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LATINO PARENT PERCEPTION IN SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT AND BEHAVIOR ISSUES IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

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LATINO PARENT PERCEPTION IN SCHOOL
INVOLVEMENT AND BEHAVIOR ISSUES
IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

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
Denisse Medina

June 2017

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore whether Latino parent perception of their involvement in their elementary child's education affect their child's behavior in the classroom. Previous research has demonstrated that parent involvement in education enhances the academic, socioemotional, and behavioral outcomes of children (Mattingly et al., 2013). The current study utilized the qualitative method to examine Latino parent perception of school involvement and its relationship to child's classroom behavior. Results from interviews were transcribed and analyzed. Findings of this study suggest that a relationship exists between parent perception of involvement in child's education and child's classroom behavior. Findings revealed three major themes: perception of parent involvement, communication and barriers. Results may bring awareness to the Latino community of how parent involvement can impact behavior and lead to mental health implications. Findings may influence social workers to change school policies, develop new programs and to refer them to adequate services.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

One of the many difficulties some children experience during their childhood years are behavior problems (Mattingly et al., 2013) Statistics in the United States demonstrate that more than five percent of children from the ages of four to seventeen years of age experience serious emotional difficulties and behavioral problems. Children with behavioral difficulties experience many negative effects such as difficulty focusing on tasks and controlling their behavior that if it persists can create lifelong problems such as behavioral disorders (Mattingly et al., 2013). Good behavioral health is an integral part of a child's healthy development which increases a child's sense of wellbeing, supports satisfying social relationships with family and friends as well as assists children in achieving their full academic potential (Mattingly et al., 2013). Parents and a child's environment play a crucial role in enhancing a child's behavior (El Nokali et al, 2010). When parents provide support for their children it influences a child's development in a positive way. Therefore, it is important that parents create a secure attachment with their children and provide support through every spectrum of life, to influence positive outcomes in their children's behavior and future.

Parent involvement in their children's education affects the student's academic outcome and more importantly can influence a child's behavior in the

classroom. Policy makers and various researchers have demonstrated that parent involvement in education, defined as parents' activities and behaviors related to children's schooling, enhances the academic, socioemotional, and behavioral outcomes of children (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). Although there is no definite definition of what constitutes parent involvement, different definitions of parent involvement have similarly provided these results (Zellman & Waterman, 1998). Similarly, the ecological perspective states that interaction between both the school and the home, can affect a child's social and emotional development by promoting school readiness, good behavior, impulse control and attention (Fan & Chen 2001). In return, good behavior in the classroom creates more opportunities for children. Parental involvement in education has become such an important topic, that even the No Child Left Behind Act has required that both elementary and secondary schools promote parental involvement in education (NCLB, 2002). Due to the increased importance of this topic, parent support programs were created in schools all over the U.S to promote parent involvement in the classroom. Unfortunately, evidence provided by Mattingly and other researchers found little empirical support for the effectiveness of such programs in student behavior. (Mattingly et al, 2002).

This problem has a great impact in micro practice, when parents fail to provide support, are not involved in their child's education or provide minimal involvement, the most affected by this noninvolvement are the children and their behavior (Dwyer & Hetch, 1992). Results of the study can provide great insight

into the Latino parent perception of child involvement and their experiences within the systems and subsystems as a parent of Latino descent. Social workers, school staff, parents and other individuals can use obtained knowledge when working with this population. Topic is of great importance because lack of parent involvement is not only linked to parents not being seen as partners with the school and with the teachers, but this type of problematic parent child relationship can be linked to the development of emotional and behavioral disorders. In the long run, these emotional and behavioral disorders can progress depending on the decrease or increase of parent and teacher involvement and develop in the direction that is highly problematic (McCormick et al, 2013). In 2013 a report released by the Center of Disease Control and Prevention revealed that about twenty percent of American children from ages three to seventeen years of age suffer from mental disorders. Mental disorders were defined by serious changes in was that children handle their emotions, learn and how they behave (McCormick et al, 2013).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to determine whether perceived parent involvement measured as being involved or not involved, affects child behavior in the classroom. Derived from research conducted by various researchers in the past several years, various perspectives have demonstrated that parent involvement in their child's education creates many positive outcomes

for the child and influences positive emotional, social and cognitive development. In return, this also influences the child's behavior in the classroom. Most research on parent involvement in their child's education has focused on measuring child's education achievement and briefly states that it also influences a child's behavior in the classroom. Current research has failed to provide detailed information on how different levels of parent involvement in elementary school aged children impact a child's behavior, specifically when it comes to the Latino population. For example, a study conducted on parent involvement, emotional support and behavior problems focused on the relationships between the parent and teacher, teacher and child but failed to address parent involvement within the context of classroom practices (McCormick et al, 2013). Current study focused on the Latino growing population with its growing needs and lack of research on the subject being studied. According to 2013 statistics from the census bureau the Latino population reached a high number with 55.4 million individuals which was an increase of 1.2 million people from the previous year (McCormick et al, 2013).

Although parent involvement has been an issue discussed nationally, little research has been conducted in what is considered parent involvement in the elementary years for Latino parents of Latino students. Little attention has been focused on how Latino parents define and perceive parent involvement. Therefore, one of the purposes of this study is to look, determine and define this perception. In addition, minimal research has also been conducted in how this

definition of parent involvement has affected a Latino child's behavior in the classroom. The methodological limitations within these studies is that they obtain their results through the use of various scales and therefore do not allow individuals to provide additional information on their perceptions or experiences. The community at large, specifically the Latino population should become aware in how parent involvement in their child's education can affect a child's behavior, can lead to behavior disorders and mental illnesses. More is to be known on Latino parent's perception in the education of their children and its impact.

