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SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE MIXTEC COMMUNITY AND THE BARRIERS TO THOSE SERVICES

Currie Bailey Carmon

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SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE MIXTEC COMMUNITY AND THE BARRIERS
TO THOSE SERVICES

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Currie Bailey Carmon

May 2023

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: While outreach and services continue to expand within marginalized communities, this research aims to identify services accessible to the Mixtec population within the North County of San Luis Obispo and identify the barriers to accessing those services. **Methods:** This study was conducted by interviewing service providers 18 years or older, who work within the Mixtec community in the private sector, child welfare services and within the school settings. The researcher utilized the post positivist paradigm, and data was gathered through semi-structured Zoom interviews with the service providers. **Results:** The study sample featured 6 participants who work within the Mixtec community with the average age of 42.5 years old (range = 28-56). The gender distribution was 83.3% female and 16.6% male with 66.6% being Hispanics and 33.3% Caucasian participants. The participants' education level was 66.6% with master's level education versus 33.3% at a Bachelor level. Half of the respondents offered educational assistance to the Mixtec community, with services helping parents navigate school systems, helping students plan for after high school, and connecting families to appropriate resources in the community as well as teaching parents the laws about child safety in the home and while driving. 33.3% of services offered by respondents addressed the Mixtec communities' basic needs including cash aid, food stamps and medical insurance. Finally, 33.3% of the services offered addressed safety issues by

investigating child abuse and neglect in the homes. **Conclusions:** Service providers' perspectives on the available services offered to the Mixtec community and their experiences addressing the barriers to accessing those services will provide an understanding of how to better serve this community. At the micro-level, the information gathered through this research will help social workers advocate for specific services and help individuals overcome the barriers to accessing these services. At the macro level, this information can help advocacy efforts to improve services offered to the Mixtec community by addressing the barriers to this population accessing.

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CHAPTER ONE

ASSESSMENT

Chapter one discusses the research topic, an assessment of current services provided to the Mixtec population in San Luis Obispo County's North County, and how the language barrier is impacting the Mixtec community to accessing these services. Next is an explanation of the post-positivism paradigm used for this study. This is followed by a literature review examining services available or the lack of services as well as any barriers to services identified in the Mixtec communities. The Theoretical orientation of Maslow's Hierarchy is discussed as it relates to this study. Lastly, this chapter discusses how this study's findings contribute to micro and macro social work practice.

Problem Focus

The Mixtec population in the North County of San Luis Obispo, struggles to obtain adequate services in the social services, mental health and education sectors due to lack of services available to meet their needs and the language barrier between service providers and the Mixtec population. San Luis Obispo County has a total population of 2893,111 people with 23% of the population identifying as Hispanic or other Hispanic. ("Census profile: San Luis Obispo County, CA," n.d.). Of this, a small but significant population identifies as Mixtec.

This researcher has observed a lack of services to address the needs of the Mixtec population and a language barrier that further complicates helping

address the needs of this population. The research focus of this study is an overall assessment of the current services provided to the Mixtec population through child welfare services, mental health, and the education system in San Luis Obispo County, specifically its North County. This will include an overview of the available resources and any barriers to these resources for the Mixtec community and will identify any services that are lacking in this community. Interviews will be conducted with community service providers who are working directly with this population, including translators, parent/family partners, child welfare emergency response social workers, and school social workers, working in North County schools. These interviews will help identify services that are available to this community, lack of services, and any barriers to services that the Mixtec community may be facing. The researcher hopes to identify any lacking resources and or barriers to access services that the Mixtec population in the North County of San Luis Obispo County is having to help service providers engage and address this population's identified needs.

Paradigm and Rationale

The research study will be conducted using the post positivist paradigm. The post positivist paradigm understands that an "objective reality exists but suggests that the 'immutable laws and mechanisms' driving that reality can never be fully comprehended" (Morris, 2014, p. 41). Looking at quantitative measurements and hypothesis testing only shows the researcher half of the

story, where the rest of the story must be viewed in the open or natural environment (Morris, 2014). The post positivist paradigm allows the researcher to take a learning role versus a testing role. There are three assumptions with this paradigm: ontology which is the reality that is being studied, epistemology, which is what is known of the reality and methodology which is the strategy that was used to seek the truth. The post positivist paradigm assumes that social reality is measurable and stable and its patterns can be known although often difficult to access (Krause, 2005). The post positivist approach takes an objective view of interactions between human experiences and assumes that these interactions are controlled by natural laws (Kaplan, 2015). With this paradigm being inductive it will allow the researcher to identify central themes to the research, versus making the research fit a certain hypothesis (Morris, 2014).

The researcher believes this is the best paradigm for this study because interviews can be conducted with those who are directly working with the population and know what services are available or lacking as well as the barriers to any available services, providing the researcher qualitative data on the research question. Also, the post positivist paradigm will allow this researcher to be flexible and research the subject from more than one perspective, studying the problem by understanding a need and looking at the cause to enact results (Panhwar et al., 2017).

Literature Review

There is believed to be roughly 165,000 indigenous Mexicans living in California who have migrated to the United States from Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Michoacán, Mexico (Mixteco.org, 2021). Many Mixtec people are fleeing harsh economic and environmental conditions due to mismanagement of their land and an oppressive government to make a better life for themselves and their families (Damian & Firebaugh, 2019). Although some Mixtec community members immigrating to the United States speak Spanish and English, many do not read or write at any level or in any language. Many only speak Mixteco (Maxwell et al., 2017), making accessing community services difficult.

Research on the Mixtec communities is limited primarily due to these language barriers, their long working hours, the seasonal type of work they engage in, and an overall distrust and fear of deportation in the community, making engagement difficult (Mixteco.org, 2021). To date, only a few studies have been done with small pockets of the Mixtec community (Maxwell et al., 2017). This literature review will explore the Mixtec population and discuss the barriers they face as immigrants to the United States in having their basic needs met. This review will also discuss how Mixtec's language and lack of a written form creates barriers for them accessing services in school. This researcher found a lack of information on child welfare's engagement barriers with the Mixtec population, although will draw some inferences based off of similar service providers.

