Fall 12-12-2020

A Qualitative Study of the Social Emotional Needs of Newly Arrived Immigrant Secondary Students in One Texas High School

Janie Snyder
janieshep@live.com

A Qualitative Study of the Social Emotional Needs of Newly Arrived Immigrant Secondary Students in One Texas High School

Creative Commons License

Flyleaf (the blank page for protection in binding)

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF NEWLY ARRIVED IMMIGRANT SECONDARY STUDENTS IN ONE TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL

by

Janie Snyder, B.A.T., M.Ed.

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

Stephen F. Austin State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Education

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
(December, 2020)

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF NEWLY ARRIVED IMMIGRANT SECONDARY STUDENTS IN ONE TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL

by

Janie Snyder, B.A.T., M.Ed.

APPROVED:

Pauline M. Sampson, Ph.D., Dissertation Chair

Barbara Qualls, Ph.D., Committee Member

Karen Embry Jenlink, Ed.D., Committee Member

Deborah Williams, Ed.D., Committee Member

Luis Aguerrevere, Ph.D., Chair, Department of Human Services

Marc. S. Guidry, Ph.D.,
Associate Provost

Pauline M. Sampson, Ph.D.
Dean Research and Graduate Studies

ABSTRACT

Immigration has been part of American history, through time increasing the diversity in population. The U.S. Department of Education reported that newly arrived immigrant students are welcomed to classrooms in public schools, and recent data revealed that more than 840,000 immigrant students occupy American classrooms. Immigrant students may demonstrate high aspirations and hope for a good public education however, some experiences bring about isolation, anxiety, and oppression, demonstrating a critical need for a caring and equitable environment. This qualitative case study utilized interviews with newcomer students to determine the social-emotional impact of the lived experiences of newly arrived immigrant students in one East Texas High School. Interview data was coded to define specific struggles and to identify supportive strategies for these students. The findings revealed themes in the areas of: The Language Barrier, Social-Emotional Alienation / Isolation, Needing Peer Assistance, Friendships, and Family. Students expressed a strong need for language support, which would assist in academics and social realms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I praise My Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is always strong when I am weak, and who promised to finish the work He has started within me.

Words cannot express my love and appreciation for those who experienced the sacrifice most, my family. David, thank you for your support when the many hours of homework kept me up most nights, kept the kitchen table cluttered with books and articles, and pulled me away from time spent with you. Shelby, thank you for being my biggest fan, for cheering me on, and for being my constant source of light and inspiration. Kaylie, for the many nights at gymnastics and dance when I read and worked instead of watching your talents shine, and for the weekends that I missed out on your adventures.

A special "thank you" to a very wise Superintendent, Dr. Darrell Myers, who has served as a role model of professional excellence, a mentor, and friend, and whose voice forever reminds me to stay the course, keep the main thing the main thing, and to always do what is best for kids.

To the many great educators who have served children and families and have helped to shape my passion, thank you for your dedication to the most important job in the world. More importantly, to the children I have had the privilege to teach and coach, thank you for touching my life and teaching me more than I could ever teach you.

Finally, Cohort 21, Dr. Patrick Jenlink, Dr. Karen Embry-Jenlink, Dr. Ali Hachem, Dr. Chance Mays, and Dr. Pauline Sampson, it has been an honor and privilege to take this journey with you. May we all change the world.

DEDICATION

For my late uncle, Ben. D. Terral, who first planted the seed, and for my Jimmy who is forever beautiful, forever missed, forever loved, and forever 19.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

Introduction to the Study

Background of the Problem

Suárez-Orozco and Todorova (2003, p. 5) expressed, "Immigrant youth are increasingly found in neighborhoods, schools, community centers, and health care facilities all over the country." Moreover, in some ways immigrant youth "are like all other children – immigrant and nonimmigrant alike. They also share particular traits and experiences that are unique to the immigrant experience." According to McCabe (2011, p. 1), "The United States experienced phenomenal growth in the number of English-language learners over the first decade of the 21st century, expanding the need in many public schools to provide special language instruction."

"The demographic makeup of students in U. S. schools has changed dramatically in recent years. The number of children of immigrants, immigrants, and students with limited language English proficiency keeps rising" (Blanco-Vega, Castro-Olivio, and Merrell, 2007, p. 43). The Texas Education Code (TEC) §89.1201(a) states that students in Texas who have a primary language other than English and are identified as an English Language Learner must be provided their education in bilingual education or an English

as a second language (ESL) program, as required in the Texas Education Code Chapter 29, Subchapter B (2018). Additionally, Waters (2015, p. 305) stated that

> undocumented children are entitled to K-12 education and so attend elementary and high school with other children, ostensibly on an equal footing. Thus, schools are one of the only institutions in American society where undocumented children legally belong and are entitled to equal treatment.

"All children in the United States are entitled to equal access to a public elementary and secondary education, regardless of their or their parents' actual or perceived national origin, citizenship, or immigration status" (U.S. Department of Education, 2014, p. 1). This provision includes newly arrived unaccompanied children, who are residing in local communities with a parent, family member, or other appropriate adult sponsor, as they work through immigration proceedings.

East Texas Independent School District (EISD) has experienced rapid growth in student enrollment beginning the 2018-2019 school year with 6,430 (August 31, 2018) students, and currently servicing 6,707 students, as per the School Board Report posted February 18, 2019. Among the greatest increase are students identified as English Language Learners (ELLs), with the total as of this project being 2,902 students, which is 43.3% of the district population, up from 2,792 at 42.5% during the October, 2018 Snapshot. The campus of East Texas High School in ETISD has shown considerable growth in student population, with the majority of growth being English Language Learners, a total of 361 to date. Fifteen of these students are Newly Arrived Immigrant Students who came from varying countries including Honduras and Costa Rica, and some

attending school for the first time in a structured educational setting. Currently there are 15 newly arrived immigrant students being served at East Texas High School as follows: 9th Grade- four students, 10th Grade- three students, and 11th Grade- three students.

East Texas High School (ETHS) functions as a traditional public high school, with an administrative team including a Principal, four Assistant Principals, four Counselors, one College and Career Counselor, and two Instruction Specialists. Appropriately certified teachers and staff serve students in the state required curriculum, as well as electives and Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses that provide enrichment to learning. Additionally, Bilingual and English as a Second Language certified teachers work diligently to meet the academic needs of English Language Learners, including the 15 Newly Arrived Immigrant Students.

Chapter 89 of the Texas Education Code, policy §89.1201 (2019) mandates that every student in Texas "who has a primary language other than English and who is identified as an English learner shall be provided a full opportunity to participate in a bilingual education or English as a second language (ESL) program" (see Appendix A for TEC §89.1201.Policy Assurances.) At ETHS ninth grade newcomers are serviced in two English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) I classes, while 10th grade newcomers are placed in ESOL II. ESOL courses provide credit for their English I and English II classes. These students also receive instruction through a pull out program with an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. To determine appropriate placement for students, TELPAS (Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System) data is used, showing student levels of English language proficiency. Students

who score in the Intermediate Advanced or Advanced High range are placed in the general education setting with an ESL certified teacher, while students who score in the Beginner and Intermediate range are placed in the ESL program. Students in 11th and 12th grades are placed in the appropriate English course and receive supports as needed by the ESOL teachers. In addition, for the 2019-2020 school year a New Language Acquisition elective course was added to increase language skills.

Goals in the Campus Improvement Plan for ETHS address academic performance of all students on state assessments, attendance percentage, highly qualified teachers, safe and drug free environment, and preparation for post-secondary readiness. While the plan mentions students at risk, there is no mention of English Language Learners specifically, nor of meeting the needs of newly arrived immigrant students.

Problem Statement

"The rapidly increasing population of Latino youth is at significant risk for mental health problems due to the high rates of poverty, violence, teenage pregnancy, and school dropout" (Garrison, et. al., 1999, p. 215). The problem to be addressed in this research is that while Newly Arrived Immigrant Students are served by appropriately certified teachers and receive academic resources and materials to assist in their learning, social-emotional supports are not addressed in the ETHS Campus Improvement Plan. According to Blanco-Vega, Castro-Olivio, and Merrell (2007, p. 47), "Immigrant Latino youths face unique circumstances and therefore may have unique social and emotional needs. One of the most salient psychological processes that immigrant Latino adolescents face is acculturation."

Ozer (2013, p. 1) stated, “Acculturation can be understood as the continuous meeting of different cultural elements.” In addition, Ozer (2017, p. 1) explained that the act of acculturation is “understood as a process happening within various domains, with changes in behavior, such as use of language, food preference, peer group interaction, and media consumption, as well as changes in attitude, such as preferences for the involved cultural elements.”

The issues Latino immigrant students face, such as a traumatic experience during the process of immigration, entering a new culture and facing new language and social norms, and possible discrimination “represent a great challenge for the social and emotional well-being of Latino immigrant and other ethnic and cultural minority students” (Blanco-Vega, Castro-Olivio, & Merrell, 2007, p. 48). Thus, Blanco-Vega, et., al. (2007, p. 57) further stated that “Latino immigrant youths are at risk for negative social and academic outcomes.” Boldly, Li (2010, p. 133) expressed, “Traditionally, the White teaching work-force has been set as default, but its dominant attitude and its ignorance of other cultures have greatly limited its capacity in delivering quality service to ethnically and linguistically diverse students.”

In a study conducted in Turin, Italy, Ricucci (2008, p. 456) found that “The importance of school as an institution involved in the reception, integration and construction of an intercultural experience is especially critical given the increment of the attendance of foreign students in the various levels of the education system.” Additionally, DeJonckheere, Vaughn, and Jacquez (2017, p. 408) described five categories of adversity and stress found in their study of Latino Immigrant youth which

stem from "(a) peer relationships, (b) immigration, (c) academics, (d) language, and (e) family."

Finally, Chapter 89, Subchapter BB. Commissioner's Rules Concerning State Plan for Educating English Learners, effective in 2018, did not address the social emotional needs of newly arrived immigrant students. In fact, the rules refer only to educational programs, such as Dual Language, professional certifications required of teachers, professional development, assessments, and requirements to meet the academic needs of English Language Learners.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to identify and understand the lived experiences that Newly Arrived Immigrant Students face in the East Texas High School setting, and to develop a working plan of systems and strategies to provide social-emotional supports. McLaughlin, et. al., (2002, p. 214) stated, "Given the complexity of economic, cultural, and educational issues for Latino immigrants, it is vital to identify the at-risk factors and the success factors in our own communities." In addition, "Educators should help students and parents learn how to negotiate and interact with schools, determine ways to communicate directly with immigrant families, and organize staff development experiences that compel school personnel to examine their images of Latino immigrants" (McLaughlin, et. al., 2002, p. 227).

Garrison, Roy, and Azar (1999, p. 200) stated, "In order to provide culturally competent services to Latino children and their families, it is essential to understand and appreciate the characteristics of the Latino population, along with their service needs and

ways to effectively address them." In addition, to support immigrant students, Garrison, et al., further urged the "delivery of school-based mental health services for meeting the mental health needs of Latino children in the context of their family, school, and community" (1999, p. 207).

Research Questions

The research questions that guide this study include:

1. What are the lived experiences of newly arrived immigrant students at East Texas High School?
2. What are the social-emotional needs described by newly arrived immigrant students?

Significance of the Research

Marshall and Rossman (2016, p. 67) stated, "The proposal should present a convincing argument, showing how the proposed research will likely be meaningful and will contribute to improving the human condition." The significance of this research is first to provide information that will drive professional development for teachers as well as programming and strategies to support the social-emotional needs of Newly Arrived Immigrant Students at East Texas High School and in East Texas Independent School District.

Secondly, this research provides a rich literature review and qualitative data on the lived experiences of the participants that will enhance existing knowledge on the social-emotional needs of Newly Arrived Immigrant Students, and how to provide

supports in the public-school setting. By providing a voice to these students, their narratives will inform educators who seek to bring equity in the educational environment.

In a study completed by DeJonckheere, Vaughn, and Jacquez (2017, p. 400), the authors noted that to their knowledge, "no studies to date examined the effects of this complex social environment on stress and resilience in Latino immigrant youth." Ojeda, Flores, Meza, and Morales (2011, p. 184) also expressed that Latino immigrants are a "historically exploited group that represents more than half of all U. S. immigrants and is continuously growing. Limited research exists on Latino immigrants despite their large presence in the United States. According to Wilson, Ek, and Douglass (2014, p. 2), "Much must be learned about how youth seek agency by educational border crossing and how educators can facilitate rather than block their efforts." Moreover, Martinez, McClure, Eddy, and Wilson (2011, p. 324) expressed, "Though research on Latino immigrant families in particular is increasing, little is known about contributors to positive social, behavioral, and emotional adjustment among foreign-born parents and youth." In addition, "Few studies have examined the adjustment of immigrant Latino families at different stages in the process of adapting to life in the United States" (Martinez, et. al., 2011, p. 324). Finally, Wilson, et. al. (2014, p. 2) further stated, "There is also a moral imperative for educators to cross borders as well, but in a distinct way through which they exit comfortable and privileged zones to better understand, engage, and justly serve diverse students."

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that all students involved in the study are newly arrived immigrant students, as defined for this project. It was also assumed that including a trusted bilingual colleague, who is also well known in the community, would assist in building trusting relationships with the participants. Finally, it was assumed that all participants involved in the study would willingly provide truthful information clearly and with complete understanding of the purpose of the research.

Limitations

According to Neuman (2006, p. 156), qualitative research includes a variety of limitations. "Major limitations include time, costs, access to resources, approval by authorities, ethical concerns, and expertise." The researcher must take into account that "simply by identifying oneself as a researcher may automatically give one power over the participant because the researcher is viewed as a figure of authority based on education level and career" (Ojeda, et. al. 2011, p. 195). Thus, a limitation is the knowledge that some of these families may be undocumented and fearful or untrusting of the researcher and/or "the system" (p. 195). Ojeda, Flores, Meza, and Morales (2011, p. 189) stated that being unfamiliar "with research, prior experiences of being exploited or deceived for research purposes, concerns about language fluency, or fears that information they provide for a study will be reported to 'immigration' may contribute to Latino immigrants' consideration of participating in research." Building relationships of trust with families was critical to gaining permission to interview students. The intention of the researcher was to meet with the students in their community, rather than in the school

setting to increase validity and truthful information. In addition, a trusted colleague who has ties to the community offered assistance with the communication process. The information gleaned from this study will not be considered to be transferable or generalizable, but specific to East Texas High School.

Additionally, the language barrier between the researcher and participants adds a disadvantage. According to Squires, a disadvantage to cross-language interviews is the possibility of "rendering the translator or interpreter as an invisible part of the research process, failure to pilot test interview questions in the participant's language, no description of translator or interpreter credentials, [and/or] failure to acknowledge translation as a limitation of the study" (2009, p. 277). In their experience, Ojeda, Flores, Meza, and Morales noted that "Bilingual and bicultural skills have also been essential to our qualitative research projects, particularly in designing the interview protocol, conducting interviews, transcribing and translating interviews, and interpreting data" (2011, p. 187).

Moreover, "Depending on Latino immigrants' experiences with government in their home countries and in the United States, they may be skeptical about how information they provide will be used and/or misused" (Ojeda, Flores, Meza, and Morales (2011, p. 186). This notion demonstrated that "the research process with Latino immigrants is as critical as the outcomes of the study" (Ojeda, et. al., 2011, p. 186).

Cautions

Cautions, in this context, refers to conditions that the researcher must take into consideration, as they have the potential to effect ideals. Specifically, in this research cultural awareness and biases, whether known by the researcher or not, might have played a role in researcher perception.

Cultural competence.

According to Ojeda, Flores, Meza, and Morales (2011, p. 186), "When conducting studies with Latino immigrants in a culturally competent manner, researchers must not only be well versed in qualitative research methods but also know how to work with communities that have been historically exploited by mainstream society." In this situation, such skills include "relying on gatekeepers, having knowledge of the Spanish language, and understanding cultural nuances. Another issue involves attending to how Latino immigrants may perceive research" (Ojeda, et. al., 2011, p. 186). The researcher must also keep in mind that "to most Latino immigrants, participation in research may be a foreign experience. Thus, researchers should develop essential awareness, knowledge, and skills to conduct culturally competent qualitative research with Latino immigrants" (Ojeda, et. al., 2011, pp. 187-188). Moreover, "the more knowledge researchers have about the sociopolitical climate of Latino immigrants, the more successful they will be in executing a study that produces valuable data about this group" (Ojeda, et. al., 2011, p. 188).

Biases.

As researchers begin the qualitative process that involves culture, language, etc., participants and/or societies, an awareness of personal attitudes and biases must be considered. Ojeda, et. al. (2011, p. 188), acknowledged that "these attitudes and beliefs, if left unchecked, can influence researchers' interactions with participants as well as their interpretation of data."

Delimitations

The participant group was limited to immigrant students who have been in the United States less than five years, in order to maintain a purposeful sample. Initially, the setting of the interviews was to be on the home campus of the students, seeking to ensure a comfortable and trusting setting. However, during the interview process, COVID 19 reached the United States, which resulted in EISD moving to online platforms for learning. In addition, district employees were prevented from visiting the homes of students, or meeting face to face at any public place. Thus, all interviews were conducted via conference call and/or on Zoom, which is an online platform for meeting.