The research method conducted for this study consists of qualitative research in order to understand the fundamental reasons, opinions and the overall problem of parental involvement. The study specifically consists of open ended interviews in order to gain as much information and insight of parent's perception of their involvement in their child's education. Through this qualitative study, data will consist of personal perceptions, views and Latino parent's own experience. This research design was selected because previous studies have failed to provide such personal detailed experience and has led to the lack of data of Latino perception of parent involvement. Such data cannot be obtained through simple quantitative results, where participants are not able to expand on their answers. Overall research needs to address the lack of information of Latino parent's perception in order to better understand this increasing population and to prevent problems from arising due to this lack of knowledge. By understanding

the Latino parent perception, social workers and professionals will be better equipped to help Latino children with behavioral issues and parents.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

The research study developed from researcher's passion in working with children in the educational field and her interest of the overlap in the field of mental health. The researcher's interest in bringing awareness of the mental health implications that behavioral issues can impact children of Latino descent based on parent involvement in child's education, began this research in such area. Overall, the findings from this study will have an impact both at the macro and micro level of social work.

At the micro level parents will become aware of the importance in how behavior issues in the classroom can later develop into mental disorders. In return, this can lead presumably in parents identifying such issues and finding ways to become more involved in their child's education or seeking mental help for their children. In addition, through the results of this study, micro level social workers will obtain the adequate knowledge of what Latinos perceive parent involvement. Micro level social workers will take into account cultural differences, through the obtained knowledge and will be able to apply it in the social work field when working with Latino individual clients and families. In addition, through this knowledge, it can lead to building ways to create parental involvement in

their child' education. For example, it can consist of teaching cultural awareness to teachers in order to create a comfortable environment for Latino parents and increase communication between them.

At the macro level if study results demonstrate the significance of parent involvement on child behavior, not only will it educate the Latino community at large the importance of parent involvement but the school districts and the social work profession. By bringing such awareness to the Latino community, preventive methods at the macro level can arise to prevent mental health issues to arise or develop in children. Schools primarily those with a high Latino population, such as the Coachella Unified Districts where my participant's children attend, will determine that a change in school policies should be made. By understanding Latino parent perception of what they consider involvement policies can be created to increase resources and finances to develop new programs that will help increase involvement in this targeted population. Moreover, results from study will help build on future studies focusing on what Latino parent's perceive as parent involvement and its effect on children's behavior in the classroom.

This current study addresses the following question: Does Latino parent's perceptions of their involvement in their children's elementary education affect their child's behavior in the classroom?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature review chapter will examine the current significant research on topics of parent involvement in their child's education and behavior issues. The subsections within this chapter will discuss parent involvement as a predictor of academic achievement. As well as what is defined as parent involvement across different cultures. In addition, various theoretical perspectives that is pertinent to the population being studied will be discussed in the final section

Parent Involvement Impact on Child's Behavior

Child behavior in the classroom is impacted by the support parents provide their children. Therefore, non-parent involvement can lead to behavior issues in the classrooms. If behavior problems are not detected or parents do not begin to be involved in their child's education, these behaviors can lead to mental disorders. According to statistics fifty percent of mental health conditions actually begin by the young age of fourteen (El Nokali, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010). Therefore, early engagement and support are crucial in preventing this or in providing children with the interventions that are necessary for them to succeed. In fact, mental health is a vital part of a child's overall health. It is interactive with their ability to succeed in school and in society as a whole. Both the school and home

setting offer a unique influence and independently influences a child. Therefore, parent involvement is a crucial topic that needs further research, in order to educate the Latino community of how their involvement can affect child's behavior in the classroom and how such behaviors can lead to mental disorders (El Nokali, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010).

Over many years, a significant amount of literature has been documented on the importance of parent involvement for the population of young children, such as those in the elementary years. Research on the effects of parental involvement has shown a constant positive relationship between parent involvement in school and student's outcomes (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). Similarly studies have also demonstrated that parental engagement is linked with positive outcomes such as a decrease in truancy rates and a lower level of dropout rates (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). Previous research tends to focus more on the relationship between parental involvement with student achievement and less attention has been placed on either the emotional and social aspects of children's development and their behavior (Gonida & Cortina, 2014).

Parent involvement in their children's education predicts a decline in problem behaviors in the classroom (McCormick et al. 2013). Data gathered from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, a study conducted on early youth development, results demonstrated that children who have highly involved parents had greater social functioning and less behavior problems compared to those children whose parents were not highly involved.

Findings also suggested that if parents improved their parent involvement this would in turn predict a decline in problem behaviors and would improve student's social skills (El Nokali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal, 2010). Similarly, Dearing and Kreider (2006) discussed how parent participation in child's education improves both behavior in the classroom as well as at home. This occurs as both parents and teachers work together to promote social functioning and address the problem behaviors displayed by the children (Dearing & Kreider, 2006). Parent involvement was measured as participation of parent's in school activities or functions and the type of communication between parent and teacher, as well as how frequently this communication occurred (Dearing & Kreider, 2006).

Although there has been literature and studies that have focused on parental involvement in their children's education and its consequences on the child, most studies have focused on the positive consequences consisting of academic achievement. Not many studies have taken into account how it affects child's behavior in the classroom, which is the topic discussed in this study. In addition, those few studies that focus on how parental involvement contributes to child's behavior in the classroom, do not primarily focus on Latino students. For example, the study previously discussed conducted by Dearing and Kreider consisted of 78 non-Hispanic whites while the remaining twenty-two percent consisted of minorities primarily African American and Asians (Dearing & Kreider, 2006). Therefore, such studies do not take into account how Latino's perceive or define parent involvement. When it pertains to Latino parent's perception of their

involvement in their child's education and whether that leads to positive or negative outcomes in their behavior. It is critical that what Latinos perceive as parent involvement is taken into account.