The Mixtec people come from one of the most impoverished areas of Mexico, and frequently these individuals lack formal education or have very little education (Maxwell et al., 2017). Mixtec's come to the United States in hopes of a better life for their families and are often found working the fields in meager paying jobs that are often seasonal (Maxwell et al., 2015). Farm work is traditional in this community as they have traditionally practiced agriculture, with land being passed down by the fathers ("Mixtec.org," n.d.). Some only speak their native language of Mixteco or Zapoteco, which does not consist of a written language (Maxwell et al., 2015). These native languages come from the pre-Hispanic indigenous populations believed to have originated some three thousand years ago (Mixteco.org, 2021). Mixteco is unrelated to Spanish and has 30-50 variations or dialects that are spoken and mainly spoken in the Oaxaco areas of Mexico which are very remote. This language does not have a past or present tense and uses repetition to establish meaning, for example: fast fast would be used to mean very fast. Finally, Mixteco is a tonal language, a lot like the Chinese language, which relies on how a word is pronounced to determine its meaning (Mixteco.org, 2021).

Engagement with the Mixtec Communities

The Mixtec/Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP), a non-profit and the University of California Los Angeles Fielding School of Public Health, did a research assessment, providing data regarding the needs of the Mixtec and Zapotec communities in Ventura County, California. The assessment focused on

basic needs that are determinants of overall health. Food security, housing availability, access to appropriate health care, transportation, employment, and safety and discrimination were all assessed. This study's premise was to evaluate how services or lack of services can improve health conditions in the Mixtec community (Maxwell et al., 2015). The MICOP went door to door in 2013 and found that the average person surveyed was 31 years old and lived in a household of 4.5 people. The dominant languages spoken in the home were Spanish and Mixteco at 54%, Mixteco only at 23%, Spanish and Zapoteco at 8%, Spanish only at 8%, and English or at least one other language at 7%.

Only 25% of the 989 individuals sampled had three basic needs being met out of 10 that were assessed, and 22% had eight or more of their needs being met (Maxwell et al., 2015). The total number of basic needs being met was higher among the men than women, with having access to employment, education, and transportation accounting for most of this discrepancy. Married couples reported more of their needs being met versus their single counterparts, as well as younger respondents' needs being met over the older respondents. Also, the smaller households reported their needs being met more often than the larger households (Maxwell et al., 2015).

This study showed that many of the basic human needs such as food, housing and health care are not adequately met within the Mixtec and Zapotec populations. These basic needs are determining factors of overall health. These findings show that many of these children have access to health care but it can

come at a price of spending many hours at the emergency room. This study also found that the findings could be skewed depending on when the research was conducted. One study conducted in Fresno California showed that of the Mixteco speaking individuals surveyed, only 24% reported having enough food in the winter while 100% surveyed reported ample food in the summer. This can be attributed to the seasonal nature of farm labor work which a large population of the Mixtec population engage in. Also, a study conducted during harvest season when laborers are working may yield much different results from a study conducted in the wintertime when laborers are only working on average 33 hours a week (Maxwell et al., 2015).

Lack of Services in the Schools

MICOP did another study examining the views of Mixtec public school parents, examining the ways their K-12 students navigate the public-school setting in Ventura County. An overall lack of resources for this community was identified for work, school, and in their general Mixtec communities. It was found that Mixtec children were often getting clumped together with other English learning (EL) students who were predominantly Spanish speakers (Damian & Firebaugh, 2019). Often school staff assumed that the Mixtec children's parents spoke Spanish and would send home Spanish communications that they were unable to read. MICOP found that language barriers and lack of their own general education for the parents created additional barriers to success for their students. The Mixtec children also reported bullying because of language

barriers and their short stature, making them less likely to fit in with the EL students or the English-speaking children. Despite the family's difficulties in navigating the public school system, MICOP found that Mixtec parents could still provide encouragement and show attempts at strategies to help their children while maintaining their language and culture (Damian & Firebaugh, 2019).

These MICOP studies show the disadvantage that the Mixtec communities face at meeting many of their essential needs. These communities are often described as invisible and have been dealing with long-standing inequalities both in their native county of Mexico and in the United States. The MICOP has begun sharing information with health care providers and other local agencies to help address the needs of these communities in the hopes to evaluate the impact of services and lack thereof to help improve the overall well-being of this population (Maxwell et al., 2015).

Common Barriers to Services

In 2016, two bi-lingual interviewers interviewed 44 indigenous women who resided in Oxnard, California to identify structural, cultural, and provider-based barriers to engaging in healthcare services. Common operational barriers to services found within the Mixtec communities included lack of access or availability of interpreters, no insurance or means to pay for insurance or medical treatment, and lack of knowledge of how to obtain insurance that may be available. Other barriers noted were long waiting for lines at health clinics, difficulty filling out paperwork for services because inability to read or write and

communicate in Mixteco, and difficulty knowing when appointments were because there is not a written Mixteco language. Finally, lack of transportation to utilize available services is detrimental, and even when available, individuals do not understand how to access it or pay for it (Maxwell et al., 2017).

Cultural barriers to services include individuals being hesitant to ask questions about recommended health care procedures as they reported being embarrassed to question doctors or being leery of unfamiliar procedures as many reported not seeking medical care in Mexico. These barriers were more noted when women were delivering babies as in their remote areas of Mexico, they rarely have access to deliver in hospitals, but rather gave birth at home with a midwife in some situations. Many women reported only seeking medical care when all home remedies had been exhausted being a cultural norm (Maxwell et al., 2017). The researchers found that there were limited provider-based barriers reported but among those noted were disrespectful service providers and the inability to maintain the same service provider.

Barriers within the Educational System

According to Damian and Firebaugh (2019), many Mixtec children suffer in the school system and struggle with barriers to adequate education due to the same language barriers affecting their parents in the general community. Mixtec children are receiving a lack of support from school districts who are failing to realize that there are cultural and linguistic variations amongst this already marginalized ethnic group. Already, Latino parents report feeling reprimanded in

the United States for not being engaged in their children's education. Therefore, it can be assumed that the Mixtec population will struggle even more because of the different dialects to their language and a larger rate of illiteracy within the population. In addition, many Mixtec parents rely on their children to help them understand and live day to day in the United States and may be focused more on family survival than educational issues.