A bilingual administrator in EISD served as translator communicated the research intent, as well as provided assurance of confidentiality. This well trusted staff member lives within the community and is active in the church and in other community activities. To ensure the accuracy of translation, this same administrator translated and transcribed word for word recordings from the interviews.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in the specific context of this study to aid the reader in understanding the content and context of the research.

Newly Arrived Immigrants Defined

Definition for this project. For the purpose of this study, "the term 'newcomers' refers to any foreign-born students and their families who have recently arrived in the United States" (Newcomer Toolkit, 2016, p.8). This study included newcomers who are new to the United States during the 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and the 2019-2020 school year and attend East Texas High School.

Immigrant. According to Merriam-Webster, an immigrant is a person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence.

Lived experiences. Herger (2016) stated that the term "lived experience comes up most often in the discussions about social justice involving marginalized individuals and groups" and describes first hand accounts of the living.

Population data and increased numbers. "Rates of intentional migration have reached unprecedented levels in the United States and throughout the world" (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, Szapoenik, 2010, p. 237).

School population. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2019, p. 1), "Schools in the United States have always welcomed new immigrant children to their classrooms – according to the most recent data, there were more than 840,000 immigrant students in the United States."

Acculturation.

As used in this study, "Acculturation can be understood as the continuous meeting of different cultural elements" (Ozer, 2013). Blanco-Vega, et. al. (2007, p. 47) stated, "Acculturation is the process of cultural change when an individual encounters two different cultures." In addition, "Acculturation refers to the internal processes of change that immigrants experience when they come into direct contact with members of the host culture" (Kelly, 2016, p. 155). Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, and Sapocznik (2010, p. 237) proposed acculturation as a "multidimensional process consisting of the confluence among heritage-cultural and receiving-cultural practices, values, and identifications." Gil, Vega, and Dimas (1994, p. 43) defined acculturation as "the process of cultural change due to two or more cultures coming into contact."

Acculturation psychology.

Acculturation psychology "aims to comprehend the dynamic psychological processes and outcomes emanating from intercultural contact" (Ozer, 2017, p. 1). Additionally, "Within psychology, the focus on the individual has been related to adaptation during these cultural processes and the acknowledgment that not all individuals participate to the same extent and adapt in the same manner to the general process of acculturation" (Ozer, 2017, p. 1).

Acculturation psychological framework theory.

According to Ozer (2017, p. 2), conceptually, "the theory of acculturation psychology [framework] consists of various factors representing both the group and the individual levels of the process. This model acknowledges that the individual variables,

reflecting psychological aspects, are embedded in situational variables referring to the context" (Ozer, 2017, p. 2). The acculturation framework "distinguishes between the acculturation as a cultural or group phenomenon, and the psychological acculturation on the individual level" (Riedel, et al., 2011, p. 556).

Kelly (2016, p. 157) expressed, "Acculturation theory speaks to the adaptation of a minority culture blending with and adapting to a majority culture." In addition, "Through acculturation theory, Hispanics can recognize the importance of adaptation and integration into American society while still maintaining their culture and enriching American culture" (Kelly, 2016, p. 161).

Acculturative stress.

According to Riedel, Wiesmann, and Hannich (2011, p. 555), "Acculturative stress denotes unresolved problems resulting from intercultural contact that cannot be overcome easily by simply adjusting or assimilating." Acculturative stress and cultural differences result in several conflicts that may lead to significant stress. Riedel, et. al. (2011, p. 556) defined those conflicts as:

1. Conflicts through the new roles played in the new place of residence.
2. Conflicts through change of status, specific practices, beliefs and values.
3. Conflicts through acquisition of a new language.

According to Gil, et al., (1994, p. 44), "Negative outcomes occur when stressors exceed the individual's coping resources, or mediators. Acculturative stress, as applied to Hispanic adolescents, may also include differences in acculturation levels between adolescents and their parents."

English For Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

For the purposes of this study, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) refers to high school courses that meet the requirements for English I and English II for English Language Learners, in accordance with Chapter 128. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Spanish Language Arts and Reading and English as a Second Language, Subchapter C. High School. (Texas Education Agency, 2019).

Newcomer.

The term "refers to any foreign-born students and their families who have recently arrived in the United States" (NCLEA, 2016, p. 8). In this research, Newly Arrived Immigrant Students (newcomers) refers to students who are new to the country entering the 2018-2019 school year.

TELPAS.

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) was designed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to "assess the progress that limited English proficient (LEP) students, also referred to as English learners (ELs), make in learning the English language" (Texas Education Agency, 2019). TELPAS is used to assess the English language proficiencies in Kindergarten through 12th grade in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, fulfilling yearly federal requirements.

Translator and Interpreter

According to Squires (2009, p. 3), "Translators and interpreters provide language translation services. When researchers need written documents translated from one language to another, such as interview transcriptions or primary and secondary sources,

they employ a translator." Further, "If researchers require translation services to conduct an interview or focus group, they employ an interpreter"

Summary

According to Winsler, Kim, and Richard (2014, p. 2244), "Solid socio-emotional skills promote competent interactions with classmates, teachers, and other adults, potentially contributing positively to the attainment of English language proficiency as well." Additionally, in a study completed by McCloud (2015, p. 268), the author found that the "difficulties of English comprehension, anxiety over the physical environment, and lack of friends coalesced to create unsettling experiences for these students as newcomers." McCloud (2015, p. 269) also stated that newcomer students who make connections between families and community members who are English Language Learners transition more smoothly into the school setting.

Further, Blanco-Vega, et al. (2007, p. 48) stated,

> We must not forget that when Latino immigrant students first enter American schools they are thrown into an entirely new culture [in which] students are forced to learn a new language and coping skills around racial, ethnic, and language discrimination that could have a negative effect on their mental health.

Organization of the Study

In this study, chapter I provided background knowledge, starting with a descriptor of the district involved in the study in regard to the specific research topic. The problem, purpose, and significance of the research are explained, as well as specific research questions, terms and the organizational format. Chapter II provides a rich literature

review that supports the nature and ideas of this research. Literature review sections include a description of newly arrived immigrant students, their lived experiences, social-emotional skills as critical elements, acculturation, theories, and possible interventions to support newcomer students.

The methodology is described in chapter III, depicting a qualitative study using interviews to glean information from newly arrived immigrant students from one school district. In this chapter, the theoretical framework is defined, as well as processes that ensure ethical research.

Chapters IV and V provide a conclusion to the research. In chapter IV the findings of the study are shared in accordance with the research questions. All qualitative interview data is presented as emerging themes. Chapter V provides a summary of the study, including implications and recommendations for further research and suggested supports for newly arrived immigrant students.

This study utilized an Acculturation Psychological Framework Theory which is "based on a universalistic theoretical position acknowledging the culture-specific differences in search of the underlying psychological mechanisms" (Ozer, 2017. P. 4). Within psychology, according to Ozer (2017, p. 1), "the focus on the individual has been related to adaptation during these cultural processes and the acknowledgment that not all individuals participate to the same extent and adapt in the same manner to the general process of acculturation." Additionally, Ozer (2017, p. 2) stated, "Even though the acculturation process affects the new cultural society, the greatest effect is from the context of reception to the acculturating individual."

In addition, the research included a Critical Theory framework. According to Reeves, et al., stated, “Critical theorists study how the construction of knowledge and the organization of power in society generally, and in institutions such as schools, hospitals, and governments specifically, can lead to the subjugation or oppression of particular individuals, groups, or perspectives” (2008, p. 633). Critical theory then “is not tied to one specific methodology and can be applied at the micro (individual), macro (local systems and contexts), or macro (societal) level” (Reeves, et. al., 2008, p. 633).

This dissertation research was qualitative in nature using purposeful sampling to conduct interviews with newly arrived immigrant students. Interviews were conducted with individual participants, using open-ended questions, to allow for the voices to heard and understood. The interviews were recorded and translated to English and put into transcript form for coding. The coding was categorized by perceived struggle, and possible strategies and programming to support newly arrived immigrant students. The identity of all participants remained confidential throughout the process and when reporting the findings.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

This chapter provides review of relevant literature associated with the problem addressed in the study. Newly arrived immigrant student, as referenced in this research, is defined in regard to lived experiences including the immigration process, inequities, trauma, and schools. Social emotional skills as critical elements for newcomer students is explored and includes personal perspectives from a study completed by McCloud, 2015.

The diversities among newcomer students and the dynamics of acculturation are discussed and include gender, family factors, residency, educational background, socio-economic status, and the prospect of acculturation assessments. As foundational theories to the study, Acculturation Psychological Framework Theory and Critical Theory are explored. Finally, the literature review provides suggested interventions to support newcomer students in the home, school, and community.

Introduction

Suárez-Orozco and Todorova (2003, p. 5) expressed, “Immigrant youth are increasingly found in neighborhoods, schools, community centers, and health care facilities all over the country.” Moreover, in some ways immigrant youth “are like all

other children – immigrant and nonimmigrant alike. They also share particular traits and experiences that are unique to the immigrant experience" (Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2003, p. 5). The number of newly arrived immigrants in the United States continues to increase at a rapid rate. According to Camarota (2001):

- More than 1.2 million legal and illegal immigrants combined now settle in the United States each year.
- The number of immigrants living in the United States has more than tripled since 1970, from 9.6 million to 28.4 million. As a percentage of the U.S. population, immigrants have more than doubled, from 4.7 percent in 1970 to 10.4 percent in 2000.
- By historical standards, the number of immigrants living in the United States is unprecedented. Even at the peak of the great wave of early 20th century immigration, the number of immigrants living in the United States was less than half what it is today (13.5 million in 1910).
- Immigration has become the determinate factor in population growth. The 11.2 million immigrants who indicated they arrived between 1990 and 2000 plus the 6.4 million children born to immigrants in the United States during the 1990s are equal to almost 70 percent of U.S. population growth over the last 10 years.

In addition, "While some arrive with advanced degrees, good jobs, and visas, others arrive with minimal levels of education and find employment in low-wage labor markets, and have no documentation" (Gonzalez, Suarez-Orozco, Dedios-Sanguineti, 2013, p. 1179).

Newly Arrived Immigrant Students

The participants in this study were recruited from East Texas High School, which serves a growing percentage of newcomer students. While all students shared different experiences and reasons for migrating to the United States, they have all lived in this country for zero to five years.

Definition for this project. For the purpose of this study, the term "newcomers" refers to "any foreign-born students and their families who have recently arrived in the United States" (Newcomer Tool Kit, 2016, p. 8). This study included newcomers who immigrated to the United States since the 2017-2018 school year and attended East Texas High School.

Population data and increased numbers. "Rates of international migration have reached unprecedented levels in the United States and throughout the world" (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, Szapocznik, 2010, p. 237).

School population. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2014, p. 1), "Schools in the United States have always welcomed new immigrant children to their classrooms – according to the most recent data, there were more than 840,000 immigrant students in the United States."

The Lived Experiences of Newly Arrived Immigrant Students

The lived experiences of newly arrived immigrant students exhibit a variety of differences that include country of origin, immigration processes, family expectations and relations, and events taking place once they enter the United States. While newcomer

students seek to get a good education and a better life in America, there are significant consequences that are individual to each student.

"Immigration is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon involving many factors and variables that may be viewed through a variety of lenses" (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, 2008, p. 2). Further, Suárez-Orozco, et. al (2008, p. 56) stated, "The process of migration "inflicts tremendous stress on family members [as] families often must endure long separations" while survival pressures bring additional stressors.

Immigration experience.

"The migration experience affects the type and degree of acculturative stress that the immigrant will experience. Some are forced to flee and seek political asylum due to political events in their home countries" (Blanco-Vega, Castro-Olivo, & Merrell, 2007, p. 51). Others come to this country voluntarily, "in search of better economic opportunities or to join family members who await them here" (Blanco-Vega, Castro-Olivo, & Merrell, 2007, p. 51). Riedel, et. al., stated, "Migrants have left their social environment behind, in which they were socialized, still carrying those earlier acquired patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting with them" (2011, p. 56). Still, immigrant youth "share particular traits and experiences that are unique to the immigrant experience [and] all immigrant youth have distinctive features common only to their own unique experience" (Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2003, p. 5). When the type of migration is considered, "it is important to keep in mind different traumatic experiences, near-death experiences, and violence that some immigrants experience and its impact on their mental health and adaptation to the new society" (Blanco-Vega, et. al., 2007, p. 51).

According to Suárez-Orozco, Carola, Suárez-Orozco, Marcelo, (2001, p. 20) "Immigration, a major life decision, has important psychological and social implications for the individual and the family group. On the eve of departure, immigrants face an uncertain future with potential for both gains and losses." In their study, Suárez-Orozco, et., al., (2001, pp. 67-68) found that "only 20 percent of the children in our sample came to the United States as a family unit. Most of the children were separated from one or both parents for a few months to a few years." Thus, family "reunification is a long, painful, and disorienting ordeal" (Suárez-Orozco, et. al., 2001, p. 66).

Trauma.

"By any measure, immigration is one of the most stressful events a family can undergo. Immigrants must learn new cultural expectations and (often) a new language" (Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2003, p. 20). In their study, DeJonckheere, et al., heard student stories "involving two main sources of immigration stress – life before immigration and feelings of loss after migrating to the United States" (2017, p. 410). For example, "Many of the students were living with their grandparents in their country of origin before moving to the United States to be reunited with one or more of their parents" (DeJonckheere, et. al., 2017, p. 410). In addition, DeJonckheere, et. al., noted, "A second source of immigration stress highlighted by the students is the loss that is experienced when leaving a culture, environment, and family support network that is safe and familiar" (2017, p. 410). Losses also included such things as pets, family, and friends.

In a study by Gonzalez, et al. (2013), participants "spoke of their anxieties, of chronic sadness, of depression, of overeating or undereating, of difficulties sleeping, and of a desire simply to never get out of bed" (p. 1187). Chronic stressors ultimately led many young people to attempt suicide for various reasons including the "discovery of undocumented status and their legal limitations, ongoing stress and worry, multiple experiences with exclusions, and not being able to envision themselves in the future" Moreover, "Extreme isolation and concealment, graduation from educational institutions without tangible options, and reported fears and anxieties about becoming adults were all good predictors of suicide amongst the participants in our study" (p. 1188). Finally, "The rapidly increasing population of Latino youth is at significant risk for mental health problems due to the high rates of poverty, violence, teenage pregnancy, and school dropout" (Garrison, et al., 1999, p. 215).

Community.

"Immigrants' choice of neighborhood in the United States will have important consequences for their interpersonal lives, experiences, and opportunities" (Suárea-Orozco, et al., 2001, p. 130). Blanco-Vega, et al. (2007 p. 52) expressed that when entering the United States, "immigrant adolescents are faced with unknown customs and behavioral expectations that are controlled by the dominant culture. Demographic characteristics of the place of entrance have a great effect on the impact of immigrant adolescents' development of minority status." According to DeJonckheere, Vaughn, and Jacquez (2017, p. 413), "Independent of immigration and academic stress, the students described family stress as a significant source of anxiety and worry." Additionally,

"Family stress, according to the students, included difficult relationships with family members as well as the pressure to take a leadership role within the family" (DeJonckheer, et al., 2017, p. 413). Further,

> It is important to pay attention to the type of neighborhood to which the immigrant is moving, the access or lack thereof to quality education, exposure to violence in the new environment, teacher expectations for the [student] the local community's attitude toward immigrants, the local cultural climate, and any current changes to public policy that affect immigration laws. The mental health outcomes for the newly arrived immigrant will in many ways be affected by these contextual factors that my lead either to social and emotional resiliency or to negative outcomes. (Blanco-Vega, et al., (2007, pp. 51-52)

Blanco-Vega, et al, (2007, p. 51) stated, "Immigrants who arrive in the United States encounter U.S. cultural values and assumptions that all immigrants should become proud and loyal American citizens" and thus, celebrating cultural diversity only in a manner of superficial forms, which my lead to additional stressors.

School.

"School success is among the most important correlates of overall physical, mental, and social well-being" (Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004, p. 128). However, "many school systems around the country are not prepared to address the needs of an increasingly culturally pluralistic student population" (Martinez, et al., 2004, p. 129). Suárez-Orozco, and Suárez-Orozco (2001, p. 125) expressed that "the parents' attitudes toward education are passed down to their children. The children of immigrants arrive in

our schools with very positive attitudes toward teachers and other school authorities." Additionally, "Relationships are critical to the [acculturation] process, and it is in schools that immigrant youth fore new friendships, create and solidify social networks, and begin to acquire the academic, linguistic, and cultural knowledge that will sustain them throughout their journey" (Suárez-Orozco, et al., 2008, p. 3). "Educational borderlands are the physical and/or conceptual landscapes where one must negotiate notions of cultural difference as she or he lives and learns – [they] envelop an array of pedagogical and cultural spaces, yet are typically guarded by exclusionary tactics" (Wilson, et. al., 2014, p. 1). DeJonckheere, et al., (2017, p. 408) described five categories of "adversity and stress experiences" of Latino Immigrant Students including "(a) peer relationships, (b) immigration, (c) academics, (d) language, and (e) family." According to the students in their study "reported significant peer-related stress, including difficulties forming relationships and experiences with teasing, bullying, and interpersonal aggression." These experiences resulted in "feelings of sadness, frustration, and isolation" (DeJonckheere, et al., 2017, p. 408).