Parent Involvement as a Predictor of Academic Achievement

As previously discussed, most literature focuses on academic achievement as a measure of parent involvement. The attention has been placed on educational achievement rather than on individual behavior in the classroom. Researcher El Nokali and colleagues (2010) mentioned that perhaps such focus on academic achievement may be attributed to the "academic nature" of many of the behaviors that are classified as parent involvement, such as helping with homework. For example, according to Zellman and Waterman, great levels of parent involvement lead to better student achievement (Zellman & Waterman, 1998). This study consisted of 193 students from the LA area from second and fifth grade whose study conducted on mothers revealed that greater parent school involvement was related to better test scores in reading as well as a rating of less learning problems (Zellman & Waterman, 1998). When it came to student achievement with minority children, there was evidence of both racial and economic gaps to this achievement. Due to these gaps, the study concluded that the lack of parent involvement contributes to this low academic achievement. Only when focusing on the future implications, did such study take into account how parent involvement can also affect a child's behavior. It briefly discussed at the end how both teachers and parents should maybe, take into account child

behavior in the classroom because behavior problems as well as social functioning can have unforeseen consequences to the environment of the classroom (Zellman & Waterman, 1998). Overall, throughout these different studies, behavior outcomes were not given much importance.

What Is Defined as Parent Involvement

Parental beliefs as well as perceptions are a strong predictor of parental involvement and therefore much emphasis needs to be placed on this concept. Overall there has been a mix of definitions of what characterizes parent involvement. According to a report from the National Center for Education Statistics found that more than ninety percent of parents who had elementary school children reported they had attended school meetings throughout their child's academic year (Herold & O'Donnel, 2008). In this same study eighty percent of this national representation sample of parents reported they attended school events and sixty percent stated they volunteered in their child's classroom. (Herold & O'Donnel, 2008) Parent involvement takes many forms and there is no specific definite definition of what constitutes it. It is a complex concept that includes a great variety of parent's behaviors (Zellman & Waterman, 1998) Parent involvement can consist of helping with homework, participating at school events, communicating with the teacher and many others (Zellman & Waterman, 1998).

The definition of parent involvement can date back to the 1920's where parent involvement was originally defined as parents being complete supporters and helpers of what the school and teachers were doing. Later in 1994, this definition changed into parents being economically and psychologically responsible for their children. Although definitions vary across studies, Kerbow and Bernhard (1993) found that there is a significant difference in what consists of parent involvement along different racial and ethnic groups. For example, Asian American parents' involvement consists of putting all their efforts on their child's education outside of school by focusing on discussing school programs or curriculum and providing their children with academic extracurricular activities. On the other hand, African American parents view parent involvement as being effective participants in their child's school activities (Kerbow & Bernhardt, 1993). Such studies did not take into account the perception of the Latino parent's population definition of what consists parent involvement.

When it came to comparing how parent involvement contributed to their child's behavior in the classroom, there was a scarcity of studies that discussed specifically the Latino population. Similarly, there was a lack of studies defining the term parent involvement for the Latino culture. According to Tinkler, cultural differences have to be taken into account when discussing parent involvement or participation in a child's education (Tinkler, 2002). The noninvolvement of Latino parents might be misleading, leading school personnel to assume parents of Latino children to be uncaring. When in fact this noninvolvement might be due to

the Latino culture seeing teachers as personnel of power who should be highly respected and the belief that by interfering with this authority they are being rude or disrespectful (Tinkler, 2002). More studies such as this should be conducted in order to gather additional data of what constitutes parental participation among the Latino community. This specific study will look deeper into this perspective.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

When it pertains to the problem being discussed of parent involvement and the effects on child's behavior, researchers focused on two specific theories, ecological perspective theory and systems theory. For example, researchers placed a great emphasis in how the interaction between the home and the school could affect a child's social and emotional development. Good interaction between these two microsystems promoted early school achievement, good behavior, attention in the classroom as well as impulse control (Fan & Chen 2001). Through the ecological perspective different environmental systems such as macro system consisting of cultural ideologies, micro system and individual systems work and interact with one another. In other words, it studies the relationships of individuals within communities and the society as a whole (Pardeck, 1996). Applying this ecological perspective in the study being conducted is helpful in determining the greatest concern and selecting the main problems to be addressed.

In addition, studies also followed the theoretical approach of systems theory in order to gain an understanding on how systems and subsystems interact with one another or influence one another. According to systems theory communication occurs within interdependent units that work together to adapt to a changing environment (Michailakis & Schirmer, 2014). The focus of the study remained on how the system of the home or family, consisting of subsystems of being a parent and a child affected one another. How parent involvement in their child's education whether being involved educationally in the system of the home, could affect the subsystem of the child being a student. Parental involvement played a crucial role in whether misbehavior was evident in the classroom. Similarly, the subsystem of being a parent also interacted with the school system itself and with the teacher subsystem when it pertains to parent involvement. The question throughout the studies was whether the system of parent played a crucial role in the behavior displayed at school.

Similarly, while conducting research on the Latino parent population's perception of involvement in their child's education, focus remained on the Systems theory in order to determine if these two systems affected one another. The focus will remain on the family system, specifically the parent subsystem and how this impacts the individual, child's behavior outcomes in the system of the school setting. The parent system was interviewed in order to determine if their perception of their involvement in their child's education played a role in how behavior was displayed in the classroom.

Summary

Overall this study has various macro and micro social work implications for study to be conducted and future studies. First of all, this study analyzed Latino cultural perspectives when it comes to defining parent involvement. In addition, its emphasis was on how this parent involvement affects children's behavior at school, whether positively or negatively for elementary age group students. The purpose of this study is to inform and educate the community at large, specifically the Latino community in how their involvement can affect their child's behavior in the classroom, which in turn can eventually lead to mental disorders. At the micro level, as a social worker, we will learn the specific perceptions of Latino parents in what they considered parent involvement. Moreover, both the Ecological theory and the Systems theory can be used to help us understand the relationship between parent involvement and behavior issues in the classroom. Overall, this study will build on future studies by providing additional information on a population that has not been studied extensively. Although we know there is a relationship between the levels of parent involvement and behavior, this study will differ by only focusing on the Latino population, defined as an individual of Latin American descent or origin.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

The focus of this study aims at focusing on the perception of Latino parents in their involvement in their child's education and how this affects their child's behavior at school. The purpose of this study was to determine whether parent involvement is beneficial to children, whether those parents who perceive themselves as being highly involved see more or less behavior problems than those who perceive themselves as not being involved in their child's education. Chapter three will discuss various sections which include the sampling, data collection and instruments, procedures, protection of human subjects, and data analysis.