Interventions

This researcher found limited information on current interventions addressing the language barrier between the Mixtec community and the education and child welfare systems, although there is research discussing interventions on addressing this population amongst the medical field. This literature includes suggestions on how to effectively engage this population such as agencies collaborating with individuals and leaders directly in the Mixtec communities. It also suggests using word of mouth or other individuals who are already engaged in services to help spread the word about available services and their benefits to the community. Also, validating Mixtec client's issues and feelings about specific concerns they bring up within their communities (Ahn et al., n.d.). In addition, understanding their traditional indigenous practices can help service providers gain better insight into how this population addresses their medical needs, mental health, and rearing of their children (Crandail et al., 2016). This researcher believes that employing these same practices will help child welfare and educational systems have better engagement with this community

and address the language barrier by involving those who are part of the community that can help bridge the gap linguistically.

This literature review provided insight into the Mixtec population and their struggles once immigrating to the United States. In addition, it discussed how most of the Mixtec population's basic needs are not being met as well as discussing issues within the health care and public school system as they relate to the Mixtec community and language barriers. This review highlights the largest barrier to services being that of a language barrier due to an ancient language that does not have any written form, coupled with the fact that 23% of Mixtec individuals only speak Mixteco and no other language (Maxwell et al., 2015). This review provided interventions of actively engaging members of the community to help bridge the language barrier and to gain education on cultural norms within the community (Crandail et al., 2016).

Theoretical Orientation

The Theoretical orientation used in this study will be Maslow's Hierarchy of needs which is a motivational theory depicting that one's needs lower down in the hierarchy must be satisfied before an individual can attend to the needs depicted higher in the hierarchy. The needs are noted from the bottom up consisting of physiological, comprised of food, water, warmth, and rest; safety, comprised of security and safety; love and belonging, comprised of intimate relationships and friendships; esteem needs, comprised of the feeling of prestige and

accomplishment; and finally, self-actualization, comprised of achieving one's full potential, including creativity (McLeod, 2018).

Maslow initially stated that people had to fulfill their lower needs before they could meet their higher needs, although he later clarified that he believed it was not an all or none process. It is believed that when a need has been met, a person can focus on meeting his or her next set of needs. Maslow believed that every individual desired to move up the hierarchy towards self-actualization. What is found is that these needs are disrupted by one's inability or failure to meet their lower-level needs. For example, if one is unable to meet their need for safety, they are unlikely to be focused on their need for love. Individuals can fluctuate between needs depending on what is taking place in their lives (McLeod, 2018).

Understanding how the Mixtec communities' needs are or are not being met and how this community can meet their needs through the services provided, can show where services are lacking as well as the barriers to these services exist? The research strives to strengthen identified areas of lacking services and barriers to available services in order to help this community meet their basic needs. As basic needs are met the researcher believes individuals will be able to move forward towards self-actualization as identified in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Potential Contributions

With insight into the services and or the lack of services offered to the Mixtec communities in the North County of San Luis Obispo, as well as identifying the barriers to the available services, this research can help promote change on both the macro and micro social work levels. In the micro level of social work, this research could be used for service providers who work directly with this population to help address barriers found to available services with the families and communities and identify needed services. Also, on the micro level, this research can bring cultural awareness to service providers who are working with the Mixtec population. Showing service providers how to better serve and address the needs of the Mixtec culture and in a culturally appropriate way by looking at the identified barriers to service.

On the macro level, this research can be used to help increase funding for services to this marginalized community, by showing local government the lack of needed resources and the benefit to the needed resources within the community. Also, through macro social work, additional resources could be provided to help the Mixtec community engage in already established community resources and help lobby to establish new community resources that are identified as lacking.

Summary

This chapter covered the problem focus of a language barrier between child welfare services and the education system within the Mixtec community. The post-positivist paradigm was identified as the best paradigm for this study

due to its ability to allow the researcher to interview those working directly with the Mixtec population. Also, the theoretical orientation of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs was identified as the best fit for this research. The research's potential contributions were discussed in both micro and macro social work, helping this marginalized community better access services by addressing the language barrier. Furthermore, the literature review explained the population's characteristics and discussed the difficulties that the population faces once immigrating to the United States and the barriers to accessing services their language causes them as well as interventions to help address this issue.

CHAPTER TWO

ENGAGEMENT

Chapter two discusses the project's study site, community agencies in the North County of San Luis Obispo, and the participant's role within one of the agencies. It discusses the plan for engaging with the participants and the method used to do so. Also, the researcher explains how she will prepare for her engagement with participants. In addition, diversity, ethical, and political issues that could arise are discussed in relation to the impact on participants. Finally, the role of technology and how it is utilized in this study is outlined.

Research Site and Study Participants.

This study's research sites were an online research technique utilizing Zoom. Community agencies included were child welfare services, Community Action Partnership Advocates, and the Link office that all serve the Mixtec population.

The study participants will be emergency response child welfare service's social workers, who address children's safety in the home, as well as social workers or counselors at local schools who are helping Mixtec children navigate school issues and family concerns. Additionally, participants will include service providers who work with the Mixtec population through community agencies assisting with housing, basic necessities and helping engage families with other community resources.

Engagement Strategies

This researcher will use her employment position with the County of San Luis Obispo, child welfare services to obtain written permission from her supervisor, a potential gatekeeper, to speak to the schools and service agencies assisting the Mixtec community. This researcher will set up appointments to via Zoom with school social workers and counselors and fellow child welfare emergency response social workers and local service providers. This researcher will obtain written permission from school administrators as well as service agency directors. Participant's engagement will be voluntary and confidential. The researcher will explain the purpose of the study and the goal of increasing services to the Mixtec community, along with addressing how the language barrier is impacting this engagement to encourage them to participate. Finally, this researcher will allow service agencies as well as school administrators to add their own questions to the study to help increase their buy-in for the research.

Preparation

This researcher will study journal articles and other literature about this population and the issues they are facing to ensure appropriate questions are asked during the interviews. In addition, this researcher will base questions on firsthand experience through employment working with the Mixtec population. This researcher will formulate the questions she wants to seek answers to and

have them written down to easily be referenced with either an in-person or phone interview. This researcher will do mock interviews with co-workers and/or family members to gain feedback for flow of questions and identify any issues with the line of questioning, as well as to gain practice asking the questions.

