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The Parental Involvement of Non-English Speaking Latino Parents in Secondary Education

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Action Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education

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The Commitment of Non-English Speaking Latino Parents to Secondary Education

Bianca M. Andrade

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Abstract

This study characterized the ways in which non-English speaking Latino parents demonstrate their commitment to secondary education and investigated the factors that cause non-English Latino parents to feel unwelcome at a public secondary education institution. The 33 participants of the study were self-identified non-English speaking Latino parents of students enrolled at a middle school in the central coast valley of California. The parents participated in one of three ways: (a) a one-on-one interview, (b) group interview or (c) they completed a home-sent questionnaire. After analysis, the qualitative data revealed non-English speaking Latino parents participate in the education of their children by advising, communicating, monitoring, supporting and motivating their children at home. In addition, it revealed that these parents do not participate in formal parent involvement activities because they find no value in them since they do not meet their needs. Parents reported not feeling welcomed by teachers because the communication between teacher and parent is limited and almost absent even when parents show up to events at school. Schools need to find ways to make school events worthwhile for non-English speaking Latino parents, if they want these parents to engage with teachers and school leaders.

Dedicación

A mi padre, quien sembró el sueño cuando era una niña.

A mi madre, quien veló porque el sueño se hiciera realidad.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

As the Latino population continues to rapidly increase across the Unites States, Latino student enrollment in K-12 education is also increasing in U.S. classrooms. When compared to other ethnic and racial groups, Latinos tend to underperform academically leading to an academic achievement gap (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). The differences in academic achievement are the result of different factors, one of the factors being parent involvement (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Good, Masewicz & Vogel, 2010; Jeynes, 2003; Zarate, 2007). Regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, parent involvement has been identified as a key factor to higher academic achievement because of its positive correlation with student academic performance, higher homework completion rates, higher tests scores, lower student dropout rates, and reduction of behavioral problems at school (Carreón, Drake, & Calebrese, 2005; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Hara & Burke, 1998; Jeynes, 2003; Lefevre & Shaw, 2012; Olivos, 2004). However, research identifies Latino parents as the one ethnic group with the lowest participation or engagement in their children's education (Valencia & Black, 2002; Lee & Bowen, 2006).

Low participation from Latino parents in parent involvement activities such as parent meetings, parent conferences, open houses, and school fundraisers has led teachers and experts to assume that Latino parents do not support or value the education of their children (Valencia & Black, 2002). However, research shows that Latino parents do value education and are able to have an active role in their children's educations in different ways that are not visible to most educators. Valencia and Black (2002), Olivos (2004), and Karate (2007) Latino parents are actually involved in the education of their children by providing encouragement and discussing

family educational values, beliefs and future educational plans with their children (Valencia &

Black, 2002; Olivos, 2004; Zarate, 2007). This type of parent involvement is invisible to

educators because it takes place in the home. However, experts speculate that increasing the level

of effectiveness of Latino parent involvement at schools could be a key factor in bridging the

achievement gap, but prior to posing possible solutions and programs, there is a need to explore

and gain an understanding of the factors that may be limiting or inhibiting the participation of

Latino parents in the parent involvement school activities (Valencia & Black, 2002; Delgado-

Gaitan, 1991; Zarate, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Public school educators, education researchers and media have constructed the idea that

Latino parents, especially those that lack English skills, do not care nor value the education of

their children because they tend to have low participation numbers at school parental activities.

However, various studies have demonstrated that non-English speaking Latino parents do value

education and show commitment in other forms that are not visible to school officials. The

commitment and parent involvement of this specific group of parents may not visible because

their actions they take to support their children are difficult to study and measure. (Delgado-

Gaitan, 1991; Valencia & Black; 2002; Olivos, 2004; Zarate, 2007). In addition, researchers have

identified language and unwelcoming school environment as two key barriers that limit the

parental involvement of non-English speaking Latino parents (Lee & Bowen 2006; Lee et al.,

2012; Olivos, 2004). Despite the fact that there has been an increase in the employment of

Spanish-speaking school personnel and the commitment to translating all school information to

Spanish, non-English speaking Latino parents continue to report feeling unwelcome at schools

(Lee & Bowen 2006; Lee et al., 2012; Olivos, 2004, Zarate 2007). Although numerous studies

attest to the fact that barriers obstruct integrating linguistic minorities into the intense social environment of public schools, there continues to be a lack of case study analysis of individual schools to uncover the root causes of perceived exclusionary practices (Olivos, 2004, Zarate 2007). To support non-English speaking Latino parents who believe that educators and the educational system know best when it comes to instructional practice and policy decisions, in-depth school-based research can uncover, explore and explain the root of causes for exclusion.

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this research is to explore the reasons that cause non-English speaking Latino parents to feel unwelcome at public schools and characterize their commitment to education of their children in secondary education.

Research Questions

Within the context of my phenomenological study, I propose the following questions:

- What activities and arrangements do non-English speaking Latino parents identify as their responsibility in supporting their children as students in public schools?

- What factors hinder their participation at school activities?

- What constitutes a welcoming school environment for non-English speaking Latino parents?

- Are parents who perceive their children's school as welcoming more involved than parents who don't feel their children's school is a welcoming environment?

Theoretical Framework

Parental involvement has been identified as a key factor to higher student academic achievement (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Epstein 1995; Hara & Burke, 1998; Jeynes, 2003; Lefevre & Shaw, 2012; Zarate, 2007). As a result, it is understood that if parents are involved in the

education process of their children, their children will be more likely to achieve greater academic achievement than those children that lack parental support. One of the theoretical frameworks that will guide this research is Joyce Epstein's (1995) classification of six types of parental involvement. Epstein's framework is composed of six types of parental involvement practices: (a) parenting, (b) communicating, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision making, and (f) collaborating with the community (Epstein, 1995). Epstein's model considers that children grow in three different major contexts: family, school and community. Epstein (1995) argues, "School, family, and community cannot alone produce successful students. Rather partnership activities may be designated to engage, guide, energize and motivate students to own success" (p. 2). In essence, families and schools as a whole, share the responsibility to work collaboratively to ensure students' success. Although Epstein's classification system provides a viable framework for parent involvement it does not address the underlying causes of why parents from linguistic minorities, especially Latino parents, stay away from active involvement at the school site.