Study Design

This research is a descriptive study that provided details on Latino parent perceptions on school involvement, where a current lack of information exists. Study is descriptive due to the small amount of research that addresses Latino parental perceptions on school involvement (Grinnell & Unrau, 2013). Study aimed at providing accurate description and expanded the understanding of parent perception in involvement in child's education. Previous research lacked

this information since most studies were qualitative studies that measured level of parental involvement through various scales.

This descriptive study is a qualitative design in order to understand the fundamental reasons, opinions, perceptions and the problem of parental involvement. Data was gathered through the use of interviews using open ended questions which allowed participants to answer in words allowing for a common theme to be generated. Descriptive studies aim at finding this, investigating a problem or situation which provides insights to the researcher. Specifically, descriptive questions were used in order to present an accurate profile of the group being studied, Latino parents and their children. In addition, descriptive questions documented the information that either confirms or contradicts prior beliefs about the subject being studied.

There are some limitations of using descriptive qualitative research. For example, through the use of data collection of interviews, participants might not be truthful as they feel when answering the questions or may feel compelled to tell the researcher what he or she wants to hear. In addition, participants may refuse to answer questions they view as too personal and therefore not enough data of parent perception may be gathered. Moreover, there is also a possibility of error within the researcher. For example, bias can play a role if the researcher records what it wants to hear and ignores the data that does not adhere to the researcher's hypothesis. In addition, this qualitative data was not used to

determine whether there is a causality between themes, but rather whether a relationship exists.

This study aimed at determining: Does Latino parent's perceptions of their involvement in their children's elementary education affect their child's behavior in the classroom? What is defined as parent involvement to the Latino population?

Sampling

The sampling technique that was used to obtain the data is non-probability availability sampling because participants were not randomly selected instead I took the participants that were available to me. Participants consisted of Latino parents of students from various elementary schools across Coachella Valley districts this researcher is currently working as a substitute teacher, after school tutor and independent tutor.

Approval was sought independently by contacting each parent and seeking their approval to participate in study. Sampling consists of Latino parents who currently have a child attending elementary education, defined as students from Kindergarten to sixth grade. Latino parents are defined as individuals from Latin American origin or descent with the majority of participants being of Mexican descent. Latino parents that were interviewed consisted of either mother or father that was dependent on their availability and decision of the parents to participate. The sample of participants that were utilized are

majorly from a low level of social economic status and low levels of education. The majority sample of participants only attended elementary school and a only a few continued to middle school or high school with not much history of receiving higher education. The sample members represent a variety of ages starting from early twenties to late forties. The study ultimately had six respondents.

Data Collection and Instruments

Qualitative data was collected by audio recorded individual interviews from the months of January to March of 2017. Prior to beginning individual interview sessions, demographic data was collected in detail and provided in Appendix C. Demographic data includes age of parent participants, age of children, child's elementary grade level, gender identification and ethnicity identification. The researcher conducted individual one on one interviews in order to explore views, experiences and beliefs of participants. Interviews were semi-structured interviews with some organization but allowed for open ended questions. During interview, questions were specifically worded in a way that allowed researcher to get a better understanding of the perception of parent involvement among Latino parents of Latino students. Questions were open ended in order to gain an insight perspective and to allow participants to disclose all the information they could provide on this topic.

The semi structure interview consisted of eight open ended questions. Question interview guideline was provided and attached in Appendix A. Interview

began with questions that participants were able to answer easily and continued with more difficult and delicate topics. The length of the interview consisted of approximately twenty to thirty minutes. Once interviews had been conducted and audio recorded, the transcription process began.

The researcher followed Interview question guideline provided in Appendix A, by asking key questions and provided additional probing questions. Participants were allowed to diverge and provide examples in more detail. Researcher allowed Latino participants who are experts of their own culture to express themselves and provide examples of their own experiences.

Procedures

In order to obtain participants for this study, researcher spoke with parents of elementary children individually. Researcher approached future participants after students had been dismissed from after-school program and during tutoring sessions for students researcher was providing private tutoring. Researcher informed parents individually of the details of the study, explain ethical principles and confidentiality. Participants were informed they were going to be given a gift card at the end of study to demonstrate researcher's appreciation of taking time to be part of the study. Researcher provided participants with calendar of availability of times and dates for participants to be interviewed.

Individual open-ended interviews were conducted in the client's home or at the Indio public library where a room was reserved specifically for interviews.

Participants decided whether they wanted to participate in interviews at their home or at the library. Availability of dates for interviews were set throughout the months of January to March. Participants showed on the date and time of designated dates. Times ranged from 8 am to latest at 5 pm. Individual interviews took approximately twenty to thirty minutes.

Prior to interview set date, researcher called participants to remind them of scheduled date. During date of interview, those participants who chose to be interviewed at the library were led to private room. For those participants who choose to be interviewed at their home, researcher shoed up five to ten minutes before set time schedule. At the beginning, participants were each given an ID number and asked to sign by providing their initials, date and time of interview on provided list. Researcher provided and explained consent form, gave an introduction, and explanation of the purpose of the study being conducted. Researcher allowed participants to provide comments and to ask any questions, and interview sessions began. At the end of interview session participants were thanked for their participation and a fifteen-dollar target gift card was provided to them.