Within the academics, participants in DeJonckheere's, et al., noted "difficulties associated with academic achievement and success, particularly in a foreign environment. The children identified three major sources of stress within the academic arena: comprehension, homework demands, and family pressure" (2017, p. 411). In addition, students identified further stress and "difficulty coping with language barriers after emigration from a Spanish-speaking country" (DeJonckheere, et al., 2017, p. 412). Thus, "Children and young adolescents spend many hours of their days in schools, and the way

in which they adapt to their school environment will greatly impact their overall acculturation experience" (Blanco-Vega, et. al., 2007, p. 53).

In a study completed by Hilburn (2014), teachers indicated that they "were not fully knowledgeable about the complexities of these challenges or prepared to help immigrant students meet these challenges" (p. 663). One participant stated:

> I think the biggest challenge is a lack of hope for the future for students who don't have legal immigration status. One of my brightest kids is an undocumented Latino and super-smart but he's never there because what is going to school going to get him really? He is honest about it. He knows he should be in school. He also has other priorities and doesn't see a possibility of going to college that is affordable so what's he going to do. (Hilburn, 2014, p. 666)

Still, in Hilburn's study, participants (teachers) indicated a "very positive perception of teaching immigrant students. Even while acknowledging the multiple challenges and difficulties, the implicit message conveyed by participants was enjoyment in teaching immigrant students and a desire to help [them]" (Hilburn, 2014, p. 674).

Inequities.

Gonzalez, et al., (2013, p. 1183) stated, "In the mass media and dominant political discourse, the loaded term 'illegal' has a clear contextual and political meaning implying that many Americans believe undocumented immigrants do not and should not belong to the U.S. society." Moreover:

> The internalization of such messages left respondents feeling scared, along, distrustful, without solid footing, and lacking the possibility of successful societal

> integration as adolescents. Once these negative feelings were integrated into their identity narratives, there were devastating implications for their sense of the self. Responders articulated a distortion in coherence between previous and current beliefs about themselves as individuals. (Gonzalez, et al., 2013, p. 1183)

In their study, Wilson, et al., indicated the "importance of educators in all locals being more inclusive and countering racialized politics of difference that attack diverse cultures and identities" (2014, p. 20). According to Wilson, et al., (2014, p. 20), "Educators must be willing to challenge the hierarchies that privilege particular cultures while simultaneously reevaluating their own motives and ideologies as they relate to students of color, immigrants, and immigration." In a report by Mitchell (2018, p. 2), it was noted that "Immigrant parents often do not feel welcome to engage with schools and think they have little say in how their children are treated and taught in schools." In the following section, the social-emotional skills as critical elements is explored and demonstrates struggles that newcomer students face and includes the prospect of developing these skills.

Social-Emotional Skills as Critical Elements

According to CASEL, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning organization (2020), "social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions." The social emotional learning approach with CASEL suggests that social and emotional learning be infused into a part of

everyday life of all students, include all classrooms and within their community. Due to lived experiences, newcomer students are likely to face challenges with social-emotional learning.

"Social and emotional learning is the process through which social-emotional competence develops" (Domitrovich, Staley, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017, p. 408). According to Abrahams, Pancorbo, Santos, John, Primi, Kyllonen, and Fruyt (2019, p. 460), "The development and promotion of social-emotional skills in childhood and adolescence contributes to subsequent well-being and positive life outcomes."

The social-emotional implications facing newly arrived immigrant students.

Immigrant students face many challenges as they enter the United States and acculturate to their communities. Developing social and emotional competencies is a critical factor in their success at school, in their communities, and in learning. "Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which social-emotional competence develops" (Domitrovich, Staley, Durlak, Weissberg, 2017, p. 408). According to Abrahams, Pancorbo, Santos, John, Primi, Kyllonen, and Fruyt (2019, p. 460), "The development and promotion of social-emotional skills in childhood and adolexcence contributes to subsequent well-being and positive life outcomes." Arbona, Olvera, Rodriguez, Hagan, Linares, and Wiesner (2010, p. 364), "Immigration to a foreign country is believed to include many stressors because it typically involves separating from one's family and friends and learning a new language and cultural system." In addition, "Stressors related to the conditions of migration include a set of social and structural inequities that immigrants may experience upon arriving and settling in the

United States" (Torres & Wallace, 2013, p. 1619). Isolation, identity, voices from students belonging are social emotional areas that compose the social emotional implications for newly arrived immigrant students.

Isolation. Benuto, Casas, Gonzalez, and Newlands (2018, p. 201) revealed that "undocumented child immigrants experience feelings of isolation, alienation and liminality as they navigate life in the United States with an unauthorized legal status." Additionally, "Undocumented youth are excluded from many opportunities because of their status, forcing them to adapt and adjust, and further promoting their sense of isolation and alienation." According to Gonzalez, et al., (2013, p. 1185), restrictions experienced as a result of being undocumented "not only became materialized into reported experiences of exclusion, discrimination, and isolation but also as a stigmatized identity that was gradually assimilated into the core identity discourse of these young individuals." In addition, external barriers became internalized resulting in "with implications for almost every aspect of their lives, extending beyond the immigration barrier itself with deep implications for their identity, mental health, and well-being" (Gonzalez, et al., 2013, p. 1185).

Identity. Gonzalez, et al., stated, "Although often seen as an individual process, identity formation is embedded in larger social, structural, and temporal contexts, each with corresponding sets of values and demands." Moreover, "Such consideration is especially relevant when studying the identity formation of immigrant youth, as they navigate between different cultural systems facing the need to integrate different world views into a single, yet plural identity" (2013, p. 1179). "Immigration from Latin

America to the United States is often an escape from difficult circumstances, but with this gain comes a loss of identity" (Miller, 2013, p. 316). According to Blanco-Vega, et al. (2007, p. 48), Immigrant students "often become aware for the very first time of their ethnic identity and their self-image as an ethnic minority." In addition, "In some cases, they are placed in situations that are in direct conflict with their traditional cultural values" (Blanco-Vega, et al., 2007, p. 48), all of which increase challenges facing newly arrived immigrant students. Additionally, the pressures of the immigration experience " often conflict with the cultural values, language, and ethnic identity that an individual from a minority background may experience when the cultural demands from the mainstream culture are different from those of his or her native culture."

According to Suárez-Orozco, et al., (2001, p. 88), immigrant "children quickly acquire new language skills and often become reluctant to speak their original language in public." In addition, "They desperately want to wear clothes that will let them be 'cool' or, at the very least, do not draw attention to themselves as different" (Suárez-Orozco, et al., 2001, p. 88).

In regard to psychological acculturation theory, a new emerging aspect "addresses the importance of identity formation, elaborating on the cognitive aspect of social identification through intercultural transition. This theoretical approach acknowledges that acculturation is especially closely related to the social and cultural aspects of identity" (Ozer, 2017, p. 5). Thus, (Ozer, 2017, p. 5) expressed that "new developments are made to include the importance of personal identity." Finally, Miller (2013, p. 321)

suggested that immigrants must "be able to acknowledge the loss of some aspects of themselves that could never be regained in order to move on."

Voices from students. In a qualitative study completed by McCloud (2015), student voices were shared to explain struggles immigrant students faced in the school setting. "The difficulties of English comprehension, anxiety over the physical environment, and lack of friends coalesced to create unsettling experiences for these students as newcomers" (McCloud, 2015, p. 268). Shared voices were as follows: Student 1: "I didn't understand nobody. Talking in a different language I don't know" (McCould, 2015, p. 268). Student 2: Expressed nervousness "to the point of wanting to cry because I felt bad at school. I looked at other people and almost everyone is speaking English. Then I came home sad for moths because I didn't know English" (McCloud, 2015, p. 268). Student 3: "It was very difficult for me because I didn't have friends. I didn't understand anything either" (p. 268). Student 4: "It was terrible because I didn't know nothing about anything. I didn't know any English or didn't have any friends. Nothing" (p. 268). Student 5: "It was like scared because I didn't understand what the teachers were saying, and I didn't know where to go; I kept getting lost" (p. 268).

In a study completed by Gonzalez, et al. (2013), a sample of student voices indicated what students experienced. Student 1: "I didn't want to be seen as different. I mean, I wasn't different. But I felt like I had a big sign above my head" (2013, p. 1182). Student 2: "For the longest time I thought I was going one way. You know, we all have a sense of what we hope our future will look like . . . I was going the other way, and I couldn't do anything about it" (p. 1183). Student 3: "I don't know why but I was afraid

of being seen as an immigrant. I told my mom that I needed new clothes. She couldn't understand. I didn't know how to explain it, but I started doubting myself a lot" (p. 1183). Student 4: "When you don't have papers you don't have any motivation. I mean, you can't go further than where you are" (p. 1184). Student 5: "I felt really alone and didn't know what to do. I felt like giving up. Just giving up on everything. I mean, why should I try? What good was it going to do? That's what I thought" (p. 1184). Student 6: "It has effected the way I am when I meet new people. I used to be very outgoing, but I try to keep my guard up, try not to get too close to people" (p. 1185). Student 7: "Nothing was the same anymore. Everything I thought I was going to be, everything I did, was totally different. It was like I was living some other person's life" (p. 1186). Student 8: "When I was younger I used to cut myself. You can't hardly see it because I got a tattoo to cover it up. Those days were really hard. I don't know how many times I thought about ending everything" (p. 1187). Student 9: [I had] "gotten to a place where I lost hope" (p. 1187).

Belonging. When students are exposed to a supportive school environment, with a sense of belonging it can "decrease anxiety and acculturative stress because in such welcoming/supportive environments students are *not* asked to deny their cultural identities in order to fit into the host culture" (Blanco-Vega, et. al, 2007, p. 56). Furthermore, Blanco-Vega, et al. expressed,

> In this type of environment, students are not constantly faced with salient cultural conflicts, such as the demand to speak only English and to be part of nondiverse teams (eg., clubs, sports). Students who feel more comfortable and welcome to

> express their cultural values (such as language, tradition, parental involvement in native language), and students who can have contact with staff who are bilingual and bicultural, would more likely feel like they are a part of the school system. (2007, p. 56).

In their study, Gonzalez, et al. (2013) discovered that "Repeated attempts by respondents to restructure their self-narratives of identity, with the dawning awareness that they had no place to belong, elicited feelings of uncertainty and stress" (p. 1185).

Acculturation

"Acculturation [is] a process happening within various domains, with changes in behavior, such as use of language, food preference, peer group interaction, and media consumption, as well as changes in attitude, such as preferences for the involved cultural elements" (Ozer, 2017, p. 1). According to Ozer, "The experience of acculturation is found worldwide as a universalistic phenomenon. However, the phenomenon is bound in a culture specific context" (2013, p. 2). Ozer further defined four societal acculturation strategies:

1. Melting pot when assimilation is sought by the dominant group.
2. Multiculturalism when cultural diversity is an accepted value of the society.
3. Segregation when the dominant group demands and enforces separation.
4. Exclusion when the dominant group imposes marginalization.

In the complex study of acculturation research, Berry (1997, p. 62) stated that "no text (no matter how generous the word allocation), nor figure (no matter how complicated), can represent every aspect of the realities of the acculturation process."

(see Appendix B for Key Theoretical Relationships in Acculturation by Gil, Vega, Dimas, 1994.)

Diversity.

Immigrant youth are widely diverse in experience, culture, race, language, beliefs, values, and so on. Suárez-Orozco and Todorova (2003, p. 19) stated, "Nearly 80 percent are youth of color, originating in Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean. They bring with them an astonishingly wide array of linguistic, religious, and cultural beliefs and practices." Additionally, "Some families are escaping political, religious, or ethnic persecution; others are lured by the promise of better jobs and the hope for better educational opportunities…Some are documented; some are not" (Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2003, p. 19). According to Blanco-Vega, et al, "Immigrants who are categorized under the label of *Latino* come from several different countries and cultures, [which] has an effect on mental health outcomes due to the ease or difficulty of going back home and accessing family support" (2007, p. 49).

In a study completed by Oikonomidoy (2018), the author found that dimensions of diversity among immigrant students included "race/ethnicity/nationality, language, social class, phenotypical characteristics/dress, middle-school affiliation, and gang membership" (p. 199). Additionally, diversity was seen as a source of "group boundaries" and divisions between "friends and enemies, gangsters, U.S.-born and foreign-born, rule abiding and rule breaking, and so on" while also visualized as a strength. Moreover, Oikonomidoy noted that when diversity was seen as a strength, "difference was respected, recognized, and appreciated. Friendships were created across

boundaries, and differences provided sources for personal intercultural and interlinguistic growth and inclusion. Students learned languages from their classmates to communicate with them" (2018, p. 199).

Gender.

Blanco-Vega, et al. (2007, p. 48) expressed, "In general, immigrant Latina girls do better than boys in school" as they tend to face increased expectations from parents and teachers. Further, they "contend that although adolescent girls and boys may have some differing risk and protective factors, both genders seem to share very similar trajectories in the development of resiliency and negative outcomes" (Blanco-Vega, et. al., 2007, p. 48). According to Ozer (2017, p. 2), "Personal factors such as age, gender, education, and socioeconomic status are said to affect the acculturative adaptation."

Family factors.

According to Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova (2008, p. 56), "Migration is first and foremost a family affair. More often than not, family obligations and family ties are the very foundation of the arduous immigrant voyage." However, this migration process "inflicts tremendous stress on family members. Families often must endure long separations…[and] children acculturate more quickly than their parent, upsetting traditional family roles" (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008, pp. 56-57). "Parental acculturation processes and levels have been found to have an impact on the social-emotional and academic outcomes" (Blanco-Vega, et al., 2007, p. 52). Martinez, DeGarmo, and Eddy (2004, p. 147) found "Latino parents and family as being essential to, and perhaps more proximal to, student outcomes. *Familia* is the most

powerful protective force for many Latino children." Thus, 'We need to develop and refine intervention strategies that enhance parents' abilities to promote success for their children. Such strategies need to be developed in partnership with communities and schools" (Martinez, et al., 2004, p. 147).

In their study, Gonzalez, et al., found that "the fear of deportation was a constant threat to the continuity and congruence of the self at a symbolic level. But meeting daily and family needs was also a concrete and ongoing stressor" (2013, p. 1185). Moreover, "respondents had considerable responsibility of taking care of younger siblings, acting as a go-between for their parents and school teachers and other institutional agents, and taking jobs to contribute to family finances requiring active venturing into the society" (Gonzalez, et al., 2013, p. 1185).

In a study completed by Martinez, et al., (2011, p. 341), the authors found that "the disparate rates at which youth and parents have adopted Anglo attitudes and behaviors have led to acculturation gaps within families." Specifically, "Anglo-orientation gaps between youth and their parents appeared to be largest during earlier years of adjustment with parents 'catching up' to some extent over time" (Martinez, et al., 2011, p. 341).

Residency.

"Having legal status in this country is a protective factor because the fear of deportation is less present for the immigrant with legal documents" (Blanco-Vega, et al., 2007, p. 48). Furthermore, "undocumented immigrant children feel afraid and inhibited in school because they may fear deportation by their teachers and other school officials,

and as they grow they find the great disappointment of not being able to enroll in college" because of their status (Blanco-Vega, et al., 2007, p. 49).

The U.S. Constitution guarantees that undocumented immigrant students have a right to a P-12 education, however, according to Gonzalez, Suárez,-Orozo, and Dedios-Sanguineti, (2013, p. 1175):

> They cannot legally work, vote, receive financial aid, nor drive in most states. They can also be deported at any time. In school they are told that if they work hard they can attain their dreams. But when their peers begin to move through important rights of passage – taking their first jobs, getting their dirver's licenses, and applying to college – their inability to join them sets off a series of discoveries about what it means to undocumented. In addition to the onset of multiple exclusions, their lives are fraught with feelings of fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and guilt.

Gonzalez, et al., further stated that "as they grow older, family responsibilities increase, while legal options decrease" (2013, p. 1177). Additionally,

> . . . the hostile social and political climate, the cumulative stress from increased responsibilities to contribute to their families, decreased options to participate as full members of society, and daily fear and anxiety resulting from the ever present fear of deportation as well as stigmatized identities can serve to take a toll on youth mental and emotional health. (Gonzalez, et al., 2013, p. 1178)

Socioeconomic status.

While some immigrants come from privileged backgrounds, many immigrants face the struggles associated with poverty. "Many arrive from poor origins while others experience downward mobility in the process of resettlement. Nearly a quarter of the children of immigrants live below the poverty line, compared to 11 percent of non-Hispanic whites" (Suárez-Orozco and Todorova, 2003, p. 19). Further, according to Suárez-Orozco and Todorova, "Nationwide, 37 percent of the children of immigrants report difficulties affording food and they are more than four times as likely as native-born children to live in crowded housing conditions" (2003, p. 19).

"Immigrants from all social classes are affected during the acculturation process. Both upper- and upper-middle-class immigrants usually suffer losses of prestige and experience prejudice and discrimination for the first time" (Blanco-Vega, et. al., 2007, p. 49). Additionally, "Immigrants from middle-class socioeconomic backgrounds may suffer a decrease in prestige, often finding jobs that are below their training due to language and training differences" (Blanco-Vega, et al., 2007, p. 49). Thus, Blanco-Vega, et. al. contended that "socioeconomic status influences the amount of previous exposure to the host country's cultural customs and values, therefore influencing the degree to which the immigrant acculturates or assimilates" (2007, pp. 49-50).

Educational background.