Tedin and Weiher (2011) agree that a key factor to student success in schools is active involvement from parents; however, they state that active parent involvement is dependent on education-related social capital. The idea of education-related social capital is derived from the sociological theory of cultural capital developed by Bourdieu and Passeron and it delves into the possible reasons why Latino parents often have low participation in traditional parent involvement activities at school. According to Tedin and Weiher (2011), parents' involvement or participation in school activities such as parent-teacher meetings depends on their knowledge about the educational system; the less education-related social capital they have, the less likely they are to get involved in the school community. In addition, they state that regardless of race

and ethnicity, education-related social capital can be limited by factors such as full time jobs, disability, and divorced or separated marital status (Tedin & Weiher, 2011). Kao and Turney (2009) argue that immigrant parents have a greater disadvantage and less social capital than other parents because they have less knowledge of how the school systems work and lack an understanding of teacher-parent relationships. Rueda et al. (2003) concur with the idea, stating that immigrant families, in particular those from low socioeconomic status backgrounds and speakers of languages other than English, are at a disadvantage with respect to cultural and social capital. Similarly, non-English-speaking parents, even if born in the U.S., are at a disadvantage because they may lack basic knowledge of the U.S educational system practices and behaviors that they are expected to know in order to help their children succeed in the U.S education system. As a result, social and cultural capital is an important factor to take into consideration.

These theories provide a framework to understand the underlying causes and explanations for feelings Latino parents experience in schools.

Researcher Background

Before becoming a credentialed teacher, I held various positions at elementary and secondary schools in the area where I conducted my research project. I have worked as an academic mentor, instructional aide, after school teacher, and student teacher. While working at each of these positions, I constantly heard teachers complain about one problem "Latino parents do not participate nor seem to care about the education of their children."

As a Latina, I wondered why they would say Latino parents do not care, I looked at my own family and those that have children at school, and saw that they do care and value education because it is the opportunity for a better living. Then I reflected on my K-12 education years and recalled that my mother barely attended any of the parental school activities. The one

event she never missed was Back-to-School night. My mother would request well in advance the time off from work to attend, but she was not the type of parent that would go up to the teacher and ask questions about policies, and how to help me at home. In addition, her English skills were limited and she was not able to fully understand the teachers, so she would passively rely on the information I translated for her. Despite the fact, she always advised me to listen to my teachers and to do my homework. She told me stories of how she did not have the opportunity to study, but if she had she would have taken advantage of it, and that was the reason why she wanted me to do well. She had her ways of encouraging and motivating me by telling me stories about how much she and my father had sacrificed to ensure I had a better academic education that the one they were able to have.

During my student teaching and first year of teaching, I came across parents that were very glad I was able to communicate with them without needing an intermediate individual to translate. I found out many Spanish-speaking Latino parents lacked an understanding of the U.S education system, such as class placement of their children, the meaning of grade point average (GPA), and its importance in secondary education. Many seemed confused and did not understand why students had more than one teacher as they transitioned from 6th to 7th grade. During parent conferences, I found myself explaining basic information to parents about the school system.

After making these observations, I began to wonder whether non-English speaking Latino parents truly do not care about the education about their children, or if they lack the understanding of the education system and do not know how to help their children in the secondary school. Perhaps they do not understand the way teachers and school administrations

expect them to be involved, or they just choose to not participate, or are other barriers that are not immediately evident.

Definition of Terms

- **Achievement Gap.** The disparity in academic performance between groups of students.

- **Formal Parental Involvement.** Type of parent involvement in which parents can be observed, such as attending open houses and parent conferences; volunteering in school events, classrooms, and fundraisers, and contacting teachers on a regular basis (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Valencia & Black, 2002; Zarate, 2007).

- **Informal Parental Involvement.** Type of parent involvement which is not visible at school and happens mainly at home.

- **Latino.** Individuals of Mexican, Central American or South American descent.

- **Non-English Speaking Latino Parent.** A parent that is of Mexican, Central American or South American descent who live in the United States but is not able to communicate in English.

- **Parental Involvement.** Parent participation in the academic education or schooling of a child (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012).

- **Phenomenological Research Design.** An in-depth interview used to study the meaning or essence of a lived experience among selected participants (McMillan & Schumacher 2006, p. 352).

- **School Parent Activities.** Events that take place at school and are planned by school administrators or teacher. These include events such as open houses, back-to-school night, migrant meetings, and parent conferences.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Regardless of race and ethnicity, parent involvement has been identified as a key factor to higher academic achievement (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Hara & Burke, 1998; Jeynes, 2003; Lefevre & Shaw, 2012; Olivos, 2004; Zarate 2007). "Parent involvement (i.e., academic support) is an empirically validated predictor of school success" (Lefevre & Shaw, 2012, p. 707). Despite the positive correlation, studies continue to report that Latino parents, especially those that are non-English speakers, have a lower participation or engagement in parent involvement activities at schools when compared to other ethnic groups (Lee & Bowen, 2006; Valencia & Black, 2002). If parent involvement is the key to academic success then it is crucial for school officials, administrators and teachers to gain an understanding of the barriers that limit the involvement of Latino parents in the education of their children because parent involvement could contribute reducing the Latino achievement gap (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Zarate, 2007). This is the reason for this study, which tries to answer the following questions:

- What activities and arrangements do non-English speaking Latino parents identify as their responsibility in supporting their children as students in public schools?

- What factors hinder their participation at school activities?

- What constitutes a welcoming school environment for non-English Latino parents?

- Are parents who perceive their children's school as welcoming more involved than parents who don't feel their children's school is a welcoming environment?

This chapter will examine the research about parental involvement. First, an operationalized definition of parent involvement will be discussed. Second, a brief overview of two types of parent involvement will be given. Finally, an analysis of the research about Latino

parent involvement will be presented along with a discussion of the limiting factors of parent involvement that have been previously identified by researchers.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is a term that can be defined in various ways depending on the standpoint of the definer. Parents, teachers, school administrators, policy makers and researchers tend to have a common understanding of the term but do not share the exact same definition or description of what does parental involvement entail (Carreón, et al., 2005).