Protection of Human Subjects

Before participants agreed to be part of research study, they were informed of their rights as participants and of their confidentiality. During set date of interview session participants were informed once again of the ethical principles behind study, their confidentiality and anonymity and their limitations.

Participants were informed not to notify others of their participation in study if they wanted to be kept anonymous and to not notify other individuals if they knew other participants. Informed consent form provided in Appendix B was given, explained and audio recorded for records, as well as consent to be audio recorded. Participants were given an allotted time of five minutes to read consent form and sign.

After interviews were conducted, audio recordings were stored in a confidential USB drive that was purchased for storage of interviews. USB drive was stored on desk and locked in with a key. Researcher was the only individual to have access to this key and USB drive. Each participant was initially assigned a two ID number to be used on sign in sheet where they initialed their name next to their prospective number. On USB drive each participant was distinguished by ID number and was used to transcribe data, so that no information on transcribed and printed data could identify any participant. In order to maintain this confidentiality, a year after completion of interviews audio recordings and other information of participants will be deleted permanently from USB drive.

Data Analysis

Interview data gathered in individual one-person interview was analyzed using various qualitative techniques. Once interviews had been conducted and audio recorded, the transcription process began. Transcriptions were conducted of each audio recording by typing up each verbal statement into written form.

Each individual was distinguished by the given two ID number and no names were provided on written transcription. Every statement, whether it was beneficial or not beneficial to research was transcribed. In addition to statements, nonverbal cues that were observed during interview that were not recorded were also be provided, such as nodding of the head when answering questions. During interview researcher was writing these observable cues in Interview guideline used to prompt interview.

Transcriptions were analyzed by looking for common patterns, themes and relationships. Themes were each organized by topic. Relational analysis was conducted in order to determine relationship between themes and interpret results. These results were written down on each specific theme folder. In order to avoid errors, researcher reread transcripts twice to check major themes were identified.

Summary

This research study examined whether Latino parent's perception of their involvement in their elementary students' education affected their child's behavior in the classroom. Through interviews researcher was able to gain more insight of Latino parent's perception of school involvement. Through open ended semi-structured questions, researcher was able to gain the Latino perception and experience, something not obtained in previous studies.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

After conducting qualitative research through qualitative interviews, Latino parent participants provided great insight in the perception of parent involvement in their elementary children's education. There were several themes that arose from the qualitative data obtained through the process of coding and analyzing of individual interviews. The main themes that developed was the Latino definition of parent involvement, communication and barriers to parent involvement. Both themes and subthemes are supported through direct quotes from participants gathered through individual interviews. It was determined that through Latino parent responses there were two barriers that impeded parents from being more involved in their child's education, long hours of work and language difficulty.

Presentation of the Findings

The demographic characteristics of the study conducted are presented in Table 1. The study consisted of a total of six participants with the majority of the proportion of the gender sample being women (83.3%) and the rest male. The average age for the sample was 35 years of age. The sample consisted of all Hispanic/Latino (100%), with 100% percent describing themselves of Mexican heritage. Participant's education ranged from completing elementary education (33.3%), middle school (16.7%), high school graduate (16.7 %), some college

graduate (16.7%) and bachelor's degree (16.7%). Participant's children were all identified as Hispanic/ Latino. Majority of participants children are sixth graders (33.3 %), 1st (16.7 %), 2nd (16.7%), 4th (16.7%), (16.7 %), 5th (16.7 %). The average age of children's participants is 9 years of age.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

| | <i>M (SD)</i> | Percent |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------|
| Gender | | |
| Female | | 83.3 |
| Male | | 16.7 |
| Ethnicity | | |
| Hispanic/Latino | | 60 |
| Age | 35 (6.5) | |
| Education | | |
| Elementary | | 33.3 |
| Middle School | | 16.7 |
| High School | | 16.7 |
| Some College | | 16.7 |
| Bachelor | | 16.7 |
| Ethnicity of Children | | |
| Hispanic/Latino | | 100 |
| Age of Children | 9(2.4) | |
| Grade level of Children | | 83.5 |
| 1 st -5 th | | |
| 6 th grade | | 33.3 |

Perception of Parent Involvement

One of the main themes that developed after analyzing six individual Latino parent interviews was the perception of parent involvement. Three subthemes emerged from this theme, Latino parents defined parent involvement as home-based activities (helping with homework and checking in), school-based involvement (volunteering at school events, fundraising, fieldtrips), and home-school communication (attending parent-teacher conferences and speaking with the teacher). Participants also identified whether their perceived parent involvement affected their child's behavior in the classroom setting.

Home Based Activities

One subtheme that emerged from parent involvement after individual qualitative interview of six participants is that participants defined parent involvement as being involved in home based activities. Home based activities are divided into academics consisting of helping with homework and social (checking in with child and his wellbeing at school with teacher and peers). Six out of the six participants stated helping with homework is defined as parent involvement in education. This theme is embodied in the following quotes expressed by participants after being asked what they define as parent involvement in their own words and through the analysis of transcription. Participants stated to them parent involvement was:

Being involved with their homework, daily routines and just following up with school (Personal communication, 2017).

Mostly helping him with his homework I make sure he understands so he gets good grades (Personal communication, 2017).

Within the subtheme of home based activities is the social aspect of parent involvement as parents defined it as checking in with child at home to determine how they are doing at school with teacher and peers. Four out the six participants emphasized the importance of checking in with students. The following quotes demonstrate this emphasis.

Seeing how my daughter is doing in her classes by asking her if she has problems at school, if she has any questions she needs to ask teacher or any of her classmates or if there are any problems that I should be aware of. Also asking her how she is feeling with her teachers and see if she is okay (Personal communication, 2017).

It is important to know and pay attention to the activities your child is completing in the school and to demonstrate interest in the progress of your child. One way to do this is by having a conversation with your child every time he comes from school and asking him how he is doing at school with every subject and if there are any problems (Personal communication, 2017).