Typically, according to Blanco-Vega, et al., "immigrant students usually report that in the United States they have access to good/free education, which is contrast to their experiences in their countries of origin where schooling may have been out of their

reach" (2007, p. 50). In their study of immigrant students, Blanco-Vega, et. al. (2007, p. 50) found that, "immigrants from Mexico and Central America tend to have poorer outcomes that Latino immigrants from South America and the Caribbean region" in regard to academics and dropout rates.

Furthermore, "immigrant children typically work hard in school and are generally healthier physically and psychologically than they were in their previous setting, [however they] often end up living in poor inner cities and attending rural schools in the new country" (Blanco-Vega, et al., 2007, p. 50). To prevent negative outcomes, Blaco-Vega, et al., suggested that "interventions need to be focused on the first few years that immigrant youths arrive in the United States, so as to be better able to cultivate that initial positive attitude that immigrant youth arrive with" (2007, p. 50).

Assessment.

Due to the "complex combinations of biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors of migration mental health" according to Riedel, et al. (2011, p. 55), "it seems to be impossible to study [migrant mental health] satisfactorily without discussing methodological problems such as the limited cross-cultural validity of assessments." The assessment of acculturation and acculturation strategies "has been a major point of dispute within acculturation psychology. As no standardized and widely accepted measurement for acculturation exists, researchers usually design their own assessment instrument with a varying sample of assessed life domains" (Ozer, 2013, pp. 2-3).

Relevant Theories

This qualitative research is grounded in two theories. The first addresses the acculturation process of newly arrived immigrant students and reflects on the cultural effects of the process on societal realms. Addressing the intersections of culture, race, and immigration status, Critical Race Theory provides the second foundational theory.

Acculturation Psychological Framework Theory

"Acculturation psychology has gained importance through the last four decades in response to the globally accelerated pace of sociocultural changes and intercultural transitions in the last two centuries" (Ozer 2013, p. 1). According to Ozer (2017, p. 2), conceptually, "the theory of acculturation psychology [framework] consists of various factors representing both the group and the individual levels of the process. This model acknowledges that the individual variables, reflecting psychological aspects, are embedded in situational variables referring to the context" (Ozer, 2017, p. 2). The aims of Acculturation psychology are "to comprehend the dynamic psychological processes and outcomes emanation from intercultural contact" (Ozer, 2017, p. 1). Ozer further stated:

> Today, psychological theories of acculturation also include cognate disciplines such as cultural psychology, social psychology, sociology, and anthropology. The expansion of psychological theories of acculturation has led to advancements in the field of research as well as the bifurcation of epistemological and methodological approaches striving to apprehend both the processes and outcomes of acculturation phenomena.

Within the psychology of acculturation, “the focus on the individual has been related to adaptation during these cultural processes and the acknowledgement that not all individuals participate to the same extent and adapt in the same manner to the general process of acculturation” (Ozer, 2017, p. 1). Also recognized in this framework is “that the surrounding society would mutually influence and be influenced by the acculturating individual’s acculturation orientation. Even though the acculturation process affects the new cultural society, the greatest effect is from the context of reception to the acculturating individual” (Ozer, 2017, p. 2).

“The study of acculturation psychology constitutes a young branch of social psychology [and the] issue of acculturation is of immense importance in today’s societies characterized by a high pace of sociocultural change and prevalent cultural meetings” (Ozer, 2013, p. 8). Thus, “much advancement is needed before it can reach universally relevant conclusions.”

Critical Race Theory

According to Reeves, et al., stated, “Critical theorists study how the construction of knowledge and the organization of power in society generally, and in institutions such as schools, hospitals, and governments specifically, can lead to the subjugation or oppression of particular individuals, groups, or perspectives” (2008, p. 633). Critical theory then “is not tied to one specific methodology and can be applied at the micro (individual), macro (local systems and contexts), or macro (societal) level” (Reeves, et al., 2008, p. 633).

Critical Race Theory offers "the ability to examine how multiple forms of oppression can intersect within the lives of People of Color and how those intersections manifest in our daily experiences to mediate our education" (Huber, 2010, p. 10). Further, "Acknowledging and understanding the complex intersections of race, immigration status, class and gender present in dominant constructions of Latina/o identity and in particular, a Latina/o undocumented immigrant identity, is an initial step towards deconstructing negative perceptions of this group" (p. 92).

According to Suárez-Orozco, "immigrants in particular need to create social connections to replace those they have left behind (2008, p. 358). The authors further state that immigrants face insurmountable odds as they journey to the United States including "terrible discrimination" and that it takes a long time for the "dominant white Anglo-Saxon Protestants to accept them as worthy, loyal, and equal U.S. citizens" (2008, p. 359. Thus, newcomer students must be incorporated into American society, including their schools.

Suggested Interventions

"Little is known about contributors to positive social, behavioral, and emotional adjustment among foreign-born youth at different stages of adapting to life in the United States" (Martinez, McClure, Eddy, & Wilson, 2011, p. 323). However, according to Garcia-Reid, et. al. (2015, p. 329), "Considering that many immigrants often experience tension and at times outright hostility upon their arrival on U.S. soil, increasing resources to counterbalance these pressures becomes paramount."

School.

"School counselors can work alongside teachers to identify and address the support needs of their students" (Garcia-Reid, Peterson, & Reid, 2015, p. 338). According to Hilburn (2014, p. 676), "Teachers and teacher educators should also acknowledge the challenges associated with obscure or undocumented legal status. These students are faced with structural vulnerabilities which can cause high levels of stress, familial separation, poverty, and even homelessness." Moreover, teachers must become "advocates for immigrant students in their classrooms and in their schools…[and must] move beyond the idea of immigration as a numbers game in which services and attention are only provided after there is a critical mass of immigrant students" who move into a school or district (Hilburn, 2014, p. 676).

In addition, supportive schools would "provide [immigrant] students with opportunities to socialize with other students from different cultural backgrounds in a tolerant and accepting manner" providing a sense of belonging and allowing students to maintain their cultural identities (Blanco-Vega, et al., 2007, p. 56). Also, enhancing the "delivery of mental health services in schools offers a compelling alternative to traditional clinic settings to effectively address the mental health needs of Latino children and their families" (Garrison, 1999, p. 215).

Professional development on understanding implications of immigration and the acculturation process, as well as advocating for these students would benefit not only the immigrant students, but the school community and families as well. Further, according to Suárez-Orozco, et al., (2008, p. 367), "Strong and compassionate leadership, engaging

teachers, and involved counselors and other staff can set a tone of respect, high expectations, and tolerance."

Partnerships.

According to Benuto, et. al. (2018, p. 201), "Undocumented youth will likely not seek help unless schools have safe spaces with trustworthy adult mentors. Schools need to consider providing this security to their student body." Garcia-Reid, et al. (2015, p. 337) suggested, "Schools have a responsibility to remove genuine and/or perceived barriers that might interfere with parental involvement…and be encouraged to partake in activities and programs that will advance their understanding of the various aspects of their children's educational experience." Additionally, school systems should target "teachers in partnership with parents to come together to encourage an emotionally supportive atmosphere that results in creating an ecological safety net for their students that promotes school engagement and decreases the likelihood of school trouble" (Garcia-Reid, et al. (2015, p. 338). Moreover, "Providing immigrant Latino youth with early and consistent positive support by caring and responsive individuals, such as parents and teachers, may help them thrive in their school environments thus potentially improving their educational prospects and future possibilities" (Garcia-Reid, 2015, p. 329). Suárez-Orozco, et al. (2008, p. 87) expressed:

> Addressing immigrant families' needs through partnerships among after school groups, community organizations, schools and churches would go a long way toward expanding these networks of supportive relations and easing the transition for these families. For although immigrant families are highly resilient, there are

clear limits to the assistance that immigrant parents can offer their children – especially given the less-than optimal education environments that their children so often experience.

Gonzalez, et al. (2013, p. 1188) expressed that immigrant students "who were able to maintain strong friendships or had caring adults (teachers, counselors, or other adult mentors) with whom they could talk openly about their struggles described less emotional distress and were much more likely to remain at school."

Along with adult partnerships, immigrant students would benefit "by connecting with other English language learners, [which can] ease the anxiety and fear" that is experienced. (McCloud, 2015, p. 268). Further, McCloud (2015, p. 269) found that for these students "partnering with someone 'just like me' is significant because it demonstrates how aware students were of their cultural and linguistic differences within the school space." Additionally, "Building relationships with other English language learners provided the opportunity for students to enter into the school's social and institutional context as English language learners" learning necessary strategies to be successful in school" (McCloud, 2015, p. 269).

Family interventions.

Gil, et al. (1994, p. 53) suggested that "clinical interventions with Hispanic adolescents may need to incorporate a family approach [as] family relations appear to be of critical importance in ameliorating the possible negative effects of acculturation stress." Family interventions would also seek to reduce "acculturation gaps between parents and adolescents" (Gil, et. al., 1994, p. 53).

Additional steps to improve immigrant adaptation.

In a case study, Ricucci (2008, p. 458) proposed three recommendations to "improve the adaptation of foreign children and youth to Italian schools," which suggestively, would be a generalization:

1. Design specific sub- policies (sub- practices) aimed at the different immigrant groups.
2. Improve the support given to foreign families and promote the potentially crucial role they play in furthering their children's education.
3. Improve their knowledge of their native language; [with the notion that] bilingualism can bring equal – if not greater – benefits.

Summary

In this chapter, newly arrived immigrant student was defined as any student from a foreign country who is new to the United States since the 2017-2018 school year, noting an increase in the school population. The immigration experience is discussed and sheds light on the effects on newcomer students as a result of trauma, life in a new community, and challenges faced at school. Social emotional learning is demonstrated as a critical skill, as the implications of immigration often result in isolation, difficulty navigating identity formation, and struggles in the school setting that include language barriers, anxiety, and a lack of belonging.

Acculturation is defined as a universal phenomenon that includes a variety of aspects such as specific cultural contexts, diversity in experience, gender norms as related to culture, family factors and expectation, United States residency and socioeconomic

status, and educational background. These factors influence the acculturation process, and the complexities limit the ability to assess or measure progression through acculturation.

Two theories are used to ground this qualitative study. The first is Acculturation Psychological Framework Theory which acknowledges the individual aspects and personal nature embedded in the acculturation process, as well as recognizing the mutual influence with society. Critical Theory is also used as a foundational theory, noting that the construction of knowledge and power in the school setting has the potential to result in oppression of specific groups, in this case newcomer students.

Identifying possible interventions that support newly arrived immigrant students is described in relation to the school setting, that include programming, partnerships between school personnel and families, and family interventions. In order to support newcomer students, educators must build a trusting rapport and provide opportunities for relationships among peers, while allowing students to maintain their identity. Mental health services, teacher training, and changes in policy reveal significant possibilities in developing the conditions for newcomer students to thrive.

"Migration and immigration are worldwide phenomena of huge proportion. Considering the resulting changes for millions of people, it is quite surprising how little we know about the experience of growing up as an immigrant youth and about the process" of acculturation" (Noam, G. G., 2003, p. 1). In addition, the process of immigration is disruptive to many facets of life for these students, as "loved ones are almost always left behind, children are often separated for long periods from parents and

siblings before rejoining them in the new country, and new contexts may present few or not necessarily healthy social choices" (Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2003, p. 6). Additional disruptions and stressors faced by immigrant students include changes in relationships, losing "social roles that provided them with culturally scripted notions of how they fit into the world" (Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2003, p. 20).

Immigrants coming to the United States may present with limited if any schooling. Blanco, et al., (2007) reported that immigrant students often expressed that they have access to a free and good education in the United States, and that they typically work hard to be successful in school. Still, the authors contend that providing interventions and supports are necessary to ensure academic and social progress in the school setting. Such interventions may include opportunities for socialization with students from different cultures, providing mental health services, and expanding professional development for teachers that focus on the needs of newcomer students and how to advocate for them.

With the rapid growth of immigrant students in U. S. public schools, and the myriad of stressors and struggles they encounter through the immigration and acculturation process, it is critical that educators look beyond merely academia. As the literature demonstrated, social-emotional factors must be considered in the development and implementation of programming and policy to ensure the overall well-being of these students. This process should include the voices of immigrant students, the collaboration between them, their families, and their schools.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Introduction

This qualitative narrative inquiry was grounded in the acculturation psychological framework theory and critical theory. The study participants included four newly arrived immigrant students at East Texas High School in East Texas Independent School District, Interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed for themed coding. Additionally, a colleague who is bilingual assisted in translation between the interviewer and interviewee, as well as in translating the transcripts from Spanish to English.

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the lived experiences that newly arrived immigrant students face in the East Texas High School setting, and to develop a working plan of systems and strategies to provide social-emotional supports. McLaughlin, et. al., (2002, p. 214) stated, "Given the complexity of economic, cultural, and educational issues for Latino immigrants, it is vital to identify the at-risk factors and the success factors in our own communities." In addition, "Educators should help students and parents learn how to negotiate and interact with schools, determine ways to communicate directly with immigrant families, and organize staff development

experiences that compel school personnel to examine their images of Latino immigrants" (McLaughlin, et. al., 2002, p. 227).

Garrison, Roy, and Azar (1999, p. 200) stated, "In order to provide culturally competent services to Latino children and their families, it is essential to understand and appreciate the characteristics of the Latino population, along with their service needs and ways to effectively address them." In addition, to support immigrant students, Garrison, et. al., further urged the "delivery of school-based mental health services for meeting the mental health needs of Latino children in the context of their family, school, and community" (1999, p. 207).

Methodology

This research used a narrative inquiry approach utilizing interviews with four newly arrived immigrant students with the purpose of gleaning and analyzing information on the lived experiences of these students, their struggles, and perspectives, as well as to determine possible programming, protocols, and strategies to support the students. "It is vital that the researcher consider the research questions and research design so the appropriate qualitative research method is selected" (Campbell, 2015, p. 201). The qualitative narrative inquiry utilized interviews from a purposeful sample to ascertain information from immigrant students.

According to Lindsay and Schwind (2016, p. 14) "Narrative Inquiry is a research methodology that we adapted over the past two decades from Canadian higher education and curriculum studies to nursing research, education, and health-care practice." In addition, narrative inquiry "originated from Connelly and Clandinin in the 1990s, and

rests on John Dewey's philosophy that experience is relational, temporal, and situational, and as such, if intentionally explored, has the potential to be educational" (Lindsay & Schwind, p. 14). The authors also noted that "it is only when experience is reflected upon and reconstructed that it has the potential to reveal the construction of identity, knowledge, and the humanness of care."

Marshall and Rossman (2016, p. 157) stated that narrative inquiry research "assumes that people construct their realities through narrating their stories. The researcher explores a story told by a participant and records that story." This approach utilizes "in-depth interviews" and "requires a great deal of openness and trust between participant and researcher [and] demands intense and active listening and giving the narrator full voice" while permitting both the participant and researcher voices to be heard (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 157). Thus, the narrative inquiry focused on the unique life experiences as they are lived and told.

According to Marshall and Rossman (2016, p. 157), narrative inquiry "is criticized for its focus on the individual rather than the social context. Like life histories, however, narrative inquiry seeks to understand sociological questions about groups, communities, and contexts through individuals' lived experience."

The researcher

During the interview process, "the researcher becomes the listener and acts to reduce any researcher bias. Audio recorded documentation of the interview results in a verbatim transcript" (Campbell, 2015, p. 202). Additionally, in a narrative inquiry study, "field notes or interview transcriptions are shared with the narrator, and the written

analysis may be constructed collaboratively. In the conduct of a narrative inquiry, there is open recognition that the researcher is not just passively recording and reporting the narrator's reality" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 158). Lindsay and Schwind (2016, p. 150 further stated, "By listening attentively, paraphrasing back to ensure understanding and asking clarifying questions, the narrative inquirer learns what the participant has to share about the inquiry puzzle." Additionally, the researcher's commitment is seen "as extending beyond the immediacy of the research puzzle and [it is understood] that narrative inquirers hold responsibilities and obligations for, and toward, the people whose stories are lived and told" (Caine, Estefan, and Clandinin, 2013, p. 576).

Theory

Reeves, Albert, Kuper, and Hodges stated, "Theories provide complex and comprehensive conceptual understandings of things that cannot be pinned down: how societies work, how organizations operate, why people interact in certain ways" (2008, p. 631). Moreover, "Theories give researchers different 'lenses' through which to look at complicated problems and social issues, focusing their attention on different aspects of the data and providing a framework within which to conduct their analysis" (Reeves, et. al., 2008, p. 631).

Acculturation psychology theory.

"Acculturation psychology has gained importance through the last four decades in response to the globally accelerated pace of sociocultural changes and intercultural transitions in the last two centuries" (Ozer 2013, p. 1). Ozer (2017, p. 2) further explained, conceptually, "the theory of acculturation psychology [framework] consists of

various factors representing both the group and the individual levels of the process. This model acknowledges that the individual variables, reflecting psychological aspects, are embedded in situational variables referring to the context." The aims of acculturation psychology are "to comprehend the dynamic psychological processes and outcomes emanation from intercultural contact" (Ozer, 2017, p. 1). Ozer (2017, p. 1) further stated:

> Today, psychological theories of acculturation also include cognate disciplines such as cultural psychology, social psychology, sociology, and anthropology. The expansion of psychological theories of acculturation has led to advancements in the field of research as well as the bifurcation of epistemological and methodological approaches striving to apprehend both the processes and outcomes of acculturation phenomena.