In general terms, parent involvement can be defined as the parents' participation in the academic education or schooling of a child (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). However, parent involvement can be categorized into various types that include parents' participation in school activities, parents' communication with teachers, parents' communication with children and parent's aspiration and monitoring of future educational goals (Valencia & Black, 2002; LeFevre & Shaw 2012). Trivette and Anderson (1995) define parent involvement as composed of four categories: (a) parental aspirations, (b) parent-child communication about school, (c) home environment and (d) parental participation in school activities. Carreón et al. (2005) claim "parent involvement is not a fixed event but a dynamic and ever-changing practice that varies depending on the context in which it occurs, the resources parents and schools bring to their actions, and the students' particular needs" (p. 467). As a result, parental involvement cannot be defined as a single behavior nor a set of behaviors. Parent involvement is rather a combination of different types of actions which can be grouped into two categories, formal and informal.

Formal parent involvement. Formal parent involvement refers to external parent involvement in which parents participate in their children's education by attending open houses and parent conferences; volunteering in school events, classrooms, and fundraisers; and

contacting teachers (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Valencia & Black, 2002; Zarate, 2007). These types of activities can be easily observed and quantified at school by counting how many parents show up to parent school activities. Carreón et al. (2005) state that these activities are the traditional efforts of schools to support parent involvement and appear to be taken into account as a measurement of parental involvement. As a result, not seeing parents participating in school activities or events can lead to the conclusion that non-English speaking Latino parents are disengaged, and do not care about the education of their children (Olivos, 2004; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Valencia & Black, 2002). However, formal parental involvement is only one of the components of parental involvement as defined by Trivette and Anderson (1995), since parents can also take part in the education of their children through informal parent involvement.

Informal parent involvement. Informal parent involvement refers to a more subtle type of involvement that cannot be captured as easily as formal parent involvement (Valencia & Black, 2002), because it is more likely to take place at home (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). This type of parent involvement includes parents providing encouragement to their children and discussing family educational values, beliefs and future educational plans (Trivette & Andersen, 1995; Zarate, 2007). It also include short term behaviors such as parents asking their students how their day went at school or what they learned at school, checking the student's daily agenda, or checking for homework completion are simple ways parents can engage with students' school work and monitor students' progress.

Latino Parents and Parental Involvement

Even though research studies have linked parent involvement to academic success, the formal parental involvement of non-English speaking Latino parents is lower than that of their

Caucasian counterparts (Valencia & Black, 2002; Lee & Bowen, 2006). Reports of low, or a perceived lack of, Latino parent involvement has caused teachers and researchers to conclude that non-English speaking Latino parents are not interested in being active participants in the education of their children. However, studies report that regardless of race, all parents have been found to have high educational expectations for their children and try to find ways to support their children (Delgado-Gatian, 1991; Valencia & Black, 2002). Most non-English speaking Latino parents do not participate in school activities but show they care about the academic progress of their children in ways that are not visible to educators and researchers (Padron, Waxman & Rivera, 2002).

Kao and Turney (2009) report that Latino parents have high school expectations, but also state that minority immigrant parents are less likely to make connections with their children's schools. LeFevre and Shaw (2012) conducted a study on the longitudinal effects of formal and informal Latino parent involvement. Their results revealed that less than one quarter of Latino parents engaged in formal parent involvement activities; on the other hand, about three quarters of Latino parents participated in informal parental involvement activities. Though it may appear that Latino parents do not have an interest in education because of their low participation at schools, one study by Good et al., (2012) argues that non-English Latino parents do understand and care about education. In this study, a group of selected Latino parents of English Language Learners were interviewed to discuss the barriers Latino students need to overcome to reduce the Latino achievement gap. After the analysis of testimonials, the researchers determined five barriers that were identified by the non-English speaking Latino parents. The five barriers were (a) communication gaps; (b) culture classes; (c) lack of systemic, articulated district ELL plan; (d) lack of teacher preparation in multiculturalism, language acquisition and ELL instructional

strategies; and (e) lack of support systems for families (Good et al., 2012). This shows that even though non-English speaking Latino parents may not be constantly visible at school activities, they do have an understanding of the problems their children face in the United States' education system. Valencia and Black (2002) reviewed Mexican-American parent involvement literature and concluded that over the past decade, prior to their literature meta-analysis, research studies have found Mexican-American parents having high academic expectations and expressing various academic supportive behaviors at home but not being present at school events. These conclusions lead to the question that if research continues to show that Latino parents, including non-English speakers, do value the education of their children and demonstrate involvement through informal parent involvement activities, then why is their formal parent involvement at school not occurring? What inhibits Latino parents from participating in formal parent involvement activities at schools?

Carreón et al. (2005) argue that Latino parental involvement needs to be taken into account even if it is not in the form of formal parental involvement. They also argue that one of the issues is that Hispanic immigrant parents are expected to participate in structures and dynamics that are already in place but they may lack knowledge, skills, or social support networks (Carreón et al., 2005). Basically, immigrant, non-English speaking, Latino parents may have limited cultural capital causing, making it difficult to overcome the barriers to their involvement in their children's education. Such barriers will be discussed in detail in the following section.

Barriers to Latino Parent Involvement

Language. One of the most prominent and apparent barriers of non-English Latino parent involvement is the language difference (Lee & Bowen, 2006; Lee et al., 2012). Lee et al.

(2012) results showed that non-English speaking Latino parents are less involved in schools than English speaking Caucasian parents and English speaking Latino parents. In another study, 8 out of 10 exemplary teachers of Latino students reported that being bilingual, English-Spanish speakers, had an impact in their role as successful teachers of Latino students by allowing easier communication with non-English speaking Latino parents (Irizarry & Raible, 2011). In Good, Masewicz and Vogel (2012), Latino parents are reported as recognizing that the lack of English language skills limits their effective connections and communication between teachers and school personnel. All these studies point to language as a primary barrier to parental involvement in schools.

Interestingly, Zarate (2007) claims that the language barrier was only found to be relevant when non-English speaking Latino parents tried to help their children with homework assignments, since the Latino parents in the study reported that they did not feel language was a barrier when communicating with school personnel. Language may not be an issue when trying to communicate with school officials because most schools across the United States offer translators and interpreters to facilitate communication between non-English Latino speaking parents and school personnel (Good et al., 2012; Zarate, 2007). In essence, Latino parents that lack English language skills are aware of the language barrier between them and their students' teachers, but there are already changes taking place to help ease the difference.