When asked whether this perception of their involvement affected their child's behavior in the classroom parents stated the following:

Being there for your child, helping him succeed in life and spending individual time with him. When there is good communication like this kids do better and behave better because of the attention you give them (Personal Communication, 2017).

School Based Activities

Another subtheme that emerged from the analysis of the content of interviews was that parents defined parent involvement as participating in school based activities. Latino parents reported parent involvement consisted of attending school field trips, volunteering in educational activities and attending school festivities and ceremonies. One parent stated:

To me parent involvement has to do with going to my child's school functions like awards and ceremonies. I attend all my child's award ceremonies. I also volunteer at the school as much as I can and for classroom fieldtrips I go with them. In April we are going to Washington D.C. I am one of the chaperons so we will be gone for thirteen days, so yeah I am very involved. Anything that has to do with school I'm there (Personal communication, 2017).

Another parent stated:

I try to attend school festivities, school recitals and Christmas holiday school events (Personal communication, 2017)

Home-School Communication

A third subtheme that emerged from the perception of parent involvement is school communication. Participants discussed the importance of attending parent teacher conferences and speaking with teacher. To them parent involvement consists of being part of this communication. One parent stated in regards to parent teacher conference:

I attend parent teacher conferences and during them, I ask the teacher several questions in order to be updated with my child's progress. My kid has always done great in her report cards but when I have questions about something I simply ask the teacher due to the fact that the teacher also speaks Spanish (Personal communication, 2017.)

Another one stated:

I consider parent involvement as speaking with the teacher to demonstrate interest in the progress of my kid (Personal communication, 2017).

Communication with Children

Another theme that emerged and previously discussed briefly is communication. Although there were various perceived definitions of school involvement the one that emerged the most throughout interviews was communication with children. Through the analysis of interviews parents emphasized the importance of communication with their children as playing a

part of school involvement. Parents reported that it is essential to communicate with children to determine if child is facing any problems at school, with teacher or peers. As part of communication parents who were highly involved reported the importance of communicating rules, morals and consequences of bad actions at home so that they can be applied at school. The following quotes demonstrate this:

I am after my child to see she is doing well. We talk to her, about the importance of going to school, behaving well, and of respecting the teachers (Personal communication, 2017).

I think I never got a behavioral complain of my child at school because when you teach kids to be good, obedient, listen to teacher, respectful and I think that comes from home. You need to see a good example at home for them in order for them to be good students (Personal communication, 2017).

The foundation we have at home it moves into the way he is at school. We set strict rules at home, if he disrespects the teacher he gets in trouble and if he gets in trouble at school he also does at home, taught him boundaries and respect. Teachers tell me he is respectful and it makes us feel good. So we know we are setting a good example right at home (Personal communication, 2017).

Parents who were not as involved or not involved in their child's education similarly reported:

If one has rules at home there is a greater opportunity that they will use these rules outside of the home, like at school. Maybe if I was more after my kid, to what he is doing, my child would behave better in the class (Personal communication, 2017.)

Well my kid does tend to behave bad, I do not know if it's something I could of done differently so he wouldn't receive notes from school. I think if I was more involved into what he was doing he would behave differently in class, maybe better.

Barriers to Parent Involvement

High Work Demand

The fourth subtheme emerged as parents discussed some of the reasons they were not involved or not as involved in their child's education. One barrier to parent involvement consists of high work demand. High work demand was described as "working for long hours to support family." Participants reported brining money to the home for basic necessities interferes with their parent involvement in their child's education. One participant reported:

But because I work too much I usually do not have time to deal with anything with the school. Here in the United States everything is very different compared to Mexico, you are always on the go (Personal Communication, 2017).

This participant continued to explain the demands of his work and struggle to maintain his family financially has caused him to not be involved.

But in reality as much as I would like, I really cannot assist school activities such as fieldtrips or events because I am always at work and they do not give me any days. I am the breadwinner of my family and is in charge of putting food in the mouths of my children (Personal Communication, 2017).

Language Difficulty

Participants also reported another barrier to not being involved in their child's education is due to their inadequacy to assist their children with their homework because they do not understand the English language. The following quotes were provided by participants in the study expressing their inability to help their children with homework.

I cannot help him with his homework because I do not understand English so he has to do it by himself even if it's hard for him (Personal Communication, 2017).

Another participant stated:

My husband is the one that sometimes helps him with his homework and to revise it because I do not understand English (Personal communication, 2017).

Additionally, participants also stated language barrier did not allow them to participate in parent school communication. Participants defined parent school

communication as attending parent teacher conferences and communicating verbally with teacher. Parents stated due to language difficulty it is hard for them to express themselves, communicate their concerns with teacher and gather information about student from teacher. One participant stated:

I do not really speak with the teacher because I do not really understand her. I go to the conferences because it is my duty, but my child translates for me. I do not know if he is telling me all the truth (Personal Communication, 2017)

One parent addressed the importance of understanding the language spoken at school and that in the homework. She reported:

If the teacher did not speak Spanish well I do not think we would have the good communication that we have to this day. It is because the teacher speaks Spanish too that it makes it easier for me to communicate with her (Personal Communication, 2017).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to determine whether perceived Latino parent involvement affected their child's behavior in the elementary classroom. This qualitative descriptive research examined what Latino parent's perceived and defined as parent involvement and whether they perceived this involvement affected children's behavior. This chapter will discuss the results, limitations of research study and various recommendations for future social work practice.

Discussion

Study finding suggest that a relationship exists between parent perception of involvement in child's education and behavior expressed by child in the classroom. Researchers found three themes that emerged from analysis of qualitative interviews consisting of parent perception, communication, and barriers to parent involvement. All participants in study identified three definitions of parent involvement consisting of home based activities, school-based involvement and home-school communication.