Within the psychology of acculturation, "the focus on the individual has been related to adaptation during these cultural processes and the acknowledgement that not all individuals participate to the same extent and adapt in the same manner to the general process of acculturation" (Ozer, 2017, p. 1). Also recognized in this framework is "that the surrounding society would mutually influence and be influenced by the acculturating individual's acculturation orientation. Even though the acculturation process affects the new cultural society, the greatest effect is from the context of reception to the acculturating individual" (Ozer, 2017, p. 2).

"The study of acculturation psychology constitutes a young branch of social psychology [and the] issue of acculturation is of immense importance in today's societies characterized by a high pace of sociocultural change and prevalent cultural meetings"

(Ozer, 2013, p. 8). Thus, “much advancement is needed before it can reach universally relevant conclusions” (Ozer, 2013, p. 8).

Critical theory.

According to Reeves, et. al., stated, “Critical theorists study how the construction of knowledge and the organization of power in society generally, and in institutions such as schools, hospitals, and governments specifically, can lead to the subjugation or oppression of particular individuals, groups, or perspectives” (2008, p. 633). Critical theory then “is not tied to one specific methodology and can be applied at the micro (individual), macro (local systems and contexts), or macro (societal) level” (Reeves, et. al., 2008, p. 633).

Participants

According to Rowley (2012, p. 264), “When writing up your research it is normal to provide a basic profile of interviewees, in terms of job role, qualifications, experience, gender, and other criteria that might be important to the study.” The researcher must consider accessibility and willingness to participate (see Appendix C for Communication Keys to Gaining Initial Access to Participants).

Minors.

“Scholars’ perceptions about childhood and society’s idea of children determines how research with the latter is conducted.” (Kutrovátz, 2017, p. 69). Additionally, Kutrovátz (2017, p. 70) stated, “Concerning verbal competence, age-related disparities are undeniable (in terms of vocabulary and – apart from verbal skills – in understanding and maintaining attention).”

The participants included four newcomer Latino students at ETHS, ranging from grades 9-12 and ages 14-19, who agreed to participate and whose parents also provided consent. The students were randomly selected from the list of enrolled immigrant students. Of thirty potential participants, only four agreed to take part in the interviews. Also participating was a bilingual educator who served as translator, transcriber, and gatekeeper to the community in which these newly arrived immigrant students reside.

Consent.

Possible participants were identified with the assistance of the district English Language Learner Coordinator and ETHS counselors. Ojeda, et al., (2011, p. 191) stated, "Researchers are responsible for following appropriate informed consent procedures. This is especially critical in working with Latino immigrants, as their participation can place them in a vulnerable position." Additionally, it is recommended "that researchers follow informed consent procedures – both in writing and verbally – to assure participants understand their rights and what their involvement will entail" (Ojeda, et al., 2011, p. 191). Moreover, according to Ojeda, et. al., "Even if participants have received a written informed consent from, researchers are cautioned from assuming all participants can read even if the form is written in their first language" (2011, p. 191).

While verbal consent from both the ETISD Superintendent and the ETHS Principal was maintained for the purpose of initial proposal, written consent was also provided. In addition, written consent from the parents of the participants was collected, as well as student assent to participate.

Data Collection

"Due to their undocumented status, access to this population is difficult and poses significant challenges" (Gonzalez, et. al., 2013, p. 1181). Additionally, "poorly executed and insensitive approaches can be harmful to [the] efforts and can lead to mistrusting researchers" (Ojeda, et. al., 2011, p. 186). Thus, "researchers should develop culturally competent skills to engage with Latino immigrants that will demonstrate behavior that honors and respects Latino culture" (Ojeda, et. al., 2011, p. 188). Additionally, "Prior to embarking on a qualitative research project with Latino immigrants, a culturally competent research team that works within its bounds of competence is advocated" (Ojeda, 2011, p. 186). For this study, a team approach was utilized during interviews to increase rapport and accessibility, as well as for interpretation and translation.

The design of this study included minors, with the process occurring electronically through conference call and the Zoom platform. The use of a trusted colleague assisted in breaking through language barriers, and in assuring participants of the intent of the research, as well as their confidentiality. A digital recording device was used to record all interviews, and translation and transcribing were completed by the bilingual colleague, who agreed to this process. In addition, verbal permission to work with students at ETHS was granted by the district superintendent and high school principal.

Interviews.

"Interviews are among the most familiar strategies for collecting qualitative data" (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 314). Definitively, interviews are "face-to-face

verbal exchanges in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to acquire information from and gain an understanding of another person or interviewee" (Rowley, 2012, p. 260). In addition, DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree stated, "While all interviews are used to get to know the interviewee better, the purpose of that knowing varies according to the research question and the disciplinary perspective of the researcher" (2006, p. 314). Thus, the "purpose of the qualitative research interview is to contribute to a body of knowledge that is conceptual and theoretical and is based on the meanings that life experiences hold for the interviewees" (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 314). Additionally, "Interviews are generally used in conducting qualitative research in which the researcher is interested in collecting 'facts' or gaining insights into or understanding of opinions, attitudes, experiences, processes, behaviours, or predictions" (Rowley, 2012, p. 261). This research included one round of initial interviews, with subsequent interviews as needed, when the researcher needed clarification on information.

Interview relations. The researcher must consider power relations and inequalities "between the so-called first and third worlds, as well as poor hierarchies rooted in gender, race, class, ethnicity, and other dimensions of social differentiation (Elwood & Martin, 2000, p. 651). Thus, the researcher is charged with examining "how these power relations are manifest in the particular cultures and places where research is conducted, how they shape relationships between researchers and participants, and how they shape the ethics and politics of knowledge construction in fieldwork" (Elwood & Martin, 2000, p. 651). Power relations may influence information gleaned during the

interview and choosing the location of the interview has the potential to shape the power relations of the interview.

Building rapport with the participants was critical to the outcome of interviews. According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006, p. 316), "Rapport involves trust and a respect for the interviewee and the information he or she shares. It is also the means of establishing a safe and comfortable environment for sharing the interviewee's personal experiences and attitudes as they actually occurred." Finally, participants were assured their lived experiences are "unique and that their responses would not be judged as being right or wrong, good or bad. A researcher should also emphasize that she or he does not want to judge them but to learn about their authentic experiences" (Ojeda, et. al., 2011, pp. 196-197).

To assist in building rapport with participants, the process and critical purpose of the research was thoroughly explained, including the value of their narratives. An administrative colleague translated information when necessary to ensure participant understanding. Additionally, there was no discussion of documentation of citizenship, immigration status of family members, etc., that might bring fear to the interviewees.

Interview sites. The interview site is the specific "location where the interview- an exchange of information between the researcher and research participant- takes place" (Elwood & Martin, 2000, p. 649). Further, Elwood and Martin (2000, p. 649) stated, "For qualitative researchers, selecting appropriate sites in which to conduct interviews may seem to be a relatively simple research design issue. In fact, it is a complicated decision with wide-reaching implications." One can suggest that "the interview site itself

produces ‘micro-geographies’ of spatial relations and meaning, where multiple scales of social relations intersect in the research interview” (Elwood & Martin, 2000, p. 649). Additionally, according to Elwood and Martin, “Interview locations provide an important opportunity for researchers to make observations that generate richer and more detailed information than can be gleaned from the interview alone” (2000, p. 653). Finally:

> Interview sites may be negotiated, restricted, or chosen by researchers, participants, and other actors who are part of or affect the research. Participants who are given a choice about where they will be interviewed may feel more empowered in their interaction with the researcher, and the researcher has an opportunity to examine participants’ choices for clues about the social geographies of the places where research is being carried out.

It was the intention of this researcher to interview students on their campuses and/or within their community. The bilingual educator who assisted with access to the participants and translation played an active role in developing trust and encouraging participation. Due to COVID 19 restrictions, the four students were interviewed via conference call and/or through the Zoom online platform.

Interview questions. Questions utilized in interviews should be “designed to generate data that is intended to answer your research questions” (Rowley, 2012, p. 263). “Developing culturally relevant interview protocol requires significant preparation as it affects both the participant’s experience and the quality of data gathered from interviews” (Ojeda, et. al., 2011, p. 192). When necessary, Ojeda, et al., suggest “being more descriptive and developing additional ways to explain concepts that will increase

participants' understanding. We also advocate adapting to each participant's vocabulary usage and reading comprehension level" (2011, p. 192). In addition, the sequencing of questions to consider throughout the interview process. "Asking less thoughtful provoking questions or collecting descriptive/demographic information early in the interview may help the participant to feel at ease and confident about their ability to answer questions" (Ojeda, et. al., 2011, p. 193). Rowley (2012, p. 265) suggested five considerations when developing interview questions stating that "questions should be checked to ensure that they:

1. Are not leading or have implicit assumptions;
2. Do not include two questions in one;
3. Do not invite "yes/no" answers;
4. Are not too vague or general; and
5. Are not, in any sense, invasive.

The interview questions used in this study were open-ended, allowing for participant voice to drive the data and conversation, while the researcher facilitated and maintained topic. Questions included the subjects of immigration process and experience, school experiences, social-emotional identity, and suggestions for supports (see Appendix E for Interview Questions). Two rounds of questioning were completed, with the initial round including the ten prepared questions. During the second round, the transcripts were read to the students for accuracy of information.

Ethics.

DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006, p. 319) suggested four ethical issues related to the interview process:

1. reducing the risk of unanticipated harm (Such as intense feelings, unexpectedly expressed grief, etc.);
2. protecting the interviewee's information (Maintaining anonymity of the participants and organization, etc.);
3. effectively informing interviewees about the nature of the study (Communication of the project's purpose and gaining consent), and
4. reducing the risk of exploitation (The interviewee should not be exploited for personal gain).

According to Jackson, Drummond, and Camara (2007, p. 21), "It is impossible to grasp every aspect of a social phenomenon, investigation, or question. Nonetheless, it is the responsibility of every researcher to approach each study with as much objectivity, ethical diligence, and rigor as possible."

To ensure ethics and integrity of this research, all participants remained anonymous, and the nature and purpose of the study was explained in both English and Spanish. Additionally, personal information regarding documentation of immigration status was not discussed. All information gleaned was translated and transcribed for review by the participants to ensure the validity of their lived experiences. Further, information gained was used for dissertation purposes, with the intention of applying the knowledge to help guide policy and practices in the school setting, only.

Quality and validity.

"A variety of terms have been used to discuss the quality of qualitative interviewing, with debates over how researchers establish the 'validity' of their work – that is, the truth, trustworthiness, or accuracy of their claims – central (Roulston, 2010, p. 201). Roulston (2010, p. 202) further identified four focuses for insuring quality interviewing, namely whether:

1. the use of interview data is an appropriate means to inform the research questions posed;
2. the interaction facilitated by interviewers within the actual interview generated 'quality' data- for example, interviewers asked questions in effective ways to elicit the data required to respond to research questions, and both speakers adequately understood one another's intended meanings;
3. 'quality' has been addressed in research design, the conduct of the research project, and the analysis, interpretation and representation of research findings; and
4. the methods and strategies used to demonstrate the quality of interpretations and representations of data are consistent with the theoretical underpinnings for the study.

Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle (2001, p. 522) expressed, "Much contemporary dialogue has centered on the difficulty of establishing validity criteria in qualitative research. "While it is difficult to generalize findings from a qualitative research project, the researcher must ensure the validity of the data analysis" (Campbell, 2015, p. 203).

Additionally, Crittenden and Hill stated, “Perfect validity refers to the case of complete agreement between core responses and the corresponding criterion codes” (1971, p. 1076). “While it is difficult to generalize findings from a qualitative research project, the researcher must ensure the validity of the data analysis” (Campbell, 2015, p. 203). Additionally, Crittenden and Hill stated, “Perfect validity refers to the case of complete agreement between coder responses and the corresponding criterion codes” (1971, p. 1076).

Developing validity standards in qualitative research is challenging because of the necessity to incorporate rigor and subjectivity as well as creativity into the scientific process (see Appendix E for Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle Assessment of Primary and Secondary Criteria of Validity and Appendix F, Figure 1 for Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle Validity Criteria for Qualitative Research). Thus, for this study, interviews were accurately translated and transcribed to ensure the voice of participants. Additionally, all participants were provided a written copy of their interview transcription for review.

Data Analysis

“Data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of a study. The analysis of the case study is one of the least developed aspects of the case study methodology” (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018, p. 6). “Social phenomenon need not be explained numerically. It is the quality and richness of the response to a social situation which we should focus on” (Basit, 2003, p. 151). Moreover, according to Basit (2003, p. 151),

"The idea is to ascertain 'what' they feel, and 'why' they feel that way. This will also incorporate 'who' feel the way they do, and 'where, 'when' and 'how'."

All interviews were audio recorded and accurately transcribed in Spanish and in English. The transcripts were shared with the participants to ensure accuracy and provided opportunities for clarification. All of the interviews and transcripts were in Spanish resulting in the need to be accurately translated to English.

Translation.

Squires (2009, p. 277) noted, "Cross-language research occurs when a language barrier is present between researchers and participants. The language barrier is frequently mediated through the use of a translator or interpreter." To accommodate for the language barriers related to interviews conducted with newly arrived immigrant students and their parents, a bilingual educator will attend interviews for relationship building, administering interview questions, and translating transcripts. According to Squires, a disadvantage to cross-language interviews the possibility of "rendering the translator or interpreter as an invisible part of the research process, failure to pilot test interview questions in the participant's language, no description of translator or interpreter credentials, failure to acknowledge translation as a limitation of the study" (2009, p. 277).

Coding. According to Crittenden and Hill (1971, p. 1073) the term of coding refers "to the process whereby persons assign data to categories [it] is a basic measurement procedure designed to make data susceptible to tabulation, interpretation, and analysis." Campbell stated, "Coding of the data can be performed manually or with

the assistance of computer software" (2015, p. 203). Basit (2003, p. 143) stated, "Data analysis is the most difficult and most crucial aspect of qualitative research. Coding is one of the significant steps taken during analysis to organize and make sense of textual data." In addition, "It is a dynamic, intuitive and creative process of inductive reasoning, thinking and theorizing" (Basit, 2003, p. 143). "Coding is not what happens before analysis but comes to constitute an important part of the analysis" (Weston, Gandell, Beauchamp, McAlpine, Wiseman, & Beauchamp, 2001, p. 382). Moreover, Basit (2003, p. 144) noted:

> Codes or categories are tags or labels for allocating units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes usually are attached to chunks of varying-sized words, phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting.

Rowley (2012, p. 267) stated that once the interview has been completed, the researcher "should listen to the interview recording, and take time to think about what the interviewee has said. They should make notes on the important points from the interview." In addition, "Completed transcripts should also be sent to any interviewees that have agreed to check them, to give the interviewee the opportunity to correct and approve the transcripts" (Rowley, 2012, p. 267). Basit further suggested that "Qualitative analysis is not a discrete procedure carried out at the final stages of research. It is, indeed, an all-encompassing activity that continues throughout the life of the project" (2003, p. 145).

The researcher should remember that from the beginning, everything collected is interesting. "Your job is to code data into initial constructs or aggregates of data and compare them to each other to see if they really are separate circles of information or if they can be placed together" (Anderson, Herr, and Nihlin, 1994, p. 157).

Transcript information was analyzed by the researcher to identify common overarching themes and coded specifically based on student voice. Additionally, analysis included implications and suggestions for transforming school practices and policies to ensure social justice, as well as recognizing further research needed.

Reporting Findings

Campbell (2015, p. 204) expressed, "Once the themes have emerged, the researcher must consider how best to articulate the findings and who will compose the audience." Moreover, Yin (2014, pp. 201-205) identified five qualities of an exemplary case study report: (1) Significance and contribution, (2) Must be complete, (3) Consideration of alternative perspectives, (4) Display sufficient evidence, and (5) Composed in an engaging manner.

A summary of findings is reported in Chapter IV. The compilation of the data with shared themes that emerged is shared, providing narrative and student voice from all participants regarding each of the ten interview questions.

Summary

"Qualitative methodology is a research tool that can allow Latino immigrants to have their voices heard. If conducted appropriately, information gained through culturally competent qualitative research can lead to social justice and change" (Ojeda, et.

al., 2011, p. 198). Additionally, “qualitative research is primarily concerned [with] understanding human beings’ experiences in a humanistic, interpretive approach” (Jackson, Drummond, & Camara, 2007, p. 21).

The significance of this research has the possibility to impact positive change for newly arrived immigrants, educators, and policy makers. Providing voice to these students offers the narrative of lived experiences, including the social-emotional aspect. Thus, providing positive outcomes beyond academics, and ultimately, in the futures of Latino Immigrant communities.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

Introduction

According to Blanco-Vega, Castro-Olivio, and Merrell, 2007, the number of immigrant students has continued to be on the increase in the United States, and in East Texas ISD, where the immigration population grew from 42.5% to 43.3% of the district's students in a four-month period, from the October 2018 snapshot to the February 2019 school board report. The problem addressed in this research was that while newly arrived immigrant students receive instruction from appropriately certified teachers at ETHS, and receive adequate resources and materials for learning, social-emotional supports are not addressed in the ETHS Campus Improvement Plan. Thus, the systems in place are in compliance with the Texas Education Agency, Texas Education Code, and Federal Title III Law which require that English Language Learners be provided full opportunity to participate in bilingual education or an English as a Second Language program. However, there are no requirements for social-emotional learning and supports for these students, who have varied experiences and difficulties during the immigration process.