Conventional opportunities for parental involvement. Schools provide traditional opportunities for parents to be involved at schools such as open house events, teacher-parent conferences, school-site council meetings, volunteering in the classroom and fundraising events. All of these parent involvement opportunities require parents to be knowledgeable of the dominant school culture and norms (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). It is

important to note that back-to-school nights are not events that occur in their native countries so the idea of going back to school at night time to meet the teachers of their children is new and unfamiliar. Delgado-Gaitan (1991) categorizes this type of formal parent involvement as conventional parent involvement activities. She claims this type of involvement is not optimal for non-English speaking Latino parents because it does not permit parents to learn about how the school system operates nor teach skills on how to assist their children with homework at home (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). The majority of non-English speaking Latino parents are immigrants and lack an understanding of the American public education system, but these conventional opportunities require parents to have knowledge of the dominant culture (Delgado Gaitan, 1991; Kao & Turney, 2009). Carreón et al. (2005) reports about the parental involvement perspective of three immigrants Latino parents who reported feeling like outsiders to the school when they attended traditional and conventional parent events at school. Furthermore, Carreón et al. (2005) state, "…from our conversations with principals and teachers, we learned there is not an awareness as to how these parents, thought to be very satisfied with their role in the school, feel about their experiences of engagement" (p. 495). This means that school administrators and teachers seem unaware that the conventional parent involvement activities make parents feel left out and lead to the feeling of feeling unwelcomed at schools.

Unwelcoming school environment. Another major factor that might account for the low presence of non-English speaking Latino parents at parent school events is the unwelcoming environment at schools. Studies have reported that Latino parents, especially non-English speaking Latino parents, do not feel welcome at schools and often feel alienated from teachers, leading to poor and low participation in formal parent involvement activities (Good et al., 2012; Olivos, 2004). Olivos (2004) reports Latino parents feeling mistreated and disrespected by

school personnel and notes that a group of six Latino parents pointed out that the principal's lack of awareness of the cultural and linguistic differences caused parent alienation from school. In addition, Carreón et al. (2005) reports feelings from three Hispanic immigrant parents feeling disrespected, distant and confused about school's cultural world.

Good et al. (2012) assert that parent involvement can be inhibited by lack of communication, trust and mutual understanding. In another recent study, Lee et al. (2012) provide insight into the involvement of Latino parents in their children's education stating that parental involvement is mainly dependent on schools' commitment actions, including efforts to connect with parents and to provide school-related information and programs. In essence, Latino parents must feel welcomed at the schools and feel comfortable approaching teachers, administrators and any other authoritative figure at the schools in order to bridge the gap between teachers and parents and help with the success of Latino students (Lee et al., 2012).

Summary

Overall, the literature suggests that there are different factors that affect the parent involvement of non-English speaking Latino parents. However, understanding the barriers that limit the participation of this specific group of parents could be the factor that helps bridge the Latino achievement gap (Lee & Bowen, 2006; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Turney & Kao, 2009). Despite the potential positive outcomes, researchers and educators report low parental involvement from Latino parents, which has led to the myth that non-English Latino parents do not care about their children's education (Olivos, 2004; Valencia & Black, 2002). However, it has been reported that Latino parents tend to have higher informal parent engagement, which is not easily captured in research studies because it takes place at home and cannot be easily quantified (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012).

The literature of Latino parent involvement also reports that Latino parents' low participation in formal parent involvement activities is the result of factors such as lacking the English language skills and feeling alienated by teachers and feeling unwelcomed at schools. (Kao & Turney, 2009; Olivos, 2004; Zarate, 2007). In addition, researchers, Delgado-Gaitan and Olivos, state that current formal parent involvement activities offered at most schools across United States do not offer a meaningful parent involvement opportunity or safe place for Latino parents to be able to voice their opinions and concerns. As a result, this study will investigate the possible reasons that cause non-English speaking Latino parents to feel unwelcome at public schools and characterize their commitment to education of their children in secondary education.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that cause Spanish-speaking Latino parents to feel alienated or unwelcome at the school and characterize their commitment to education of their children in secondary education. In this section, I will describe the methods I used to gather and analyze data to answer the research questions I proposed:

- What activities and arrangements do non-English speaking Latino parents identify as their responsibility in supporting their children as students in public schools?

- What factors hinder their participation at school activities?

- What constitutes a welcoming school environment for Non-English Latino parents?

- Are parents who perceive their children's school as welcoming more involved than parents who don't feel their children's school is a welcoming environment?

Research Design

I used the research method of phenomenological interviews and surveys to collect qualitative research data to answer the proposed research questions. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) state that phenomenological interview is an "in-depth interview used to study the meaning or essence of a lived experience among selected participants" (p. 352). This type of qualitative research allowed me to investigate and gain a better understanding of the parents' perspective on what they believe constitutes parental involvement and their feelings towards the school environment and their parent involvement.

The extensive research on parental involvement has pointed out that parental involvement is a key factor to student academic success (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Good et al., 2010; Jeynes, 2003; Zarate, 2007). As a result, understanding parental involvement is a phenomenon that

concerns not only students and parents, but also school administrators and educators. Phenomenological interviews and surveys allowed me to collect key information that helped me examine what non-English speaking Latino parents consider the best ways to be involved in their children's education. In addition, it allowed me to determine if non-English speaking Latino parents, in the central coast of California, share and report similar barriers, language and unwelcoming feelings at school, as reported by previous research among other similar parent communities.

Setting

The study involved two different methods of data collection and each method required a different setting. The phenomenological interviews were arranged and conducted at the most convenient place and time for the participants. Parents were given the choice to select the most convenient place for them such as the school, coffee shop, parent home or another place that was comfortable for participant. However, all parents suggested and agreed to be interviewed at the middle school their child attends. The interviews either took place in researcher's assigned classroom or at the office's main conference room. The second research method involved parents answering questions on a questionnaire. There was no specific setting since the surveys were sent home to be completed by parents at their convenience.

Participants

The participants for the study were non-English speaking Latino parents of 8th grade students at a middle school in the central coast valley of California. Since I targeted a very specific group and utilized opportunity sampling. As a science teacher, my 2014-2015 student load assignment was 147 students. I surveyed all 147 students to find out whose parents only speak Spanish, using a questionnaire of 5 questions. I asked students to identify the language

their parents speak (See Appendix C). Out those students, 136 took the Parent Language Survey. Thirty-one students identified both parents as non-English speakers and 21 students identified either their mother or father as a non-English speaker. As a result, my pool of potential participants consisted of 52 families.