According to Morris (2014), the role of the researcher in the post-positivism paradigm is to stay neutral and be aware of influence. The researcher will stay aware of the researcher's own experiences by keeping a reflective journal about working with the Mixtec community, while documenting interactions and events. By utilizing the reflective journal, the researcher aims to not to allow personal interactions to influence the line of questions presented to participants.

Diversity Issues

There can be diversity issues when dealing with any group, which a researcher must be aware of. Potential issues this researcher sees are that the community agencies that service the Mixtec population are mostly Spanish speaking, while the social workers are mostly non-Hispanic. Additionally, there is only one Spanish speaking social worker in the North County of San Luis Obispo. Moreover, the school social workers and counselors are comprised mostly of non-Hispanic providers as well, with only one Spanish-speaking provider. This researcher will address this issue by asking each participant how they best believe this issue can be addressed to best serve the Mixtec community.

In addition, this researcher realizes the Mixtec population on the Central Coast of California, the population being studied, is a small portion of California's total Mixtec population. It is believed that roughly 165,000 indigenous Mexicans live in California; However, San Luis Obispo County does not have a count of their Mixtec population. San Luis Obispo's neighboring Santa Barbara County, is believed to have around 25,000 indigenous Mexicans (Mixteco.org, 2021). With that being said, this researcher understands that participants being interviewed are basing their information off of working with only a small segment of the Mixtec population.

Ethical Issues

This researcher will seek written consent from the San Luis Obispo Department of Child Welfare Services to reach out to service providers who work within the Mixtec population. The researcher will explain the project, purpose and clarify to each participant that their names and titles will remain anonymous in the study and all names and identifying information will be destroyed after use. The researcher foresees that her own opinion may bias the study due to her own experiences in working with the population through her employment at child welfare services. Another issue that could arise is service providers not wanting to discuss this population with this researcher due to confidentiality reasons between themselves and the individual or the community being discussed. This researcher will address the confidentiality concerns by informing participants that

no names or identifying information will be documented on specific individuals, and the information being shared will be generalized information. In addition, this researcher will remain cognizant of her own biases throughout the process by referring to the reflective journals with the intent to understand and recognize any underlying unintended biases that may impact the research.

Political Issues

Potential political issues that could arise in this study are the researcher's working relationship with the participants. Participants who have worked with the researcher on similar child welfare referrals may feel more comfortable talking with the researcher because of the working relationship. Moreover, some participants may be reluctant to share information in fear of making their agencies look bad for having a lack of services or ability to engage the Mixtec population. The researcher will address any participant feeling uncomfortable sharing particular information, by reminding them of their anonymity and confidentiality and the purpose of the study, which is to show how language barriers impact the Mixtec community and their ability to engage in services our community is offering. Also, the researcher will notify the participants that they will have a opportunity to review the research findings before they are submitted as a final write up to allow for feedback. This researcher will notify the agency that the information shared will not be used against their agency in a negative

manner, but rather to enhance the way our community can engage this population.

Role of Technology

This researcher will utilize email to correspond with participants for convenience, along with telephone calls when needed. Most data collection will be done via Zoom with email and telephone calls used to follow up and set up and confirm appointments. The interviews will be audio recorded with the participant's permission. This use of technology will be helpful, as many participants from multiple agencies and busy schedules will be participating. In addition, the completion of interviews over Zoom allowed the automatic transcription of the audio recordings, yielding the text data necessary for coding.

Study Design

A phenomenological research methodology was utilized to understand the participant's personal experience regarding the Mixtec community. Phenomenological research methods allow the researcher to conduct interviews, asking questions about the participants' direct experiences engaging with the Mixtec community. This provides the researcher a deeper understanding of the available services and the barriers to those services from

the participants own interactions, with the goal to expose what the interactions meant to the study participants (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022).

Summary

Chapter two addressed the Engagement phase of this study. First it addressed where the research would be gathered and then discussed how this researcher would engage the participants to gather information. Next it showed how the researcher prepared to address the participants and any diversity, ethical or political issues that may have arisen during the research. Lastly, this chapter explained how technology was utilized with participants in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter three discusses the study participants and their selection process. Data gathering and how data will be collected from participants follows. This chapter also includes a section that describes how data will be recorded and then analyzed for the study. Chapter three concludes with plans for termination and dissemination of the findings of the study.

Design

A phenomenological research methodology was utilized to understand the participant's personal experience regarding the Mixtec community. Phenomenological research methods allow the researcher to conduct interviews, asking questions about the participants' direct experiences engaging with the Mixtec community. This provides the researcher a deeper understanding of the available services and the barriers to those services from the participants own interactions, with the goal to expose what the interactions meant to the study participants (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022).

Study Participants

The study participants for this research will be service providers in the North County of San Luis Obispo, California, who works directly with the Mixtec population and understand the barriers of communication and the services that

are needed to adequately address the needs of the Mixtec's. These service providers will consist of emergency response social workers, school social workers, providers from local agencies with the social service sectors, and translators that work with the Mixtec population. The common characteristic within the study's participants is that they work within the Mixtec population and can provide insight into the needs and barriers to the services needed to adequately serve the Mixtec community. Participants can be of any gender and race/ethnicity.

Selection of Participants

Critical case sampling will be used to select participants as it allows the researcher to collect critical information that is most likely to give relevant information towards the study, meaning a small group can be sampled to give an understanding of the larger group. This is particularly effective because of the small number of participants being sampled in the small Mixtec community. Critical case sampling will choose particularly important people, who are working within the Mixtec community to participate in this study as they are the most likely to provide the most prudent information about this topic (Patton, 2014). Study participants will be selected from among those who work directly with the Mixtec population in the North County of San Luis Obispo, California. Included will be individuals who work directly with this population providing goods, services, translation, and child welfare services. Critical case sampling intends to shed

light on the limitations of addressing the needs of the Mixtec population. This type of sampling will help show where the limitations are and provide information on how service providers can better serve the Mixtec population in the North County of San Luis Obispo.