During this research, four newly arrived immigrant students were interviewed in regard to their lived experiences at ETHS. Interviews were conducted virtually or using

conference call, and with assistance from a trusted translator. Recorded interviews were translated and transcribed, word for word. Commonalities among the participants were highlighted and color coded repeatedly as distinctive topics surfaced. During this process, a discovery of five common themes emerged: *Language, Needing Help, Friendships, Family, and Social-Emotional Aspects.* This chapter introduces the research participants and a brief demographic description, as well as detailing their reflections and descriptions of their lived experiences as newcomer students at East Texas High School. The details of the findings of the research are based on interview responses and themes noted through coding. Information is stated in quotes and phrasing from the translator, and pseudonyms are used to protect all student identities. Additionally, one student's detailed account of her experience and story is shared.

Participants

In this qualitative study, four newcomer students participated in interviews, and answered questions regarding their lived experiences. The four students, two males and two females, were randomly selected from the current enrollment list at ETHS and have been in the United States from one to three years.

At the time of the interviews, one student was 15 years old and in the ninth grade while the other three were 16 years old and in the tenth grade. Their time in the United States ranged from six months to three years. One student shared that his home country is Cuba, another came to the United States from El Salvador, and the homeland of the other two was not stated.

Each of the participants attended school each day in a world where they were unable to communicate effectively, and according to their words, they lacked language supports and assistance that would have assisted them in success. In addition, the participants found connections only in the realm of other Spanish speakers, as they sought to navigate a school setting vastly different from their home country.

The Language Barrier

Language and communication are critical to student learning, understanding the world around them, and building meaningful relationships with peers and adults. Orozco, et. al (2008, p. 41) stated, "Academic English-language skills affect students' abilities to adapt socially at school and are also highly predictive of academic success in the United States." The first major theme identified, noted repeatedly by all participants, was difficulty in school due to not knowing the English language. For example, Rosa expressed that she "didn't understand what people were telling her [or] anything around her," as stated by the interview translator. In addition, the norm was to have "all English speaking teachers" and all of the materials in English.

The students in this study shared their struggle in regard to academics in all content areas and in the social realm, as they noted a difficulty fitting in with peer groups who speak English, and only making connections with other Spanish speakers. According to Luis, "the most difficult part is not knowing the language" and the one thing he would change would be "to be able to speak English."

Needing academic support. According to Orozco, et al. (2008, p. 42), "Most recently arrived immigrants face the challenge of learning English at the same time as

they struggle to adjust to a new school and become more skilled academically." Additionally, "It takes, for most nonnative English speakers, five to seven years under optimal conditions to achieve the level of academic language skills necessary to compete with native-born peers in the classroom." Hence, newcomer students are burdened with learning the English language, while also learning academic content.

Martina shared that it was very difficult the first year in the United States because she did not have a teacher to teach her the language, everything was "just English." In addition, she included that she still has a lot to learn because she did not "have an opportunity like my friend to have someone teach me the language." Luis stated that when a teacher only speaks English, it would be helpful to have support, such as "a person to be there with me who speaks Spanish," to help him understand what the lessons are about.

Similarly, Rosa expressed that it would help to "have the teachers try to find someone to help translate or to help out" and that it would be nice "if it could be taught to me in both languages." Additionally, she stated that sometimes she makes connections between the English and Spanish languages, but sometimes she does not. Thus, if content was taught in both languages, she felt she "might learn more English." She further expressed, "I like to go to school, it is normal. They teach me and I learn," and although she has a hard time with some of the work, "it is coming along." Still, Rosa noted that "It is not normal to find teachers that speak Spanish. It is normal to find all English-speaking teachers," and that "sometimes it is only English, English, English.

Also, when they give you a book it is all in English and you cannot understand. So, it would help to get it also in Spanish."

When asked where they fit in at school, Luis and Rosa stated that they mostly fit in with Spanish speaking students, while Martina expressed that her friends speak both languages, English and Spanish, and that she feels she belongs there, within that group. Luis included that he is "getting to know some more people but it's difficult and the most difficult part is not knowing the language" and not being able to express himself. In addition, he shared that the only thing he would change about his experiences at school would be "being able to speak English."

Eduardo expressed that "it would be wonderful to have a translator to walk with me and be with me throughout the day," and to explain things. He further shared that he would like for others to know that he "does not know English and to please be helpful."

Rosa stated that there are some people who help her because they know she does not know enough English and that some people are kind to her in that manner. She further stated that some of her peers "are very serious. I like how some of them are and how they talk. They are good people."

On the other hand, Martina pointed out that although newcomer students speak Spanish, "here, there are different cultures and they are from different countries." Additionally, she expressed concern that she has encountered some students "that just because she didn't speak any English" wouldn't speak to her or wouldn't like her automatically. Further, she wanted others to know that "just because I don't speak English it doesn't make me a bad person."

Needing peer assistance. All four interview participants shared the need for newcomer students to have assistance from peers and adults at school. Luis stated that newly arrived immigrant students really need help and that it would be good if they were able to have a guide to help them through and show them where their classroom is going to be, what is going to happen, what they need, and what they need to know.

Luis further stated that that he would appreciate a support group. "A group of students that I would be able to count on, that would be there for me. That would be stable." In addition, Luis expressed that it would be beneficial to have someone who speaks Spanish to help him understand what the teachers' lessons are about and "to learn the language."

Rosa and Eduardo also noted that it would be wonderful to have a translator to walk with them and help out throughout the day. Specifically, Rosa stated that it would be helpful if the teachers would "try to find someone to help translate or to help her out [and] a class where she could receive that extra help to show you the words in English." Further, Rosa noted that the teachers "do not say this is how it is in Spanish and you say it like this in English."

Eduardo further expressed that he would like to have a "translator with me and be with me throughout the day and explain things."

Rosa expressed that it would be helpful if course content was taught in both English and Spanish. She further stated that there are some people who do not want to give her a hand and yet there are some people who do want to help her because they know she does not know enough English, and "some people are kind in that manner."

Additionally, “If there is nobody to help, well, you don’t know anything. You don’t do much because you don’t know anything.” Martina added that a course that teaches only English would benefit.

Friendships

In regard to making friends, the four participants shared a commonality in having mostly Spanish speaking friends. During the interview, both Eduardo and Martina stated that the thing they like most about their school is their friendships. However, Eduardo further stated that he “is a loner” and does not “have a group of people to stick around with. I walk to school alone and do not belong to a sport or anything like that.” Rosa expanded on this notion stating that she has made some friends; while she has very few friends, she gets along well with them. Additionally, both Rosa and Luis expressed that they fit in and speak mostly to Spanish speaking peers. Rosa added that she “plays soccer and is training in school” and that is normal for her. Luis further expressed that there are “only some people groups I would hang out with before school or on the bus” but not all the time. He stated, “I am a normal person. I would like to be in a group if it could be Hispanic or a diverse group because I am not racist.”

Family

The lived experiences of the four participants in this study differ in their coming to the United States and the role their family played in their journeys. Eduardo immigrated to the United States “with my cousins and uncle on the trip,” leaving other family members behind. While Luis was sad to leave his country, he came to the United

States to reunite with his father, which made him happy. Rosa came to America with her mom who:

> wanted to come here with the family she had here to learn new things, for a better life. She wanted to come over here and she wanted to learn new things and she wanted to learn the English language, graduate and also for a better job.

In the United States, Rosa and her mom spend time with other family members who live here. Further, Martina traveled to the United States with her older sister to unite with their parents who she had not seen since she was a very small child.

Social-Emotional Alienation / Isolation

Interview participants shared commonalities in social-emotional experiences and needs. Common verbiage used were terms such as strange, weird, different, lonely, bad, sad, and difficult. Although details were scarce in regard to these aspects, to the researcher, the students shared responses that were not expected, drawing empathy and compassion.

Feelings of estrangement. In leaving his country, Eduardo expressed that it felt "strange." In addition, being a newcomer at ETHS was "weird because a lot of people stare" at him, "kind of like questioning 'who are you' or 'what are you doing here?" This made him feel weird. Similarly, Luis stated that living in the United States was "a little strange because it's a different lifestyle." For example, he spends more time at home than he did in his home country where he walked everywhere.

Luis further expressed that "I have seen many things here that in Cuba" he did not see, "even in the way the cities are set, and cars here are very different" than in his

country. He noted that "there are many people that are different. I have noticed that there's a lot of bad habits here, like marijuana." In addition, Luis stated, "I feel strange. It is a different atmosphere. It's as if I do not belong to it."

Difficult aspects. When asked their story about coming to the United States, three of the four participants used the word "difficult" to describe their experience. Eduardo stated that his trip to the United States "was a little difficult but thank God I am here."

In addition, Luis stated that being a newcomer at ETHS was very difficult for him. It is difficult to meet new people "and getting to know who they are because I do not know a whole lot of people yet. The most difficult part is not knowing the language and not being able to express [myself]."

When asked what it felt like to leave her country, Martina responded that it was "very difficult, however it was the best choice we could have made because there were lots of gangs and they were invading" where they lived so they had a lot of problems with them.

Finally, Rosa stated that she has learned some things at school but "has a hard time with some of the work they give me."

Positive aspects. While the participants in the interviews shared difficulties in their life experiences both in coming to the United States and in school, all four mentioned things they "like" about being here. When asked how it feels to live in the United States, Eduardo stated that it "feels good! It's beautiful! It's huge!" He further stated that he feels he is getting a better education and "I like that." In addition, Eduardo

stated that the thing he likes most about his school is “friendships” and that “the people here are more respectful and like to help me .”

Luis expressed that while leaving his country behind, he was happy because he would be reuniting with his dad. In addition, he stated that he likes sports: basketball and soccer, adding that he played soccer in Cuba.

Rosa stated that being in the United States “feels good” because she “is doing alright here.”

During her story of coming to the United States, Martina expressed appreciation for the people at a house in Pennsylvania, where she and her sister first stayed. According Martina, they treated her very well and were very nice. In addition, she developed “really good friendships there.” Moreover, she “feels very good being here, especially being reunited” with all of her family. At school there are several teachers who truly help her and she “really likes that.” She also enjoys math and the friends she has made, and likes going to school. In regard to her experiences, Martina further stated that she is “grateful I am here and that what I have been through has made me stronger.”

Feeling alone. When leaving his country, Eduardo felt lonely because he left people behind in his country stating that “they were no longer with him.” Luis felt “really bad” because he was leaving behind his “living space, my land.” Rosa stated that when leaving her country “at the beginning it was a little sad” because she was leaving everything behind, but as time progressed, life became “normal” again for her. Additionally, she expressed that when she first came here, she did not like it at all. She “didn’t know anyone and felt very lonely” and did not understand anything around her or

what people were telling her. She did not understand what was happening and had a "hard time." Rosa concluded that as she "started to get to know people things became normal and I started to feel better."

During her initial time in the United States, Martina and her sister were placed in a home in Pennsylvania. She stated that the first night she was there she "cried and cried for several nights" because she wanted to go home to her parents. In addition, the worst part was that she and her sister "could not touch or comfort each other. All we could do was stare into each other's eyes from one bed to another, from one side of the room to the other." Martina further stated that the whole experience of coming to the United States, "18 hours in the car without being able to use the restroom was very difficult" and she does not wish that on anybody. However, the worst part "was coming and not knowing anybody" and she wished that her "fellow classmates would help each other." She further wished that people would treat each other nicely and help each other out.

What Participants Would Change

During the interviews, all participants were asked: What, if anything, would you change about your experience at school? As noted previously, all students maintain that not speaking or knowing English is a struggle for them, and that English language supports would be helpful. Even so, Eduardo expressed that he would change nothing and that "everything is fine." In addition, Luis added that he would "be able to speak the language," and Rosa added that she "doesn't know really. Nothing bad has happened to me."

The Final Question

All interviews concluded with one final question: "Is there anything else you would like to add to your story?" Of the four participants, three of the students stated that they had nothing to add. However, Luis responded, "I don't know. When people first get here most people do not approach you. They do not relate or speak to us." He further expressed that

> new students really need help and more support, and that if we were able to have like a guide to help us through and show us like, here's where your classroom is going to be, this is what's going to happen, this is what you need, this is what you need to know. There is usually someone to help but we still need more support.

Martina's Story

During her interview, Martina seemed eager and determined to tell her story, more so than the other three. Without pause or prompting questions, she spoke clearly and with such detail that mental images were readily accessed. Further, Martina was poignant, drawing in her audience with ease. With detail, she shared her experience of immigration, her initial placement in the United States, and reuniting with her parents.

Leaving her home country of El Salvador began on a Friday, without warning. She and her sister left together, taking a bus to cross the border between Guatemala and Mexico. Initially, they traveled 18 hours until they got to a house where they stayed several days. As they continued to travel, "most people turned us away and we had to keep moving." Finally, they got into a small car that was "packed with people" even in

the trunk! During the 18 hours the "smugglers" helped them travel. Eventually, they crossed "the river" finding many items along the way, such as backpacks, pieces of clothing, shoes, and bones.

In her group there were only four females, the other three were males. When they finally made it to a clearing there was a car waiting for them in which they traveled for several hours. They were then dropped off in a field at approximately 2 am. Martina stated that it was "freezing, really cold" and all she could hear "was that there were cows around her." Finally, another car picked them up, however, she and her sister were separated. They were reunited in the next house where they stayed for seven days. According to Martina, "there were about 160 people living in the two-story house and all of them were waiting. Some had been there several months to make it to the United States." Finally, they were picked up by other smugglers and provided an inflatable device that they used to cross the river into the United States. From there they were told that it would be up to them to find their way and were warned that they could be found and picked up by immigration authorities at any time. They began to walk and were seen by a man driving by who called immigration and turned them in. After being picked up, they were searched and sent to a "camp" where they were given food, clothing, and a small blanket that was made out of "aluminum." They were also given a chance to take a shower, but it was timed. When their time was up, they had to get out of the shower whether they were finished or not.

Afterward, she and her sister were taken by Child Protective Services and sent by plane to a home, an "orphanage" type place, in Pennsylvania. The home was for girls

only, and it was explained to her and her sister that this home was not tied to immigration, and that now they were wards of the state. Here they were given immunizations, and a box with personal items, such as a toothbrush, hairbrush, and sanitary napkins. She and her sister shared a room however, they were constantly watched and were not allowed to hug or touch each other. Using the restroom and showers were timed, and they had chores and a strict schedule to follow that included school, recreation, and snack time. Martina shared that for several nights she cried. Although the people there treated them well, she wanted to go home to her parents. According to Martina, her sister would remind her that everything would be ok and that this would all be over soon.

Martina and her sister came to the United States to reunite with their parents, who she had not seen since she was a small child. In fact, she only knew them from pictures and talking to them on the phone. The day that her parents went to pick her up she did not recognize them, but her sister did. Her sister started to cry, and that is when Martina realized it was her parents. One of the things that Martina is happiest about is being reunited with her mother and father in the United States.

Conclusion

The interviews during this process varied in response time, details, and expanding on information. Only one of the four participants shared a great deal of information, providing clarity in understanding of her experiences. The other three were limited in responses on all questions, and only one added a phrase to the final transcript of the interviews. Even so, it is evident that the newly arrived immigrant students in this project

shared a commonality in their experiences and needs at East Texas High School. The data demonstrated a strong concern being the inability to communicate in English, academically and/or socially, shared by all participants, as well as the desire for English language supports. Similarly, the participants clarified their friendships and where they fit in as being with other students who speak Spanish.

While the students shared feelings of sadness, loneliness, and other difficulties, all agreed that they were happy about, and/or liked being in the United States. Some expressed gratitude for a better education and a better life, as well as the friendships they have made and being reunited with family members. Even so, their voices expressed a need for assistance, for help with language and navigating social spaces within the school setting.

Chapter V provides a summary of the study and conclusions reflective of the interview data and the researcher's insights. Additionally, implications related to the study and recommendations for further research are shared.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Introduction

In conclusion to this study, this chapter provides a complete summary of the problem addressed, research questions, methodology, and major findings. In addition, an analysis is provided as a set of conclusions that reflect the data gathered. Implications and recommendations are stated, making suggestions that may benefit others as well as for future research and beyond. The researcher concludes with personal insights gained through the process.

The Researcher

"Most discrimination is unconscious and takes place whether we intend to discriminate or not, despite genuinely held beliefs in fairness and equity" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. 25). As a principal on an elementary campus with over 1,200 students receiving instruction from bilingual and ESL (English as a Second Language) certified teachers, many of them newly arrived immigrant students, this project came as an Epiphany. The awakening came as a doctoral student learning about and studying oppression and inequalities, and in the process of becoming an educational leader who is committed to social justice. As Freire (2000, p.8) stated, "The conflict lies in the choice

between being wholly themselves or being divided…spectators or actors…between speaking out or being silent." Humbly, I recognized that while newcomer students were eagerly enrolled in school, assigned to the appropriately certified teacher, escorted to their classroom by a counselor, and provided with textbooks and materials, we had nothing in place to support their social-emotional needs. This mission I began as a school principal, and continued as a doctoral candidate, is one with great potential to improve how we serve students who are new to the United States. Thus, recognizing the potential to create learning environments that ensure equity in policy and practice, as well as ensuring educator preparation that includes trauma informed instruction and English as a Second Language strategies. Hence, through praxis, committing myself to transformation (Freire, 2000, p. 54), authentically committed to the people and re-examining myself constantly (p. 60) in this endeavor.