Fifteen study participants were randomly selected from the pool of 83 parents that were identified as non-English speaking Latino parents by their students. When I contacted a parent, I spoke in Spanish and introduced myself as the science teacher of their child and as a researcher. I explained they had been chosen because their child had identified them as Spanish speakers only and I asked for a confirmation whether or not they self-identified as non-English speaking Latino parents. After their confirmation I followed with the introduction and explanation of details about the purpose of the study. After giving all the details, I asked if they were willing to volunteer to take part in the study. Hence, this is considered an opportunity sample. Out of the 15 parents selected and called, 11 answered and agreed to participate. The other four parents did not answer but were later participants of the study by completing the parent involvement questionnaire.

Before starting the interviews, I explained key details about the implications of their participation in the study. They acknowledged that their participation was voluntary with no compensation of any sort. They also received an explanation of how they could withdraw at any time from the study and that all of their responses would remain confidential. Upon agreeing to participate in the study, all participants had to sign the consent form and an audio recording authorization form. The sample may not reflect the general population but it provided me a large enough pool to conduct the phenomenological study of Latino parental involvement in the central coast of California.

Description of Data Collection Methods

Parental involvement questionnaire. Thirty parent involvement questionnaires were sent to homes of parents that were identified as non-English speaking Latino parents. The questionnaire asked questions regarding their parental involvement and their role in the education of their children (See Appendix A). The questionnaire also included questions regarding parent feelings and comfortableness when visiting the school and approaching school personnel. All questions were derived from the main questions leading the study. Along with the questionnaire, each parent received a consent form to read and sign.

Interviews. The interviews were about one hour long. I welcomed each parent at the front office, walked them to the classroom or conference room. Before starting the interview, I introduced myself again, reviewed the purpose of the interview and the implications of participating in the study. Parents received, reviewed and signed the consent form and audio recording authorization form. Once all papers had been signed, I began the interview by asking parents to identify themselves and provide personal background information such as name, age, nationality, years of education, marriage status, and job/profession. The interviews then proceeded to a series of questions similar to the ones in the parent involvement questionnaire (See Appendix B). The series of questions were derived from the questions leading this study. However, the questions were open ended to elicit parent response during the semi-structured interview. When necessary, I prompted the participants and asked to clarify, to elaborate or to provide additional information.

Interview audio recordings and transcription. Each interview was audio recorded using a digital audio recorder. Since I am fluent in Spanish, I did not need an interpreter. All

communication between the parent and I was done in Spanish. I then transcribed and translated

the interview responses to English.

Field notes. In additions to the audio recordings, I took field notes that recorded any non-

verbal cues such as facial expressions, mood, gestures or any other relevant information that was

not detectable by the audio recording. In addition, I recorded key information and my own

thoughts on the question sheet as parents answered each question.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data collected through the parent involvement questionnaires, I manually

entered each parent questionnaire response into a Google Form. The responses were then

analyzed using the Google Forms summary of responses. Patterns were viewable through the

Google form analytics, but for more detailed analysis the data was transferred to an Excel sheet.

The responses were tabulated and grouped into categories. The responses and patterns were then

compared and contrasted to patterns found through the phenomenological interviews.

The data collected from the individual and group phenomenological semi-structured

interviews were translated and transcribed to prepare them for analysis. After transcription, I

coded each interview to find repetitive and common words in parent responses. Prior to

collecting the data, I planned to use the following codes: (a) parent involvement at home, (b)

barriers and (c) welcoming feeling. Following the first two individual phenomenological

interviews, I refined and added other codes. At the end, I used the following codes to analyze my

data, (a) parent involvement at home, (b) teacher-parent communication, (c) value of education,

(d) motivation and encouragement, (e) monitoring, (f) welcoming feeling, (g) participation at

school and (h) limitations/barriers. The codes were then grouped into categories to abstract the

patterns and findings from the parent responses. The process of coding is in accordance to the

coding process explained by McMillan and Schumacher (2006, p. 267). The analysis helped me gain a greater understanding of how non-English speaking Latino parents get involved in the education of their children and to determine what limits their participation at school events. The abstracted themes from the interviews were then compared to the results collected through the parent involvement questionnaires. The data collected through the questionnaires, the one-on-one interviews and group interviews, were used to cross-validate each method utilized to collect data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 374).

Limitations

By using two different methods I intended to collect data that give insight into non-English speaking Latino parental involvement at a school in the central coast valley of California. However, I understand that, as with any study, there are potential limitations that affected the overall validity, or credibility of the research.

One limitation is the number of participants. The number of participants was small and did not represent the entire community at the school site. Due to the nature of a phenomenological study, a smaller pool of participants was utilized to make data analysis less cumbersome. For the 2014-2015 school year, 1,200 seventh and eighth grade students were enrolled at the middle school. As a science teacher, I was assigned 147 of those students. While this study could have included a larger pool of participants, I chose to only survey the parents of the students enrolled in my classes. Out of those 147 students, only 52 students identified at least one of their parents as non-English speaker. Of the 52 identified families, only 33 families agreed to participate in the study. The 33 families represented only 2.75% of the entire school population. Therefore, the responses from the participants may not represent the full spectrum of opinions and experiences from all non-English speaking Latino parents.

Another limitation is the fact that the self-reported information from parents can provide biased results. Parents could have answered the questions thinking of what I wanted to find out. Some parents could have been afraid to reveal their true behaviors, feelings and attitudes regarding the education of their children. Additionally, the wording of the questions on the questionnaire and interviews protocol could have been misinterpreted by parents, causing inaccurate responses. People have different understanding of words and meanings. In order to ensure that the words were understandable to any native Spanish speaker, I had a Spanish teacher and two non-English speakers volunteer to take the survey prior to starting the data collection and review my interview questions. However, after analyzing the data, I realized that some of the questionnaire questions needed to be more clear and precise. Ensuring that the words are clear and understandable by any Spanish speaker with a basic education in Spanish language was essential to prevent respondent confusion or to avoid to change and reframe the interview questions during the interview, which could had limited the validity to the study.