Data Gathering

Because the focus of this study is to obtain information on the barriers to services provided to the Mixtec population, the data collection method for this study will be to interview participants via Zoom. The researcher will create a detailed list of questions based off the researcher's own experiences working with the Mixtec community, consultation with agency supervisors as well as consulting with other social workers working within the community to create questions that have arose for them. Finally, the researcher will gather questions from previous research done on other indigenous communities. These questions will be generated prior to the interviews, and the interviewer will explain the purpose of the study and interview. The interviewer will also ask questions based on feedback from the participant that may not be planned ahead of time. Essential questions will be asked to participants for the researcher to gain a better understanding of the barriers to services within the Mixtec community. For example, do you feel your agency is able to address the many dialects in the Mixteco Language? What services does your agency offer individuals in the

Mixtec community? What additional services do you see as needed to further assist the Mixtec community within your agency?

Phases of Data Collection

Participants were asked to sign a written consent form that was emailed to the participants and returned via email to the researcher. Participants agreed upon a time to meet via Zoom, and the researcher conducted individual interviews. The researcher began the interview by explaining the study purpose and answering any question the participant had. At the completion of the interviews, the participants will be thanked for their time and participation in the study.

Data Recording

The interviewer will conduct Zoom interviews with the participant at an agreed upon date and time. Before the interview starts, participants will be asked permission to audio record the session so that this researcher can refer back to the information throughout the study. This researcher recognizes that this creates a level of discomfort, but the researcher will explain the importance of the recordings to the study's accuracy. If a recording is not possible, then written documentation will be taken during the interviews or as soon as possible after the interviews, as noted to be very important to the efficacy to the study (Morris, 2014).

Data Analysis

The researcher will use a bottom-up approach of analysis of this qualitative data. With this bottom-up approach, information is molded from words to a theoretical statement about the similarities in nature (Morris, 2014). Open coding is used by deciphering the interviews into categories, which can lead to future questions with the participants in the study. Axial coding will show relationships between themes which can be tested in further interviews (Morris, 2014). Selective coding allows the basis for a theoretical statement to be created based off of the data analysis. Finally, conditional/consequential matrix allows for the determined theory to be utilized with the information provided (Morris, 2014).

Termination of Follow Up

The participants will be notified that the study is concluded when the research paper is submitted to the University and that the findings will be presented to the University, and participants will be notified of the time and date of presentation.

Communications of findings will be presented to the University via a graduate research paper. In addition, the findings will be presented to the participants (i.e., social workers, translators, CapSlo and Link service providers as well as school social workers) by PowerPoint presentations and handouts summarizing the findings. These methods will be offered for review by the participating organizations to be deemed accurate. The findings will be available

for other organizations upon request and utilized to eliminate barriers and increase available services to the Mixtec community within the North County of San Luis Obispo community partnerships. The participant will be mailed a termination form, notifying them of the conclusion of the study and who they can contact with questions.

Summary

Chapter three discussed how the research will be implemented and provided a description of the study participants, social workers, translators, and other services providers within the North County of San Luis Obispo, California, serving the Mixtec community. Chapter three also discussed how data will be gathered through Zoom interviews. In addition, chapter three discusses how data will be recorded via recordings and how this data will be analyzed using a bottom-up approach. Finally, the termination plans for the study were discussed, which include where the study findings will go and how they can be utilized.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics

Data for this study came from six participants. The average age of the participants interviewed was 42.5 years of age (range = 28-56). The gender distribution was 83.3% female and 16.6% male with 66.6% being Hispanics and 33.3% Caucasian participants. The participants' education level was 66.6% with master's level education versus 33.3% at a Bachelor level.

Thematic Analysis Findings

The research study sought to explore the services available to the Mixtec community as well as their barriers to accessing those services that the Mixtec population faces. This study provided an opportunity for service providers to discuss how their services help the Mixtec population as well as identifying barriers to accessing services within the community. Three categories were identified for services being provided for basic needs, education and safety with four categories under barriers to services being identified as language, cultural norms, lack of resources and fear. Additionally, five categories were identified as cultural norms: men speaking for the family, fear, child brides, domestic violence and lack of education contributing to barriers to services. Furthermore, the three categories identified to best address the barriers to service were having access

to translators on a language line, rapport building by service providers and education.

Services Offered by Provider

Services offered by providers were broken up into three categories: basic needs, education, and safety (See Table 1). Half of the respondents stated they offered educational assistance, with services helping parents navigate school systems, helping students plan for after high school, connecting families to appropriate resources in the community and teaching parents the laws about child safety in the home and while driving. 33.3% of services offered by respondents addressed the Mixtec communities' basic needs. For example, cash aid, food stamps and medical insurance. Finally, 33.3% of the services offered addressed safety issues by investigating child abuse and neglect in the homes.

Table 1 Services Offered by Providers (N = 6)

Themes	n (%)
Education	3 (50%)
Basic needs	2 (33.3%)
Safety	2 (33.3%)

Barriers to Services

In this section the author discussed the barriers for the Mixtec community in accessing available services from the perspective of the service providers. Barriers to services were identified as language, fear, cultural norms, and resources (See Table 2). The interpretation of the findings was that the barriers highlighted by the respondents are those emanating from the Mixtec population rather than from macro level barriers.

Most respondents (83.3%) reported language as the main barrier to accessing services due to Mixtecs only speaking Mixteco, which is a spoken language only and not written in written form. Participant 1 said: The big one is language; they aren't always even fluent in Spanish and a lot of them are illiterate." "A visit that should take an hour takes two... our Spanish is so different from their language." "Mixteco is not a written language but we are asking them to sign documents they can't read and we can't know that they actually understand."

Another theme that emerged in the research was fear, with (83.3%) of respondents reporting Mixtec families being afraid of outsiders, people not from their community, fear of their immigration status being found out and fear of accepting services in general. "I think there is a lot of fear in accepting services...we try and do parent education groups and they just don't come."

“They are untrusting to outside government agencies out of basic fear of being sent back.”

