where such data collection can help determine frequency of traits and can allow researchers to form parameters through in which larger data sets can be observed.

'Quantitative Data' (Stevens,2023) is information that can be counted or measured, giving a numerical value to collection. This type of data is analysed using 'statistical analysis' and in research can refer to qualitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Research will also use qualitative data to calculate various measures of central tendency in order to gauge the general trend of collected data, which can provide measures of averages, medians and modes.

Mixed Method combines elements of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This method can help researchers gain a more complete picture as it integrates the benefits of both methods (George,2025). Researchers may choose to integrate these methods for varying reasons, such as; exploring divergent views, enhancing credibility by confirming results and to compare and contrast. This integration covers a variation of scope, which can provide future researchers expand and refer to said discoveries, expanding the possibilities of further data collection (Inankova & Wingo,2023).

Thus, this study adopts a Qualitative and Mixed-Method design, using a two-sequential data collection system, categorised into Phase 1 & Phase 2.

Phase 1 used a hybrid deductive insight-generating approach, applied through qualitative surveys which included parents and professional. In result, findings from Phase 1, were used to guide in-depth qualitative interviews in Phase 2.

For this research, parents were recruited through social media and Professionals through schools and associated networks in Southern England. Phase 1 included; 29 parents of primary school children experiencing SAPs and 19 professionals furthering into Phase 2, where 10 parents and 12 professionals were counted. The parents included were predominantly mothers (n= 25; 86%) and White British.

Considering data collection, Primary and Secondary data play central roles in research. Primary data refers to firsthand collections that researchers can gather from; interviews, surveys and observations or experiments. They key advantage that forms from Primary collection is it develops specifically tailored needs that derive from the aim of the researchers which ensures high accuracy and relevance. On the other hand, Secondary Data refers to data that has already been collected, processed and made available from previous research which can often be made accessible through public database, market research reports and academic studies. (Ashikuzzaman,2025)

Furthermore, this study takes into consideration previous research (secondary data), where those accounts had examined a broad range of child, parental and environmental factors as contributors to SAPs and how those factors can be understood within a bioecological model (which positions the child in hierarchy of environments that can influence the onset and maintenances of SAPs overtime). However, in this paper the researchers express that; the majority of previous research had used quantitative methods with relatively little attention paid to the explanatory models and intervention priorities of children, parents, education staff and other stakeholders (Heyne et al., 2019). Furthering the lack of qualitative research on

stakeholders' perspectives, the researchers declare that the available research had also been skewed with secondary school samples (Cook et al.,2017).

Therefore, the researchers of this paper, after acknowledging those secondary data collections determined to use the method of qualitative designs and mixed method approaches within the aim of developing a framework with promising community-based intervention strategies

As a result, primary data collection methods were implemented by collecting information directly through surveys and interviews. This was approached in Phase 1 where surveys had been tailored for the two main groups and consisted of six open-ended, free-text questions. The context of the questions asked to the parents were generated within the aim of understanding the nature of SAPs experienced, corresponding to the time periods immediately following national school closures. Then into Phase 2, sub-samples of seven participants (six parents; one professional, from phase 1 consented to further participation) where they were interviewed and another additional 15 participants (four parents; 11 professionals) entered phase 2. Phase 2 overall consisted of paying particular attention to the links between anxiety, parenting behaviours and SAPs; sources of informal and community-based support as well as school and statutory responses to SAPs and the quality of home-school relationships and implications for addressing SAPs. This was done after the semi-structured topic guides were created after a preliminary analysis of survey data.

Analysis, for this study consisted of Thematic framework conducted sequentially on the surveys and interview data. The study took a Hybrid deductive- inductive approach which had been applied to both data sources, using a combination of deductive coding, where the initial coding framework followed logically from the research questions, with refinements made through data-driven inductive coding. The analysis followed steps of; familiarization, identifying a framework, indexing, charting and mapping as-well as interpretation. This coding framework was then applied and continuously revised throughout the survey analysis.

A preliminary coding framework was developed (from the first author, 'BM') from predetermined themes informed by the research questions and data-driven codes. The lead author had taken a critical and realistic perspective, following interpretations of the data with respect to the existing theoretical and empirical accounts of SAPs, while also having drawn from his own personal experience as a teacher. All authors had met weekly or fortnightly throughout the data collection and analysis to discuss assumptions along with challenged interpretations in the context of these lived experiences.

S4

As a result of this study, it was found that attendance had been particularly challenging for children with special needs and pre-existing anxiety problems as well as the compounding factors due to COVID-19. Due to COVID-19 there have become related anxieties and difficulties, where adapting to this new way of life and routine, followed by the lack of effective support in concerns to academic home schooling, academic catch-up and poor communication and collaboration had become detrimental to children and parents.

Therefore, effective support was characterised by; schools and families working closely together, in order to re-build this partnership between them. New interventions for SAPs were concluded that help must easily be accessible in the community and address modifiable risks and protective factor with a sensitive awareness to the effects that COVID-19. Considering those who had pre-existing inquiries whether with the children's or family's mental health or even considering families with financial challenges and anxieties.

In conclusion, from this Research Report, I have personally learnt the importance of academic writing in research skills and the important characteristics that show through in this type of work, such as; how framing such hard work needs to be done in a format of laying out the topic and discussing the key points with vocabulary and coherence throughout that recognises these points without losing itself in metaphorical talks.

This helped me understand how to professionally discuss points and reference to works that extends over a wide range of subject, learning how to pick apart the importance to make it comprehensible to readers. This will really benefit me in my path for the workspace and future studies because it mirrors the inquiries I also personally have wanted to cover in pursuit of the roles I have aspired to take on. Also, as academic and report writing covers a matter of roles, subjects as well as responsibility in the Health and Social Care sector I wish to further in.

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