Finally, my personal bias can be counted as a limitation. My experience working with non-English Latino parents over the last three years has led me to construct my own opinions and ideas about what these parents know and experience about the U.S education system. However, I had to refrain from leading participants in the way I posed questions, showing approval or disapproval during the phenomenological interviews. Furthermore, when analyzing the results there may be a bias when searching for patterns. McMillan and Schumacher (2006), explain that as a researcher, I must search for plausibility explanations by judging the quality of data with rigor within the limitations of the design and that what is I tried to accomplish as I analyzed the data.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to find answers to the following questions: (a) what activities and arrangements do non-English speaking Latino parents identify as their responsibility in supporting their children as students in public schools? (b) What factors hinder their participation at school activities? (c) What constitutes a welcoming school environment for Non-English speaking Latino parents? (d) Are parents who perceive their children's school as welcoming more involved than parents who don't feel their children's school is a welcoming environment? This chapter presents the data collected through the phenomenological interviews and parent involvement questionnaires. First, a detailed demographic breakdown of all participants will be given, followed by a summary of relevant data collected through the parent questionnaires and then the study's major findings will be presented.

Individual and Group Interviews

The researcher identified 83 potential participants from the parent language questionnaire. Fifteen parents were selected randomly and called to participate in the study. Out of those fifteen parents, 11 parents agreed to participate in an interview. The other four individuals that were contacted did not answer the phone call, but later participated by completing the parent involvement questionnaire. The parents that answered and were willing to participate in the interview, suggested and agreed to meet with researcher at the middle school their child attends. Phone interviews were considered and offered as an option for parents that could not meet in person with the researcher, but it proved unnecessary. Nonetheless, some parents set certain conditions, such as scheduling the interview around their daily responsibilities and being able to bring children to the interview.

The interviews took place during a period of two weeks, overlapping with the middle school's spring break. Thus, the researcher had the flexibility to accommodate the needs and conditions of each parent. This flexibility allowed parents to schedule an interview at their most convenient time. For instance, Juan, who works night shifts, requested an early morning interview. Sofia, Andrea and Sonia reported working during the day, so they requested an evening time interview. Maria, Julia and Paula, who work in agriculture, were about a week away from returning to work and requested interviews in the afternoon. These participants mentioned they could only participate because they were during the off season; otherwise, they would not have been able to participate because of schedule conflicts.

All participants but Paula reported having toddlers or elementary age children. For some parents it was important to be able to bring their children or grandchildren with them. Julia, Lisa, and Silvia agreed to participate only if they could bring their children with them to the interview. Patricia asked if she could bring her grandchildren. The researcher approved the presence of children. Lupe, Maria, Sonia, Juan, and Andrea mentioned they had either left their children with their spouses or a relative. Sofia, who has two middle school aged children, said she had left them alone at home but the interview was interrupted twice because she had to answer calls from her daughters.

In terms of getting to the agreed meeting place, 10 parents reported that they drove to the school. Silvia was the only parent who said she was not able to drive and did not have a car but her husband dropped her at the school.

In addition to the six parents that participated in individual interviews, five parents participated in a group interviews. The first group interview was composed of Silvia, Lisa and Lupe. Both Lisa and Lupe brought their children. The second group interview was composed of

two parents, Paula and Julia. Julia brought her 4-month old baby because she couldn't find a babysitter.

      Demographics of participants. All interviewees were natives of Mexico and had attended school in their country, but none studied beyond high school level. Three parents studied up to elementary grades, two participants completed up to the first year of middle school and three parents completed high school in Mexico. Patricia and Paula's highest level of education was marked as High School, but neither one of them completed it since they dropped out during their first year. Sofia also dropped out of high school but received her GED certificate in Spanish in the United States. Additionally, the majority of the parents reported working in agriculture or restaurant industries. Four participants reported being stay-at-home home mothers, including one grandmother who takes care of her grandchildren. The profile of participants can be found in Table 1 and the demographics summary can be found in Table 2.

Table 1

Phenomenological Interview Participants' Profiles

No.	Name	Country of Origin	Years in the U.S.	Job	Level of Education	Interview Type
1	Sonia	Mexico	21	Restaurant	7	Individual
2	Juan	Mexico	28	Agriculture	Completed High School	Individual
3	Sofia	Mexico	18	Restaurant	Some High School, GED	Individual
4	Andrea	Mexico	13	Restaurant	7	Individual
5	Maria	Mexico	14	Agriculture	4	Individual
6	Patricia	Mexico	29	Stay-at-Home	9	Individual
7	Lupe	Mexico	16	Stay-at-Home	6	Group 1
8	Lisa	Mexico	15	Stay-at-Home	6	Group 1
9	Silvia	Mexico	20	Stay-at-Home	Completed High School	Group 2
10	Julia	Mexico	15	Agriculture	Completed High School	Group 2
11	Paula	Mexico	16	Agriculture	9	Group 2

Note. Names provided are pseudonyms.

Table 2

Employment and Level of Education of Interview Participants

Nationality			Job			Level of Education	
Mexico	11		Stay-at-Home	4		Elementary	3
			Agriculture	4		Middle School	2
			Food/Restaurant	3		High School	6
						College/University	0
						No response	0

Parent Involvement Questionnaires

Thirty parent involvement questionnaires were sent to family homes during the first week

of April 2015. Twenty-two parent involvement questionnaires were completed and returned to

the researcher. Then the data was entered into a Google Form and analyzed using Google

Spreadsheet's Summary of Responses. Parents reserved the right to skip any questions they did

not want to respond. Any unanswered question was entered into the Google Form as "No

Response."

Demographics of participants. All but three parents identified their nationality as

Mexican. The other three identified themselves as Salvadoran. The majority of parents that

responded to the question "What is your job/profession?" are workers in the agricultural industry

by either working in the fields or packaging facilities. Six parents indicated being stay-at-home

mothers. One parent reported working in construction and one in housekeeping. Four parents did

not answer this question.

The parents' levels of academic education ranged from elementary to high school. Seven

participants reported their highest level of education as elementary, one parent marked middle

school and eleven parents marked high school. Three out of the eleven parents who selected their

highest level of education as High School noted that they did not complete it. Moreover, three

participants did not respond the question about level of education; the same three participants did

not provide an answer for the question about their job. Table 3 shows the demographics of the

parents who participated in the study by completing the Parent Involvement Questionnaire.