In addition, most of the men also speak at least some Spanish where most of the women only speak Mixteco. “Men do most of the talking and the women are very limited in their Spanish.” This contributes to the barriers due to lack of interpreters, so oftentimes service providers are relying on the man’s ability to understand Spanish, leaving mom out of the conversation due to the language barrier. Additionally, many women in the Mixtec culture are married off very young to their husbands and begin having babies when they are still a minor themselves. This leads to financial dependence on the man of the house as the woman is home raising the children and goes back to the man being the speaker of the household. In a domestic violence situation, the woman may be reluctant to disclose any abuse due to fear of financial repercussions if she reports the man. Thus, limiting engagement with service providers.

Finally, 50% of respondents reported a limited number of agencies being equipped to serve the needs of the Mixtec population barrier to accessing resources. This is exacerbated by the fact that Mixteco has no written language, making it impossible to leave flyers, pamphlets or even a written safety plan with a family. Even Spanish resources are scarce and even when they are provided, a lot of times those services are not utilized due Mixtec’s work schedules.

“Oftentimes families work really late, often work two jobs, kind of hard for them to

access or be available to certain resources.” Agencies’ inability to be flexible past the 9-5 schedule further impacts the populations’ ability to access services.

Table 2 Barriers to Service Use Among the Mixtec Population

Themes	<i>n</i> (%)
Fear	5 (83.3%)
Language	5 (83.3%)
Cultural norms	2 (33.3%)
Resources	3 (50%)

Cultural Norms Contributing to Service Access

In this section the norms within the Mixtec culture contributing to lack of service access are explored. Five categories were identified: Men speak for the family, fear of strangers, men have child brides, domestic violence in the homes and general lack of education.

The majority of participants (83.3%) identified men speaking for the family as a significant cultural norm that contributes to accessing services within the Mixtec community (See Table 3). Men will speak to service providers and decide if they are trustworthy and decide if the women can speak to them. For example, if child welfare services are investigating that dad comes home drunk and is

violent with mom, the man of the house is not going to allow mom to speak openly with the investigator out of fear of repercussions. One participant noted, “Women don’t have a voice; they do whatever the husband says. They need to obey the husband.”

Fifty percent of the respondents identified men having child brides as culturally acceptable and possibly a reason why they are fearful of strangers due to the difference in culture.” It’s very acceptable for them to be working or starting families young, and that’s not legal here or the norm in the US. These teenagers are essentially partnered up and starting their own families and you know not completing their education. “So when we come in and say you can’t do that here, it’s not a great way to build trust.” In addition, domestic violence in homes was identified by 33.3% of respondents as being acceptable and normal in the Mixtec population. One respondent shared, “*It is very normal for our agency to get an abuse referral with dad coming home drunk and beating up on mom and because the women are financially dependent, they don’t say anything and won’t leave.* Due to normalcy of abuse in the home and women’s financial dependence on the man of the house, reporting is very limited and a further hindrance to the Mixtec women accessing available services.

Finally, 50% of respondents reported lack of education as a cultural norm that hinders service access. It was stated that most men only have a grade school education and the women have even less as the focus is working, raising a family and making money versus gaining or furthering education. The focus on

work limits the availability of families to seek services during regular office hours and outlines the rigidity of the agencies not meeting the needs of this community by not having flexible hours. One respondent noted, “The focus is on making money, surviving, and sending money back to Mexico, versus education and learning to assimilate.” Lack of education contributes to ignorance of the local and State laws, leading to increased child welfare involvement for alleged neglect and abuse, furthering their mistrust of government agencies.

Table 3 Cultural Norms

Themes	n (%)
Men speak for the family	5 (83.3%)
Child brides	3 (50%)
Domestic violence	3 (50%)
Lack of education	3 (50%)

Addressing Barriers to Service Access

The respondents identified four areas they thought should be addressed to help the Mixtec population in accessing services available to them (See Table 4). More than half (66.6%) identified that rapport building was beneficial when working with the families to help them feel comfortable and willing to engage with the service provider, as a respondent noted taking more time when working with

their Mixtec referrals for alleged abuse and Neglect. “The more time I spend with a family and the more I show them that I can assist with their children’s basic needs, lessening the burden on them, the more they seem to let me in, a little at a time. “Half of the respondents stated a community support person could bridge relationships between service providers and families to help them engage with appropriate services. “If we could get more community liaisons if you will, to help bridge the gap between service providers and the family, they would trust us more. But because of the language gap, even with a translator, they don’t know them and therefore don’t trust them.” Due to the lack of trust, even the available services don’t get utilized by the families. In addition, 33.3% of respondents reported educational services to help families assimilate here in the US would decrease law enforcement interactions as well as child welfare referrals for investigation. “Taking time to understand their culture and explain the differences in the US is key.” Finally, 16.6% of respondents reported having more access to language lines who could provide translation services would benefit the engagement with the community. This would decrease the use of Spanish speaking interpreters being used as a substitute. One respondent noted, “Although we have language lines, oftentimes there is not a Mixteco interpreter available and if so, it is very difficult to get everything discussed in one conversation, with the fear of not being able to get another translator for further follow up with the family causing service providers to rush and limits follow up with the families.

Table 4 Addressing Barriers to Services

Themes	<i>n</i> (%)
Rapport building	6 (66.6%)
Support	3 (50%)
Education	2 (33.3%)
Language Line	3 (16.6%)

Additional Services Needed for the Mixtec Population

Here the author explored what service providers believed additional services were still needed to help the Mixtec population. This section was broken down into three categories: education for assimilation, translation services and others. Most respondents (83.3%) reported that translation services would most benefit the Mixtec community and bridge the gap between service providers and Mixtec families. “Getting them to understand the rules here and what is ok and what is not.”

66.6% of respondents reported that education for assimilation would positively impact the Mixtec community. This would ensure their understanding of laws in the community and school requirements that could empower as well as diminish law enforcement and child welfare agencies’ involvement in their lives. “We need native speakers to bridge the gap. To be able to assist in building rapport between families and service providers.” By bridging the gap, the idea is

that one family will talk to others in the community, helping to build trust within the community.

Finally, 16.6% of respondents reported other services needed to benefit the community. These services included the agencies hiring a Mixteco speaking family advocate. These services included school liaisons for families with children struggling in school. Education on basic law within the County including child welfare.

Agency's Response to Unmet Needs

50% of respondents reported that their agencies are not focusing on the unmet needs of the Mixteco community.