Summary of the Study

Newly arrived immigrant students face a number of challenges during the immigration process, and as they acculturate in the United States, that are unique to the individual and have the potential to affect their social and emotional wellbeing in the educational setting. According to Suárez-Orozco, et al., (2008, p. 53),

> From their very first days in a new school in an unfamiliar country, immigrant students are actively looking for ways to become acclimated and successful. Yet their level of academic achievement depends not only on their willingness to work hard, but also their ability to make friends, please teachers, avoid dangerous situations, find helpful mentors, and most of all, learn English quickly and well.

The problem addressed in this study was that while newcomer students are being served at East Texas High School by appropriately certified teachers, receive resources and materials to assist in learning, there is no mention of providing social-emotional supports in the ETHS Campus Improvement Plan. Thus, the purpose of this study was to identify and understand the lived experiences that newly arrived immigrant students face in their school setting. The questions guiding this study were:

1. What are the lived experiences of newly arrived immigrant students at East Texas High School?
2. What are the social-emotional needs described by newly arrived immigrant students?

The significance and goal of this qualitative study was to provide a rich literature review and glean information that could drive professional development, and to identify possible programming and strategies to support the social-emotional needs of newcomer students. Interviews were completed with four newcomer students from ETHS, with assistance from a trusted colleague for translation from Spanish to English. Interview transcriptions were analyzed and coded to identify emergent patterns or themes in the lived experiences of the four participants. Themes included: The Language Barrier, Social-Emotional Alienation / Isolation, Needing Peer Assistance, Friendships, and Family.

Major findings within the themes contained both commonalities and uniqueness among the participants. As mentioned by DeJonckheere, et al. (2017), the language barriers created after immigrating to the United States from a Spanish speaking country

added stress to newcomer students. Not knowing the English language was at the forefront of participant concern. All students expressed the need for a translator, course content to be taught in English and Spanish, and/or a course for learning English.

Students also expressed a variety of emotional aspects such as feeling weird or strange being in a new and different country. Although they traveled with at least one family member or were reuniting with family, students shared feelings of loneliness, sadness, and feeling bad about leaving loved ones and/or their country behind. Students further stated that they had some difficulty with the immigration process but like being in the United States, at their school, and the friends they have made.

Conclusions

This qualitative study provided a glimpse into the lived experiences of four newly arrived immigrant students at East Texas High School, bringing insight to their stories, challenges faced in the school setting, and suggestions for possible supports. Although the study was focused on the lived experiences of newcomer students in one high school setting, the researcher considered the background knowledge of their immigration experience as a part of their cultural identity, a part of who they are. "Immigration is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon involving many factors and variables that may be viewed through a variety of lenses" (Suárez-Orozco, et al., 2008, p. 2).

As shared during their interviews, each participant's experience in coming to the United States was unique in purpose, process, and prospect. As a major life decision, all participants defined leaving their home country as difficult because of what they were leaving behind, whether the land or their families, or both.

Although seeking a better life and the prospect of reuniting with loved ones, participants still experienced loss. According to Suárez-Orozco, et al., (2008, p. 56), "Migration is first a family affair…More often than not, family obligations and family ties are the very foundation of the arduous immigrant voyage. The process of migration, however, inflicts tremendous stress on family members." Previously unable to empathize, the researcher always considered immigrants as fortunate to be a part of this country and the freedoms it offers and expected the blessing of being here to make acculturation an easy task. I had not considered a form of brokenness and heartache to be a piece of the baggage attached to immigration and acculturation. While students attempt to navigate and learn, the stressors may cause division to their individual identity.

The Language Barrier. The overarching theme throughout the research consistently returned to newly arrived immigrant students not knowing the English language. This facet of the study reverberated through social and academic realms in the school setting, affecting each participant, as they all repeated their struggles to understand expectations, social realities, and required learning. Unable to communicate with the written and spoken words around them, the participants shared much difficulty in finding success. As stated by Suárez-Orozco, et al., "Academic English-language skills affect students' abilities to adapt socially at school and are also highly predictive of academic success in the United States." When asked what the schools could do to help them, all four participants asked for help with learning English, for translators who would assist them as they learn, and for support groups to help them navigate the social realm.

In my experience, students struggle when they change schools. Everything about their new campus is different. They have to learn to navigate the campus lay out, following a schedule with the burden of finding their way to classes within the allotted time, for fear of consequences. In addition, the campus is full of adults they do not know and will have to learn to trust, all while determining to keep up with academic and social norms. According to Grigg (2012, p. 388), frequent moves and changes of schools are associated with negative outcomes in achievement and social realms. For the newcomer student, not knowing English and not understanding the various communications around them places additional weight on an already heavy burden.

Social Emotional Alienation / Isolation. "The call for immigrants to give up their languages, to leave their cultures behind, and to acculturate in fast-forward has unanticipated consequences" (Suárez-Orozco, et al., 2008, p. 372). All participants shared varied emotional aspects in regard to the immigration process and their lived experiences at East Texas High School. Stories of who and what was left behind, as well as their struggles to find where they fit in with peers left them with sadness, loneliness, feeling "strange," and "weird." Orozco, et al. stated, "No man is an island – and immigrants in particular need to create social connections to replace those they have left behind" (2008, p. 358).

The fact that the participants in this qualitative study were unable to speak English seemed to play a pivotal role in where they fit in socially. Students repeatedly shared difficulty in all aspects due to the language barrier and shared that they wished people would be kind and help them.

Theoretical Connections

The theoretical frameworks used to ground this research require educators to recognize the potential of oppressive policies, practices, and resources, whether intentional or not. This research defined the need for changes in the status quo, and the necessity of changes that alleviate alienation and isolation of newly arrived immigrant students, as well as to ensure language supports. As educators and advocates for newcomer students, it is imperative that knowledge is turned into action.

Implications

East Texas Independent School District continues to enroll newly arrived immigrant students on a consistent basis, as do other Texas public schools. The problem addressed in the study suggested that although compliant in state and federal requirements for English language learners in the public school setting, the necessary social emotional supports have not been specifically addressed, as noted in the ETHS Campus Improvement Plan.

In seeking information on the lived experiences of newcomer students, the questions to be answered were designed to define the needs of these students in their school setting, and to bring to light possible strategies, policies, and processes that provide support and meet their needs. This qualitative research study provided valued information concerning the needs of newcomer students and offers recommendations to meet their needs. The overarching struggle for all students was reflected in their lack of knowing the English language, affecting both academics and social realities. Thus, their greatest need appeared to be in language support.

In a study completed by Suárez-Orozco, et al., students reported that knowing the English language "is very important to speak [in this country]…important to get ahead" (2008, p.147). The students in this study further stated that learning the English language "is very hard." It is evident that providing students with peers and adults who will translate information and communication is imperative to student belonging, social confidence, and academic success. Further, providing materials and resources in both Spanish and English aids in their ability to make connections with learning and expectations.

The immigration process for the students coming to the United States varied in purpose, in experience, and in relationships effected and/or forged. All participants had feelings of sadness and loneliness, likes and dislikes. Simultaneously, they were genuinely appreciative of being in the United States. It could be suggested that navigating the differences in a new country and in a new school setting offers its own challenges. While the students expressed that they liked being in the United States and having the prospect of a good education, they shared the difficulties in what they left behind in their countries, such as family members, a certain way of life, and the land that they know. In addition, students faced certain hardships during the process, such as Martina, who saw bones during her travels. The participants shared that having a support group that could be there for them and that they could count on would be beneficial. Perhaps this would be a group of students who have similar experiences and can relate, share their stories, and offer assurances and hope.

Recommendations for Future Research

The research methodology for this qualitative study included interviews with four newly arrived immigrant students at East Texas High School. The students ranged from being in the United States six months to three years and were in ninth and tenth grades. As a non-Spanish speaking individual, I had a bilingual colleague help with translation throughout the process, including gaining consent and assent, through all interviews, and in gaining approval from the participants as to the final transcriptions.

Additionally, due to COVID 19 circumstances, interviews were not permitted in person, partially out of fear, but also due to the Center of Disease Control guidelines, prohibiting gatherings in public or private places. In addition, school district guidelines would not allow personal contact with students or families during the study. Thus, all interviews were conducted via zoom or conference call, removing personalization, which may have adversely affected the ability to build trusting relationships between the participants and researcher.

Using the zoom electronic meeting platform allowed for some visual between researcher and participant. Still, having no opportunity to build relationships, and all communication being electronic, created a barrier and limited conversation and information gained. Other than Martina's story, the other participants were very brief, to the point, and did not engage strongly during the interview process.

Invisible barriers. It is important to note that thirty newly arrived immigrant students at ETHS were contacted by phone by the translator/transcriber who explained in detail the purpose of this qualitative study. In addition, as researcher, I explained that all

contacts would remain confidential and that at no time would actual names be revealed. Initially, all students agreed to meet and/or communicate further to gain information about the study before committing to participation. Of the thirty students contacted, only four followed through in agreeing to the interviews.

Several students initially agreed to participate in the study, but they did not answer phone calls or return messages as interview sessions were being scheduled. It is unclear why this happened, but I would suggest that their potential undocumented status and fear of consequences may have played a role in their decision. Further, communication barriers undoubtedly affected the process of selection of participants for the study. As the researcher, I recommend that future researchers who seek to design replications or similar study, develop relationships and sustain trust with the participants in order to gain a larger sample.

Future methodologies. It is recommended that future research include additional interview participants that allow for both parties to communicate fluidly, either in Spanish or in English, without a translator. In addition, providing an opportunity to work face to face in a setting comfortable for participants and conducive to building relationships, would be beneficial in gleaning new and substantial information. Moreover, to further transference of information, it is recommended that the study be broadened to include elementary and middle school students, and/or students from surrounding districts.

Recommendations Beyond Research

As a result of this study, it is recommended that newly arrived immigrant students be provided a support group of peers to guide and help them navigate the public-school setting. This support group might also provide language supports, such as translation and peer tutoring. In addition, ensuring counseling services from a knowledgeable school counselor or social worker is encouraged. Textbooks and materials should be provided in English and Spanish to ensure language supports and connections in learning. Moreover, providing a program that would teach newcomer students the English language as part of their daily curriculum is highly recommended and would have the potential to increase their academic and social engagement.

Educational leaders must become advocates for newcomer students, seeking community supports and partnerships that will provide necessary resources that will help in the acculturation process and lead to student success in American schools. By including community groups, such as the rotary club, financial support can also be provided that will allow for supplies, food, clothing, hygiene needs, and the like. In addition, Title III, Part A requires that funds are specifically targeted for programming and services immigrant students, with the purpose of assuring that these students meet standards for grade level and graduation. Thus, Title III funding shall finance enhanced instructional opportunities for such activities as family literacy and outreach, recruitment and support for personnel, tutorials and mentoring, curricular resources and materials, as well as other instructional services designed to meet the needs of newcomer students. Grants, such as the Mazda Foundation Grant and the Teaching Tolerance Grant provide

funding that promotes education and literacy, cross-cultural understanding and social welfare, which would strongly support immigrant students as they navigate acculturation and the public school system. As advocates for newcomer students, educational leaders have the responsibility to keep websites updated with resources, such as the American Psychological Association site, for immigrant families, and to recruit volunteers to teach families how to navigate the new world.

Professional development must include information and strategies for working with students from trauma, as well as instructional strategies that support English Language Learners. Trauma informed instruction would provide supports for students who have had adverse experiences during the immigration process, whether leaving a familiar home and family, mentally, emotionally, or socially. In addition, instructional strategies for English Language Learners, such as the use of visuals and question stems, will increase the opportunities for academic success. In addition, professional development opportunities for local school board members, administrators, and community leaders, should include training on legalities and changes in policy, as well as financial advocacy.

School district employees would also benefit by being provided information and strategies to support families. In my experience, many of the newcomer immigrant families are unable to attend school activities because they do not have a valid form of identification. Thus, a program created for families that instructs members how to get valid identification and to navigate expectations in the school community would further benefit these families. According to Orozco, et al. (2008, p. 87),

> Addressing immigrant families' needs through partnerships among after school groups, community organizations, schools, and churches would go a long way toward expanding these networks of supportive relations and easing the transition for these families. For although immigrant families are highly resilient, there are clear limits to the assistance that immigrant parents can offer their children – especially given the less-than-optimal educational environments that their children so often experience.

Concluding Remarks

Being a campus principal in ETISD, this study is very personal and brings images of students and some of their stories to mind. I cannot help but feel incomplete in this process, as limitations did not bring to fruition what I had hoped. As an educational leader, it is always my goal to make a significant and positive impact on this great work that we do, and to change the world for students, staff, and families.

Here, I have only had the privilege to glean a small percentage of what is surely the tip of the iceberg on this topic. Still, the information gained through this study, through practice, and through research has started a fire within that certainly will not quench until needs are met for all newcomer students. It is evident that educators can no longer believe that simply placing newly arrived immigrant students in a classroom with a bilingual or ESL certified teacher is enough.

We must go beyond compliance and know their stories, proving to be devoted to providing necessary supports for the whole child. The process will require training, understanding, and commitment from all stakeholders within the school community.

"These youth are already in the United States and will remain here. Our challenge is to make sure that they will one day be able to better themselves and contribute to their new society" (Orozco, et al., 2008, p. 375). This, indeed, has the potential to change the world.

REFERENCES

Abrahams, L., Pancorbo, G., Santos, D., John, O. P., Primi, R., Kyllonen, P., & Fruyt, F. D. (2019). Social-emotional skills assessment in children and adolescents: Advances and challenges in personality, clinical, and educational contexts. *American Psychological Association, 31*(4), 460-473.

Anderson, G. L., Herr, K., & Nihlen, A. S. (1994). *Studying your own school: An educator's guide to qualitative practitioner research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Arbona, C., Olvera, N., Rodriguez, N., Hagan, J., Linares, A., & Wiesner, M. (2010). Acculturative stress among documented and undocumented Latino immigrants in the United States. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 32*(3), 362-384.

Basit, T. (2003). Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. *Educational Research, 45*(2), 143-154.

Benuto, L. T., Casas, J. B., Gonnzalez, F. R., & Newlands, R. T. (2018). Being an undocumented child immigrant. *Children and Youth Services Review, 89*(2018), 198-204.

Berry, J. W. (1997). Constructing and expanding a framework: Opportunities for developing acculturation research. *Applied Psychology, 46*(1), 62-68.

Blanco-Vega, C. O., Castro-Olivio, S. M., & Merrell, K. W. (2007). Social-emotional needs of Latino immigrant adolescents: A sociocultural model for development and implementation of culturally specific interventions. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 7*(1), 43-61.

Caine, V., Estefan, A., & Clandinin, D. J. (2013). A return to methodological commitment: Reflections on narrative inquiry. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 57*(6), 574-586.

Camarota, S. A. (2001). Immigants in the United States – 2001 a snapshot of America's foreign-born population. Retrieved March 31, 2019 from https://cis.org/Report/Immigrants-United-States-2000

Campbell, S. (2015). Conducting case study research. *Clinical Laboratory Science, 28*(3), 201-205.

Campbell, S. (2013). What is qualitative research? *Clinical Laboratory Science, 27*(1), 3.

CASEL (2020). What is SEL. Retrieved from https://casel.org/what-is-sel.

Crittenden, K. S., & Hill, R. J. (1971). Coding reliability and validity of interview data. *American Sociological Review, 36*(December), 1073-1080.

DeJonckheere, M. J., Vaughn, L. M., & Jacquez, F. (2017). Latino immigrant youth living in a nontraditional migration city: A social-ecological examination of the complexities of stress and resilience. *Urban Education, 52*(3), 399-426.

DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical Education, 40,* 314-321.

Domitrovich, C. E., Staley, K. C., Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2017). Social-emotional competence: An essential factor for promoting positive adjustment and reducing risk in school children. *Child Development, 88*(2), 408-416.

Elwood, S. A., & Martin, D. G. (2000). "Placing" interviews: Location and scales of power in qualitative research. *Professional Geographer, 52*(4), 649-657.

Ebneyamini, S., & Moghadam, M. R. S. (2018). Toward developing a framework for conducting case study research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 17,* 1-11.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic.

Garcia-Reid, P., Peterson, C. H., & Reid, R. J. (2015). Parent and teacher support among Latino immigrant youth: Effects on school engagement and school trouble avoidance. *Education and Urban Society, 47*(3), 328-343.

Garrison, E. G., Roy, I. S., & Azar, V. (1999). Responding to the mental health needs of Latino children and families through school-based services. *Clinical Psychology Review, 19*(2), 199-219.

Gil, A. G., Vega, W. A., & Dimas, J. M. (1994). Acculturative stress and personal adjustment among Hispanic adolescent boys. *Journal of Community Psychology, 22,* 43-55.

Gonzalez, R. G., Suárez-Orozco, C., & Dedios-Sanguineti, M. C. (2013). No place to belong: Contextualizing concepts of mental health among undocumented

immigrant youth in the United States. *American Behavioral Scientists, 57*(8), 174-1199.

Grigg, J. (2012). School enrollment changes and student achievement growth: A case study in educational disruption and continuity. *Sociology of Education, 85*(4), 388-404.

Herger, J. (2016). Lived experience vs. experience. [Medium] Retrieved from https://medium.com/@jacobhoerger/lived-experience-vs-experience-2e467b6c2229

Hilburn, J. (2014). Challenges facing immigrant students beyond the linguistic domain in a new gateway state. *Urban Review, 2014*(46), 654-680.