The results of this study provided great insight into what Latino parents consider parent involvement in education. All six participants perceived parent involvement as being active in home based activities consisting in academics

and four participants agreed in the social aspect of “checking in.” According to participants, being active in academics at home consists of helping with homework and projects. This is consistent with previous literature that focused on academic achievement, helping with homework, as a measure of parent involvement (El Nokali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal, 2010). Even though all six participants similarly defined this as parent involvement, three of these participants reported they do not assist child with homework. Similarly, they reported this was due to, “the homework is in English and I do not understand English at all.” Moreover, four participants of study defined home based involvement as providing emotional support by checking in with child and his wellbeing at school, teacher and peers. For example, one participant stated, “seeing how my daughter is doing in her classes by asking her if she has problems at school.” This new finding of Latino perception had not been previously studied in other pieces of literature. Second perceived definition of parent involvement by Latino parents in study consisted of school based involvement. This was defined as being involved in school based activities consisting of field trips, volunteering in educational activities and attending school festivities and ceremonies. Similarly, previous literature had similarly defined parent involvement as “participating at school events, and communicating with teacher (Zellman & Waterman, 1998). Third definition of parent involvement provided by Latino parents in study consisted of home-school communication

defined as attending parent teacher conferences and speaking verbally with teacher.

Study findings suggest that a relationship exists between parent perception of involvement in child's education and behavior expressed by child in the classroom. Out of the total of six participants who participated in the individual interviews two stated they were involved, three stated they were somewhat moderately involved and one stated he was not involved in his child's education. Those participants who were more involved in their child's education had less reported behavioral issues at school than those who were less involved. Through the analysis of the data parent's perceived behavioral issues as receiving calls or note from school, described behavior of student by teacher and color in behavioral chart. Two parents who described themselves as involved described their children as "very good student," "good grades," "receives awards," respectful, "obedient," and "does not receive behavioral notes or complaints from teacher." On the other hand, those parents who described themselves as moderately involved or not involved described their children as "does not behave well," "does not listen in class," "is hyperactive," "has been in fights," "is problematic", and "receives red on behavior chart." Similarly, other past research demonstrated "that interaction between both the school and the home, can affect a child's social and emotional development by promoting school readiness, good behavior, impulse control and attention (Fan & Chen 2001).

When Latino parent participants were asked whether they perceived their involvement in their child's education affected their child behavior in the classroom, the majority responded yes. Three participants reported that because they support, are involved and are aware of how their children are doing, they behave well in the classroom. One participant responded, "Yes parent involvement plays a role" and went to further explain that the foundation set at home is reflected in how the child behaves in the classroom. Parents who perceived themselves as highly involved reported less behavior issues in the classroom. Similarly, parents who reported they were not as involved or not involved in their child's education, believed that parent involvement somewhat plays a role in the behavior expressed in the classroom. Several of these parents reported that maybe if they were more involved in their child's education perhaps child would have less behavioral issues in the class. One participant who described her child as having negative behaviors in class reported that if behavior does not change this can lead to more behaviors down the road.

Another major theme that emerged as participants were asked whether they perceived their involvement plays a role in child behavior and through the analysis of the interviews, is communication with children. Although there were various perceived definitions of parent involvement as defined by Latino parents, communication with children was the highest visible. Parents emphasized the importance of communication with children, communicating rules, morals and consequences of bad actions both at home and

in the school. According to three participants, when good communication exists and good examples are set at home children excel and behave well in the classroom. One parent stated, "I think I never got a behavioral complain of my child at school because you teach your kids to be good, obedient, listen to teacher, respectful and I think that comes from home. You need to set a good example at home for them in order for them to be good students." Another similarly stated, "The foundation we have at home it moves into the way he is at school." Parents with good communication provided through moral support, communicating rules, morals and consequences had less reported behavioral issues at school than those who were less involved. Similarly, a study conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development demonstrated that children who have highly involved parents had greater social functioning and less behavior problems compared to those children whose parents were not highly involved (NICHH).

The current study also demonstrated that there were certain barriers to being involved in the education of their children. The two main barriers discussed by parents was the demands of work, working long hours and language difficulty. One mother reported that as a single mother she is the sole provider in her home and she cannot have the flexibility to miss days of work to attend some school functions such as fieldtrips or volunteer at events. Similarly, another provider of the family who has two jobs in order to sustain his large family reported in the quote demonstrated earlier that his responsibility as the head of the home

causes him to miss school activities and help child with homework. When barriers exist, it prevents parents from being involved in their children's education which affects children in the classroom. This is supported by previous research, where various perspectives have demonstrated that parent involvement in their child's education creates many positive outcomes for the child and influences positive emotional, social and cognitive development. In return, this also influences the child's behavior in the classroom (El Nokali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal, 2010).

Limitations

Various limitations were encountered by researcher on qualitative study. One limitation consists of the small sample of a total of six participants were five identified as female and only one as male. Although when it pertains to gender there was no diversity, there was diversity among participants when it pertains to age of the participant, age of the child and grade level of child. The conflict that contributed to the small sample size, was the availability of participants. Initially more than ten participants had agreed to partake in study, but when scheduling began participants had difficulty setting date and those who had set date ended rescheduling or forgetting to show up on date of interview. As stated in the interview responses, many individuals had work responsibility and long hours of work, for this reason researcher conducted majority of studies at participants home. Additionally, greater diversity in Latino/Hispanic heritage could have been obtained as well instead of the 100% of participants identifying as Latino of

Mexican heritage. With a greater sample size and greater diversity within the participants, researcher would perhaps had been able to obtain greater insight in perception of parent involvement.