Table 3

Employment and Level of Education of Parent Involvement Questionnaire Participants

Nationality		Job		Level of Education	
Mexico	9	Stay-at-Home	6	Elementary	7
El Salvador	3	Agriculture	9	Middle School	1
		Construction	1	High School	11
		Housekeeping	1	College/University	0
		No Response	4	No response	3

The data collected with question on the Parent Involvement Questionnaire was grouped

into the following major categories: (a) parent involvement behaviors at home; (b) attendance to

parent events at school; (c) parent involvement limiting factors; (d) interactions with school

personnel; and (e) feelings towards school environment. The following sections will report the

data collected through the questionnaires.

Parent involvement behaviors at home. Question #4, 5, and 6 on the parent

involvement questionnaire (See Appendix B) concern behaviors parents do at home to support or

monitor students' academic performance. Nineteen parents reported making sure their child

completes his or her daily homework. Only three disagreed with the statement. One of them

wrote a note stating that he does not check his child's homework because he works night shifts.

Everyone except two parents reported asking their children about what they are learning at

school. In addition, all parents reported receiving information about student grades from report cards but three parents reported not being able to understand the grading system used at the school.

Attendance at parent events. Fifteen out of 22 participants agreed that they attend school activities. Six parents disagreed with the statement and one did not respond. Out of the parents that reported attending school activities two disagreed when asked about whether they enjoy attending school activities. Another two other parents also reported not enjoying attending those activities but they also disagreed to attending school activities. Overall, 68.2% (15 out of 22 parents) reported attending school activities and 72.7% (16 out of 22) reported enjoying attending school events.

Figure 1. Parent self-reported data about their participation at school events. Parents that attend school events tend to attend school orientations, back to school nights, and parent-teacher conferences.
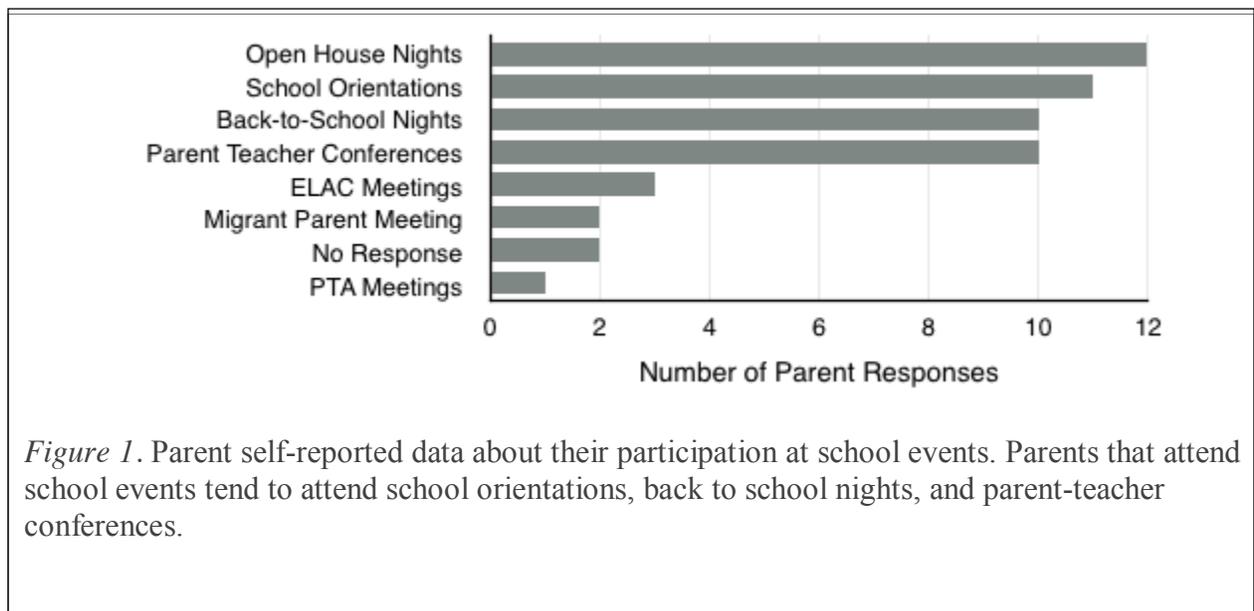
Out of the 22 participants, two parents reported that they do not attend school activities, and they also did not provide a response when asked about what type of activities they participate in. So out of 20 parents that reported attending parent school activities, 12 parents selected Open House night 11 parents selected school orientations, 10 parents selected Back-to-School Nights, and 10 parents marked Parent Teacher Conferences. Interestingly, 8 parents

marked all three first options on the questionnaire: School orientation, Back-to-School night, and

Open House Night. Less than three participants reported special and targeted parent meetings

such as Migrant Parent Meetings, ELAC meetings and PTA. Only one parent reported being a

participant of all activities except PTA meetings (Refer to Figure 1.).

Limiting factors for parent involvement. One of the questions on the questionnaire

asked to list the reasons why parents are not able to attend events at school. Parents were allowed

to choose from an item list and to choose all that applied. Five parents did not provide a response

to this question. The two most common responses from parents were conflicts with work

hours/schedule and needing an interpreter. Transportation, child care, and not knowing when

parent events take place were options only chosen by one or two parents; therefore, they are not

significant or relevant limiting factors to the parent involvement, at least for the group of

surveyed parents (Refer to Figure 2).