Huber, L. P. (2010). Using Latina/o critical race theory (LatCrit) racist nativism to explore intersectionality in the educational experiences of undocumented Chicana college students. *Educational Foundations, Winter Spring 2010*, 77-96.

Immigrant (2019). In Merriam Webster Online, retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/immigrant

Jackson II, R. L., Drummond, D. K., & Camara, S. (2007). What is qualitative research? *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication, 8*(1), 21-28.

Kelly, D. R. (2016). Applying acculturation theory and power elite theory on a social problem: Political underrepresentation of the Hispanic population in Texas. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 38*(2), 155-165.

Kutrovátz, K. (2017). Conducting qualitative interviews with children – methodological and ethical challenges. *Corvinus Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 8*(2), 65-88.

Li, J. (2010). 'My home and my school:' Examining immigrant adolescent narratives from the critical sociocultural perspective. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 13*(1), 119-137.

Lindsay, G. M., & Schwind, J. K. (2016). Narrative inquiry:Experience matters. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research, 48*(1), 14-20.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (2016). *Designing qualitative research (6th edition).* Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

Martinez, C. R., DeGarmo, D. S., & Eddy, J. M. (2004). Promoting academic success among Latino youths. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 26*(2), 128-151.

Martinez, C. R., McClure, H. H., Eddy, J. M., & Wilson, D. M. (2011). Time in U.S. residency and the social, behavioral, and emotional adjustment of Latino immigrant families. *Hispanic Journaly of Behavioral Sciences, 33*(3), 323-349.

McCabe, M. (2011). English-language learners. *Education Week.* Retrieved February 19, 2019 from http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/english-language-learners/

McCloud, J. (2015). "Just like me": How immigrant students experience a U.S. high school. *The High School Journal, 98*(3), 261-283.

McLaughlin, J. H., Liljestrom, A., Lim, J. H., & Meyers, D. (2002). A community study about Latino immigrants and education. *Education and Urban Society, 34*(2), 212-232.

Miller, L. D. (2013). I am not who I thought I was: Use of grief work to address disrupted identity among Hispanic adolescent immigrants. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 41*(40), 316-323.

Mitchell, C. (2018). Report: Deportation fear grips immigrant and refugee students in U. S. schools. Retrieved from https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning-the-language/2018/11/immigrant_refugee_student

NCLEA (2016). Department of education newcomer tool kit. Chapter 1, p. 8. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/newcomers-toolkit/ncomertoolkit.pdf

Neuman, W. L. (2006). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches (6th edition).* Boston, MA: Pearson.

Noam, G. G. (2003). Editor-in-chief's notes. In new directions for youth development: Understanding the social worlds of immigrant youth. San Fransico, Ca. : Jossey-Bass.

Oikonomidoy, E. (2018). Enemies or friends? Newcomer immigrant students' developing conceptions of diversity in high school. *Education and Urban Society, 50*(2), 183-204.

Ojeda, L., Flores, L. Y., Meza, R. R., & Morales, A. (2011). Culturally competent qualitative research with Latino immigrants. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 33*(2), 184-203.

Ozer, S. (2013). Theories and methodologies in acculturation psychology: The emergence of a scientific revolution? *Psychological Studies.* Retrieved February 17, 2019 from DOI: 10.1007/s12646-013-0203-0

Ozer, S. (2017). Psychological theories of acculturation. *The International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication,* Retrieved February 20, 2019 from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323286923_Psychological_Theories_of_Acculturation.

Pang, V. O. (2005). Multicultrual education: A caring-centered reflective approach. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Reczek, C. (2014). Conducting a multi-family member interview study. *Family Process, 53*(2), 318-335.

Reeves, S., Albert, M., Kuper, A., & Hodges, B. D. (2008). Qualitative research: Why use theories in qualitative research? *British Medical Journal, 337*(7670), 631-634.

Ricucci, R. (2008). Educating immigrant children in a 'newcomer' immigration country: A case study. *Intercultural Education, 19*(5), 449-460.

Riedel, J., Wiesmann, U., & Hannich, H. J. (2011). An integrative theoretical framework of acculturation and salutogenesis. *International Review of Psychiatry, 23*(6), 555-564.

Roulston, K. (2010). Considering quality in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative Research, 10*(2), 199-228).

Rowley, J. (2012). Conducting research interviews. *Management Research Review, 35*(3/4), 260-271.

Schwartz, S. J., Unger, J. B., Zamboanga, B. L., & Szapocznik, J. (2010). Rethinking the concept of acculturation: Implications for theory and research. *65*(4), 237-251.

Sensoy, Ö., & DiAngelo, R. (2017). *Is everyone really equal?* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Squires, A. (2009). Methodological challenges in cross-language qualitative research: A research review. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 46*(2), 277-287.

Suárez-Orozco, C., & Suárez-Orozco, M. M. (2001). *Children of immigration.* Cambridge, Mass:, London: Harvard University Press.

Suárez-Orozco, C., Suárez-Orozco, M. M., & Todorova, I. (2008). Learning a new land: Immigrant students in American society. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Suárez-Orozco, C., & Todorova, I. L. G. (2003). New directions for youth development: Understanding the social worlds of immigrant youth. San Francisco, Ca.: Jossey-Bass.

Texas Education Agency (2019). 19 TAC chapter 128. Retrieved from ritter.tea.state.txus/rules/tac/chapter128/index.html

Texas Education Agency (2019). TELPAS resources, Retrieved from https://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/telpas/

Texas Education Agency (2019). Texas Education Code Chapter 89 Retrieved from http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter089/ch089bb.html

Torres, J. M., & Wallace, S. P. (2013). Migration circumstances, psychological distress, and self-rated physical health for Latino immigrants in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health, 103*(9), 1619-1628.

U.S. Department of Education (2014). Educational services for immigrant children and those recently arrived to the United States, Retrieved from http://www.ed.gov/

Waters, M. C. (2015). Human rights for undocumented students and their families. *Harvard Educational Review, 85*(3), 305-309.

Weston, C., Gandell, T., Beauchamp, J., McAlpine, L., Wiseman, C., & Beauchamp, C. (2001). Analyzing interview data: The development and evolution of a coding system. *Qualitative Sociology, 24*3, 381-400.

Whittemore, R., Chase, S. K., & Mandle, C. L. (2001). Validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research, 11*(4), 522-537.

Wilson, C. M., Ek, L. D., Douglass, T.-R. M. O. (2014). Recasting border crossing politics and pedagogies to combat educational inequity: Experiences, identities, and perceptions of Latino/a immigrant youth. *Urban Review, 46*(1), 1-24.

Winsler, A., Kim, Y. K., & Richard, E. R. (2014). Socio-emotional skills, behavior problems, and Spanish competence predict the acquisition of English among English language learners in poverty. *American Psychological Association, 50*(9), 2242-2254.

Yin, R. K. (2014). Case study research designs and methods. Thousand Oaks, Ca: SAGE Publications.

APPENDIX A

TEC §89.1201. Policy Assurances

To ensure equal educational opportunity, as required in the TEC, §1.002(a), each school district shall:

(1) Identify English learners based on criteria established by the state;
(2) Provide bilingual education and ESL programs, as integral parts of the general program as described in the TEC, §4.002;
(3) Seek appropriately certified teaching personnel to ensure that English learners are afforded full opportunity to master the essential knowledge and skills required by the state; and
(4) Assess achievement for essential knowledge and skills in accordance with the TEC, Chapter 29, to ensure accountability for English learners and the schools that serve them.

APPENDIX B

Key Theoretical Relationships in Acculturation by Gil, et al., (2013, p. 45)

1. Negative self-esteem results when individuals low in acculturation experience high levels of stress. The individuals may experience conflicts, feel cut off from the culture of origin and its strong supportive networks, and be faced with a foreign, often unwelcoming culture, where they do not have the knowledge and resources to cope effectively in the new environment.

2. Individuals low in acculturation, but who experience lower levels of stress, will have better mental health and adjustment. These individuals presumably benefit from the mediating effects of traditional cultural values, such as family support. Also, knowledge of and participation in the host culture, while retaining the positive, protective factors of their traditional culture.

3. A curvilinear relationship exists between acculturation and mental health status because bicultural individuals experience better psychological outcomes due to their knowledge of and participation in the host culture, while retaining the positive, protective factors of their traditional culture.

4. An inverse relationship is postulated between high acculturation and negative mental health outcomes because of increased perceptions of discrimination, internalization of minority status, and/or socialization into cultural attitudes and behaviors that have a disintegrative effect on family ties.

APPENDIX C

Communication Keys to Gaining Initial Access to Participants

Potential participants "will probably make a very fast decision on the basis of your initial approach regarding whether they are willing to talk to you or not" (Rowley, 2012, p. 264). Thus, it is important to:

1. Indicate who you are (including the university and course that you are attending) and why you are conducting this research.
2. Capture the interest of the potential interviewee, with a brief explanation of your research, and if appropriate, send them the interview schedule.
3. Be clear as to the amount of their time that the interview will take.
4. Ask their permission to record the interview.
5. Assure them of confidentiality.
6. Provide any details regarding benefits to them, such as a summary of your research.
7. Give your contact details, and invite them to indicate their availability over the next two weeks.
8. Follow-up if your initial contact does not provide a response.

APPENDIX D

Semi-structured Interview Question Protocol

Level 1 Interview:

Level one interviews will begin with introductions between the participant and the researcher. The researcher will briefly explain his role, why this study is being done, and provide a brief summary of his background. The researcher will create a trust relationship with each participant, on a personal level, through casual conversation, to create a comfortable and trusting setting.

Level Two Interview:

Level two interviews will begin with a review of the member check provided in the interim between level one and two. Based on the analysis of the data collected in the level one interviews, questions will be derived for further investigation or clarification.

Level Three Interview:

As required for saturation of data, questions will be formulated based on analysis of interview responses for level two. Level three interviews will begin with a review of the member check provided in the interim between level two and three. Again, based on the analysis of the data collected in the level two interviews, questions will be derived for further investigation or clarification.

APPENDIX E

Interview Questions

Student Questions

1. How old are you?
2. What grade are you in?
3. How long have you lived in the United States?
4. What did it feel like to leave your country?
5. Tell me your story of coming to the United States.
6. How does it feel to live in the United States?
7. What have you learned from your experience?
8. What do you like most about your school?
9. What have you observed about your peers at school?
10. Can you describe where you fit in at your school?
11. What is it like being a newcomer at your school?
12. What could your teachers, administrators, and others do to help you at school?
13. What if anything would you change about your experience at school?
14. What do you believe is important for others to know about you?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add to your study?

APPENDIX F

Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle Assessment of Primary and Secondary Criteria of Validity

PRIMARY CRITERIA	
Credibility	Do the results of the research reflect the experience of participants or the ontext in a believable way?
Authenticity	Does a representation of the emic perspective exhibit awareness to the subtle differences in the voices of all participants?
Criticality	Does the research process demonstrate evidence of critical appraisal?
Integrity	Does the research reflect recursive and repetitive checks of validity as well as a humble presentation of findings?
SECONDARY CRITERIA	
Explicitness	Have methodological decisions, interpretations, and investigator biases been addressed?
Vividness	Have thick and faithful descriptions been portrayed with artfulness and clarity?
Creativity	Have imaginative ways of organizing, presenting, and analyzing data been incorporated?
Thoroughness	Do the findings convincingly address the questions posed through completeness and saturation?
Congruence	Are the process and the findings congruent? Do all the themes fit together? Do findings fit into a context outside the study situation?
Sensitivity	Has the investigation been implemented in ways that are sensitive to the nature of human, cultural, and social contexts?

APPENDIX G

Letter of Consent to ISD

Dear Mr. _____,

I am writing this letter to seek approval to conduct dissertation research, as required for the completion of the Stephen F. Austin State University doctoral program, at East Texas High School during the 2019-2020 school year. The dissertation is titled "A Qualitative Study of the Social-Emotional Needs of Newly Arrived Immigrant Students." Due to the recent increase of newly arrived immigrant students in East Texas ISD, this study is relevant and seeks to provide strategies that will help meet needs of students served in the district, and to ensure equitable practice. All participants, as well as the ISD and campus will remain anonymous and confidential.

The qualitative dissertation research on the high school campus is expected to take place during the Fall of 2019 and will include interviews with three to five newly arrived immigrant students, their teachers, and their parents. Consent will be received from all students, parents, and teachers. Questions will include information about the students' lived experiences during the immigration process and the educational setting at East Texas High School. A trusted EISD administrator will assist in translating and transcribing texts from Spanish to English.

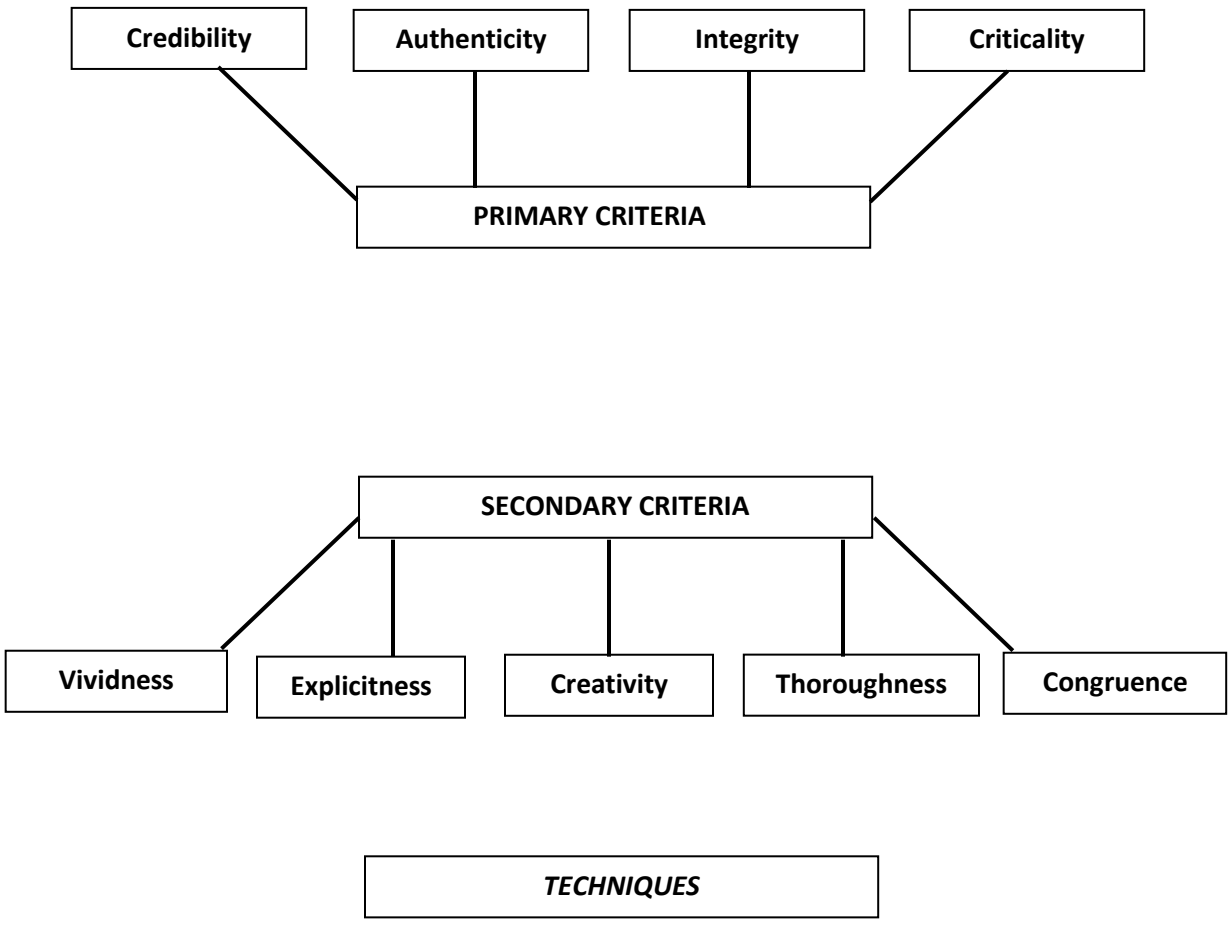
Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Janie Snyder
Principal, Southside Elementary
Doctoral Student at Stephen F. Austin State University.

FIGURE 1

Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle Validity Criteria for Qualitative Research



VITA

Janie L. Snyder graduated from Robert E. Lee High School, Houston, Texas in 1982. She attended Sam Houston State University where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Teaching in 1986. Her teaching career began in Alief Independent School District where she taught Special Education for ten years. She continued her career in Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District at Owens Elementary teaching in both the Special Education and General Education settings. Her Master's Degree in Mid-Management Administration was earned at the University of Houston- Victoria in 2002. After moving to Livingston, Texas, Mrs. Snyder taught at Pine Ridge Elementary for three years before becoming the Assistant Principal at Livingston Intermediate School. She was named Principal at Southside Elementary School, Cleveland Independent School District in 2014, where she continues to serve. Mrs. Snyder was accepted into the 2017 Doctoral Program, Cohort 21, at Stephen F. Austin State University where she earned a Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership in 2020.

Permanent Address:	400 Water View Drive, Livingston, Texas, 77351
Style manual designation:	*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition*
Typist:	Janie L. Snyder