I think some of the concerns with the district are that outreach should be a little bit more, like more to kind of just keep them in mind and what are their needs. Um, for example, um, just being more aware that our population doesn't have an email most of the time, so information is being sent out via email, like important dates, important um information. So just being aware that you know outreach is important.

50% stated that their agencies are working to branch out in the community to bring awareness to the needs, the services offered and hope to bridge the gap between agencies and the Mixtec population. One respondent reported that they work with certain members of the community that were open to services, in the hopes that the word will be spread about available services and to remove the

fear factor. “If it comes to me, I let my director know, hey this is what’s going on, asking how can we support.”

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This qualitative study engaged with service providers working within the Mixtec community in the North County of San Luis Obispo California, identifying the available services as well as the barriers to accessing those services. Service providers identified language and fear of outsiders were the largest barriers for the Mixtec population accessing services. In addition, the cultural norm of men speaking for the family and women not having a voice was identified by service providers as another significant barrier to families accessing available services. Lastly, service providers identified the limited number of agencies equipped to serve the Mixtec community as a barrier to accessing resources. Findings from this study indicate that service providers viewed individual level factors as causing barriers to service use.

Barriers to Services

The most prevalent barrier to accessing services is the language barrier. This is due in part to the Mixteco language not being in a written format and the lack of available translators. Although there are limited studies addressing these issues within the Mixtec community, Manalo-Coelho (2008), explored the issues of Mixtec immigrants from Oaxaca, Mexico now living in Santa Barbara County. The study reviewed and found barriers of language, immigration status as well as families being unable to meet their basic needs in employment, housing, medical

and education realms. Manalo-Coelho found that the Mixtec communities struggle to communicate in their native tongue, noting that if they can't find someone who speaks their language then they can't work with them either in a school setting or in the medical field. Participants shared that they find it difficult to speak to others in their community in Spanish and/or Mixteco. When asked about barriers to speaking with others in "English", one reported that they just don't talk to English speakers (Manalo-Coelho 2008).

In addition, Antony-Newman, (2019), found that most newly immigrated families do not speak the native language in the United States, therefore struggle to engage with teachers and this lends itself to less communications between the families and their schools, hindering education. This study was conducted reviewing 40 studies on parental involvement of parents in North America, Asia, Europe and Australia. This study found a disparity between immigrant parents' involvement in the school setting due to language barriers and lack of understanding of the education system, creating more barriers and inequalities in their children's educations.

Cultural Norms Affecting Access to Services

Bacallao & Smokowski (2013), conducted qualitative interviews on 10 undocumented Mexican families, including 12 adolescents and 14 adults. This study looked at the roles that U.S schools, workplaces as well as churches

played in the family's acculturation process. This study identified monolingualism as well as discrimination directed at Mexican families, forcing them to learn English in order to excel at school or work.

The researcher's study identified general fear and men speaking for the family (women not having a voice) as the most significant cultural norm creating barriers to accessing services. The fear arises from the belief that if a government agency makes contact, family members may be deported and their families displaced or split apart. In addition, the fact that women don't have a voice and look to the man of the house to dictate who they can talk with, hinders access to available services. These norms limit service providers' ability to engage the family, as typically the mother is the one at home whom the service provider is attempting to contact and the father is out earning an income. A supporting study done by Davis (2017), showed that the fear of family separation is as significant as the language barrier for the Mixtec immigrants. This study showed the men's perspective of family separation defined as the biggest hardships after language barriers. This study also outlined how machismo, a sense of responsibility, focus on work and the belief that men and women have specific roles, contributes to the men being the speakers in the home and perpetuates limited contact to outsiders.

Supplementary Findings: Addressing Barriers

Additional findings reported that to address barriers one must build rapport and community support. In this study, several service providers stated that building rapport with the client initially will help one move forward with relationships and get them to engage in needed services. There are significant rewards to increasing the engagement of parents in the school setting according to Baker et al., (2017). This study shows that creating a relationship with trust and respect will improve family engagement. This study was conducted by a focus group based on the school's implementation of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) and their desire to be more culturally inclusive. Family and staff from six schools in Midwestern states were asked to participate. A total of 50 parents and 76 staff across the six schools participated and five themes were identified between both family and staff members: making available opportunities for parental involvement, improving communication, inviting families into the schools, time conflicts or making time, and moving from involvement to engagement.

Study Limitations

As with most studies, there are limitations. The researcher identified three imitations to this study including gender, sample size and bias. Within the respondents, five of the six were female which may provide a skewed perception of what the barriers to services are for the Mixtec community due to sex. Women

and men may look at the barriers to services differently. For example, a woman who has been in a domestic violence relationship may view men as the speaker of the home, a larger barrier to services versus language. Furthermore, the limited sample size could lend itself to not being a true reflection of the population's data. Additional barriers may have been presented with a larger sample size. Finally, bias could be a limitation as the researcher based the questions on previous knowledge through researcher's work within the community. The researcher attempted to circumvent this limitation by asking open-ended questions and allowing the respondent to identify additional services they believed were needed or offer personal accounts to their work within the Mixtec community.

Conclusion

In summary, this qualitative study found that service providers identified language and the cultural norms of fear as the most salient barriers to service use among the Mixtec population. Respondents suggested that rapport building was necessary to increase the Mixtec community's comfortability with service providers as well as having a community-based liaison to bridge the gap between the two. Finally, the majority of the respondents identified that additional translation services were needed to more effectively engage the Mixtec community. The researcher recommends that a larger participant pool be accessed from either service providers or within the Mixtec population

themselves, providing further insight into the services offered as well as the barriers to those services. In addition, further research may focus on recommendations to address the language and cultural barriers hindering the Mixtec community from accessing services.

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT

SERVICES AVAILABE IN THE MIXTEC POPULATION AND THE BARRIERS TO THOSE SERVICES

My name is Currie Bailey-Carmon. I am trying to identify services available in the Mixtec population of the North County of San Luis Obispo County and the barriers to those available services. I would like to ask you to participate in an interview because I am interested in learning about what services you, through the course of your work, offer the Mixtec population and the barriers you have seen the Mixtec population dealing with in accessing these services.