Recommendations for Social Work

This study focuses on Latino parent perception of parent involvement and whether this perceived involvement in their child's education affect the child's behavior displayed in the classroom. These findings provide great insight of Latino parent perception of school involvement which can assist social workers, school staff, parents and other individuals when working with this population. Additionally, at the micro level parents will become aware of the importance in how behavior issues in the classroom can later develop into mental disorders. At the macro level study will inform and educate the Latino community at large, especially school districts with a high population of Latino students. By bringing such awareness to the Latino community, preventive methods at the macro level can arise to prevent mental health issues to arise or develop in children. Schools primarily those with a high Latino population, such as across Coachella Valley's various districts where my participant's reside, will determine that a change in school policies should be made. It will also bring an awareness of a need of new programs to be developed to help increase involvement in this targeted population Overall, this study will build on future studies by providing additional information on a population that has not been studied extensively.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to focus on the perception of Latino parents in their involvement in their child's education and how this affects their child's behavior at school. Purpose was to determine whether parent involvement is beneficial to children, whether those parents who perceive themselves as being highly involved see more or less behavior problems than those who perceive themselves as not being involved in their child's education. This study provided insight in what Latino parents perceive as parent involvement and what they perceive as bad behavior. Findings demonstrated Latinos defined parent involvement as home-based activities (helping with homework and checking in), school-based involvement (e.g., volunteering at school events, fundraising, fieldtrips), and home-school communication (attending parent-teacher conferences and speaking with the teacher). Findings also suggest that a relationship exists between parent perception of involvement in child's education and behavior expressed by child in the classroom. Studies presented that great communication with children can influence the behavior displayed in school. Additionally, findings also presented barriers to parent involvement, language difficulty and high work demands. Results of this study will provide great insight to social workers in the social work profession to provide the adequate services to this Latino population.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

- 1) **Usted considera que esta muy involucrado/a, más o menos involucrado/a, o no involucrado/a en la educación de su hijo/a? Por favor explica.** Do you consider yourself to be highly involved, moderately involved or not involved in your child's education? Please explain.

- 2) **¿Que considera involucración de padres? En sus propias palabras, ¿que cree que son?** What do you consider parent involvement? In your own words, what do you think it is?

- 3) **¿Tiene comunicación con la escuela o maestros?** Do you have communication with your child's school or teachers?

- 4) **Se siente cómodo con los maestros o la facultad de la escuela? ¿Porque?** Do you feel comfortable with teachers or school faculty? Why?

- 5) **Participa en conferencias escolares u otros eventos escolares?** Do you participate in school conferences or any other school events?

- 6) **Ayuda a su hijo/hija con actividades escolares o tareas?** Do you help your son/daughter with school activities, tasks or homework?

- 7) **Como se comporta su hijo/hija en el salón escolar?** How does your child behave in the classroom?

- 8) **Usted cree que su involucración en la educación de su hijo/a afecta el comportamiento de su hijo/hija en el salón escolar?** Do you think your involvement in your child's education plays a role in the behavior he shows in the classroom?

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT



California State University, San Bernardino
Social Work Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee
APPROVED 2/9/2017 VOID AFTER 2/8/2018
IRB# SW1728 CHAIR [Signature]

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
School of Social Work

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are asked to participate is designed to examine parent perception of school involvement in their child's education. The study is being conducted by Denisse Medina, a graduate student, under the supervision of Dr. Armando Barragán, Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino. The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board Social Work Sub-committee at CSUSB.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the study is to examine the perception of Latino parent's involvement in their child's education and its impact on classroom behavior.

DESCRIPTION: Participants will be asked of a few questions on parent involvement in their child's education and whether they perceive this involvement has affected their child's behavior in the elementary classroom.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in the study is totally voluntary. Individual interview will be audio recorded. You can refuse to participate in the study or discontinue your participation at any time without having any consequences.

CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY: Your responses will remain anonymous and data will be reported without identifying information. Audio records of individual interview will remain anonymous and will be safely stored

DURATION: Interviews will take between 30 to 40 minutes.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks to the participants.

BENEFITS: There will not be any direct benefits to the participants.

CONTACT: If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Barragán at (909) 537-3501.

RESULTS: Results of the study can be obtained from the Pfau Library Scholar Works database (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/>) at California State University, San Bernardino after July 2017.

I agree to be audio taped _____ Yes _____ No

This is to certify that I read the above and I am 18 years or older.

Place an X mark here _____

_____ Date

909.537.5501

5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

The California State University • Bakersfield • Channel Islands • Chico • Dominguez Hills • East Bay • Fresno • Fullerton • Humboldt • Long Beach • Los Angeles
Maritime Academy • Monterey Bay • Northridge • Pomona • Sacramento • San Bernardino • San Diego • San Francisco • San Jose • San Luis Obispo • San Marcos • Sonoma • Stanislaus

APPENDIX C
DEMOGRAPHICS SURVEY

ENCUESTA DEMOGRÁFICO

- 1) ¿Cuál es su sexo?
 masculino femenino otro

 - 2) ¿Cuántos años tiene usted? _____

 - 3) ¿Que raza mejor lo describe?
 Blanco
 Hispano o Latino
 Africano Americano
 Indígena / Nativo Americano / Indio Americano
 asiático / Isleño del Pacífico
 Otro: _____

 - 4) Cuale es el nivel más alto en su educación?
 no asistí a la escuela
 primaria
 secundaria
 preparatoria (sin titulo)
 graduado de la preparatoria, diploma o algo equivalente (Por ejemplo, GED)
 complete créditos en el colegio (sin diploma)
 entrenamiento vocacional
 grado asociado
 licenciatura
 maestría

 - 5) Cuantos años tiene su hijo/a? _____

 - 6)Cuál es la relación con su hijo/hija?
 madre
 padre
 cuidador

 - 7) En qué año escolar asiste su hijo/hija? _____

 - 8) Que raza es su hijo/hija?
 Blanco
 Hispano o Latino
 Africano Americano
 Indígena / Nativo Americano / Indio Americano
 asiático / Isleño del Pacífico
 Otro: _____
- Qué escuela elemental atiende su hijo/a? _____

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