If you decide you want to be in this study you will be agreeing to an interview, where a series of questions will be asked of you about your engagement and capacity of your engagement with the Mixtec Community and your knowledge of services and any barriers to the services you have encountered within the Mixtec community.

The information obtained during the interview will be confidential. Your name and personal information will not be attached to the research. Other people will not know if you are in my study and I will put information that I obtain together with other information that I gather from other service providers so no one will be able to decipher what has come from you. When I tell others about my research, no identifying information will be provided to identify you.

My telephone number is 805-674-9002. You can call me if you have any questions about the study or to notify me of your desire to not be in this study. I will provide you with a copy of this form in case you want to ask questions later.

Agreement

I have decided to voluntarily be in the study and know that I can decline involvement at any time. Currie Bailey-Carmon has answered all my questions.

_____	_____	_____
Printed name	Signature	Date

Printed name of person conducting the interview

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your name, name of the agency you work for, your role at the agency, and how long have you been in this position?
2. In what capacity do you work within the Mixtec Community and what is your role?
3. How do you, within your agency, communicate with the Mixtec population, both in written form and verbal? (i.e., translators, utilizing co-workers etc., relying on the families own children to translate.)
4. Do you feel your agency is able to address the different dialects in the Mixteco Language?
5. What services does your agency offer individuals in the Mixtec community?
6. What additional services do you see as needed to further assist the Mixtec community within your agency?
7. What barriers to accessing the available services have you identified?
8. What cultural norms do you see as impeding the Mixtec community from accessing services?
9. How would you best address these barriers?
10. What strategies are you and your agency utilizing, if any, to reduce these barriers, is it working?
11. Does your agency discuss ways to better serve this community, if so what is being discussed to address this population?

12. Do you have additional concerns or comments about your agency's ability to meet the needs of the Mixtec community?

APPENDIX C
RECRUITMENT FLYER

Do you work with the Mixtec community?

If you work within this community, providing services,
I want to speak to you!

CONTACT Currie Bailey Carmon at 805-674-9002 or 007424632@coyote.csusb.edu

Identifying services to the Mixtec community and the barriers to those services.

I am looking for individuals who work within agencies that provide services for the Mixtec community in the North County of San Luis Obispo County. The purpose of this research is to help identify services or lack of services to the Mixtec community and determine what the barriers are to those services.

Location

- Personal interviews at an agreed upon locations

Are you eligible?

- Male or female over the age of 18 years old
- Must work within the Mixtec community

If you're unsure if you meet the requirements, call or email a member of the study team:

- Currie Bailey-Carmon
- Student
- 007424632@coyote.csusb.edu
- 805-674-9002

Mixtec Study
805-674-9002

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APPENDIX D
EMAIL RECRUITMENT MESSAGE

Hi Ms. Castillo

Subject: I have been working on a new research study and I need your help.

I am currently conducting research on the available services offered to the Mixtec community and barriers you may have experienced to those services.

This study will identify available services to the Mixtec community within the north county of San Luis Obispo California and the barriers the Mixtec community has accessing these services as described by the service providers working within this community.

The researcher expects to find limited services and several barriers to the current services available, negatively impacting the Mixtec community.

I am asking for your participation in this research to help better the community which we live and serve in.

Why You Should Participate

- Provide feedback in regards to services your agency provides and how you can help make these more accessible to the Mixtec community.
- To provide personal insight into the barriers you have seen while working with the community.
- With this study the researcher hopes to identify barriers and help agencies address these barriers to better serve the Mixtec community.

Who Can Participate?

- Men and Women 18 years or older
- Individuals must work within an agency that serves the Mixtec community.

If you fit these requirements and are interested in helping, please sign up and I will reach out to you very soon.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IQU2726ogIpsaXwa7K9raq3ZkxtMgqK3eje47X5b0rQ/edit?usp=sharing>

Please let me know if you have any questions I can answer. Thank you for helping to improve the lives of the Mixtec community.

Best,

Currie Bailey Carmon

Student at California State University San Bernardino

805-674-9002 or email at 007424632@coyote.csusb.edu

APPENDIX E
IRB APPROVAL LETTER



CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Administrative/Exempt Review Determination

Status: Determined Exempt

IRB-FY2022-194

Caroline Lim Currie Bailey-Carmon
CSBS - Social Work
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Caroline Lim Currie Bailey-Carmon:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE MIXTEC POPULATION AND THE BARRIERS TO THOSE SERVICES" has been reviewed and determined exempt by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of CSU, San Bernardino. An exempt determination means your study had met the federal requirements for exempt status under 45 CFR 46.104. The CSUSB IRB has weighed the risks and benefits of the study to ensure the protection of human participants.

This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional campus approvals which may be required including access to CSUSB campus facilities and affiliate campuses. Investigators should consider the changing COVID-19 circumstances based on current CDC, California Department of Public Health, and campus guidance and submit appropriate protocol modifications to the IRB as needed. CSUSB campus and affiliate health screenings should be completed for all campus human research related activities. Human research activities conducted at off-campus sites should follow CDC, California Department of Public Health, and local guidance. See CSUSB's [COVID-19 Prevention Plan](#) for more information regarding campus requirements.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following as mandated by the Office of Human Research Protections

(OHRP) federal regulations 45 CFR 46 and CSUSB IRB policy. The forms (modification, renewal, unanticipated/adverse event, study closure) are located in the Cayuse IRB System with instructions provided on the IRB Applications, Forms, and Submission webpage. Failure to notify the IRB of the following requirements may result in

disciplinary action. The Cayuse IRB system will notify you when your protocol is due for renewal. Ensure you file your protocol renewal and continuing review form through the Cayuse IRB system to keep your protocol current and active unless you have completed your study.

- Ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.
- Submit a protocol modification (change) if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your study for review and approval by the IRB before being implemented in your study.
- Notify the IRB within 5 days of any unanticipated or adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research.

Submit a study closure through the Cayuse IRB submission system once your study has ended.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the Research Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval number IRB-FY2022-194 in all correspondence. Any complaints you receive from participants and/or others related to your research may be directed to Mr. Gillespie.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Nicole Dabbs

Nicole Dabbs, Ph.D., IRB Chair
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

ND/MG

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