Figure 2. Parents self-reported data about factors that limit parent participation at parent school events. Most parents identified work schedule and needing an interpreter as limiting factors for their participation at parent school events.
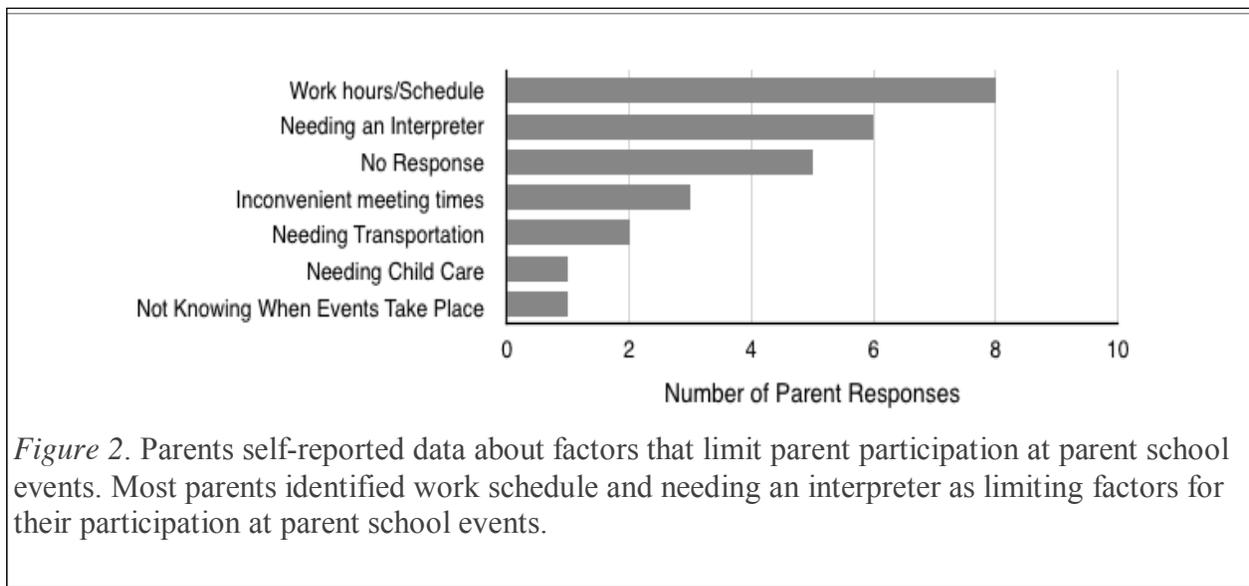
Feeling towards school environment. The parent responses showed that they feel

welcome at the school. Twenty-one out of 22 parents agreed that they felt welcomed at school.

Furthermore, all parents felt that the office personnel is friendly and approachable. Even though

the front office staff is composed of Spanish speaking personnel, five parents reported not being able get assistance in Spanish when they had visited the school's office. This could have been affected by the time parents visited the office, since office personnel is limited before 8am, during staff breaks and after 5pm.

Interactions with school personnel. Surveyed parents reported having the opportunity to talk to different school personnel such as administrators, counselors and teachers. The results varied based on the type of personnel. Seventeen out of 22 parents reported having the opportunity to talk to their children's counselor. Meanwhile, 14 participants said they have had the opportunity to talk to school's principal and assistant principals, whereas seven disagreed with the statement. However, when asked about having the opportunity to talk to the teachers of their children only eight parents agreed with the statement and 13 disagreed.

Figure 3. Parent self-reported data about their interactions with school principal, assistant principals, counselors and teachers.
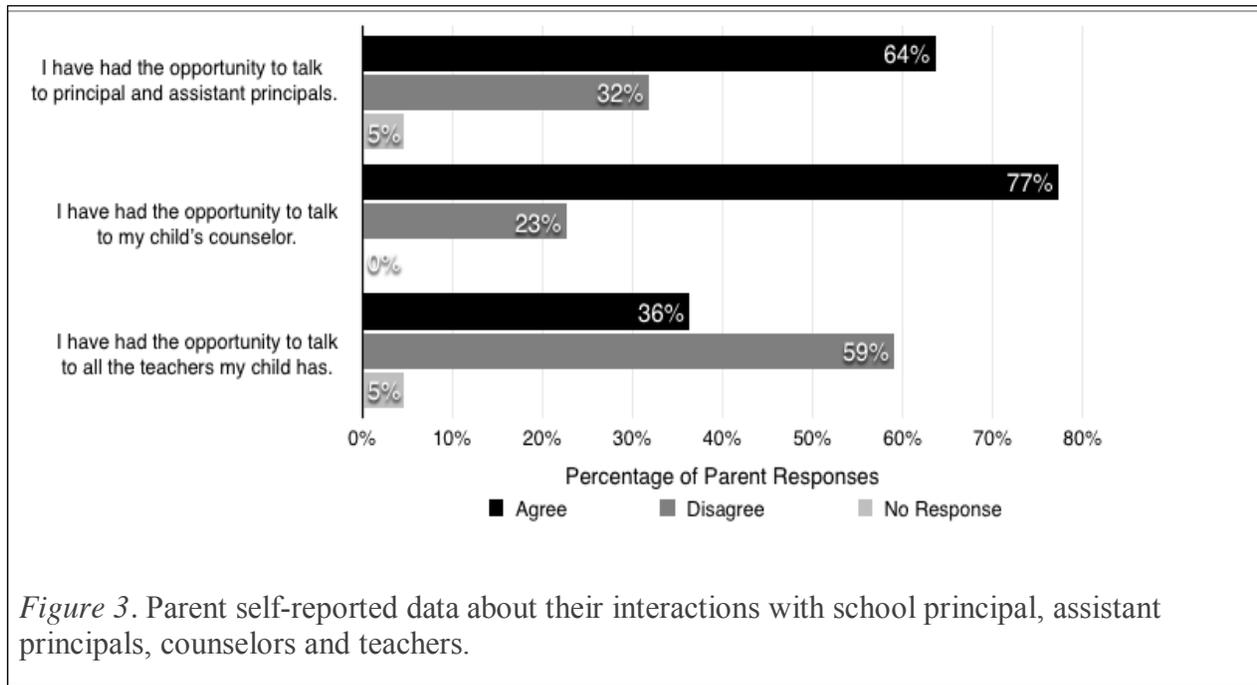
Findings

After coding and analyzing the collected data, several themes emerged that provided answers to the research questions. The primary themes were:

- A discrepancy in the definition of parent involvement.

- Parents motivate students by modeling behavior and storytelling.

- Teachers not communicating with Non-English speaking Parents.

- Parents do but do not feel welcomed at school.

- Non-English speaking parents need different involvement opportunities.

Finding #1: A discrepancy in the definition of parent involvement. All participants expressed the importance of education. Their answers and comments through the interviews revealed a high regard for education. Parents believe that education is the gateway for their children to achieve a better living. Given that they value education, they expressed that as parents it is their responsibility to be involved and guide their children to ensure they do well in school. When asked to define parent involvement, all parents responded in different ways. Lupe, Sonia, Paula, Julia and Patricia said parent involvement is "estar al tanto de las calificaciones" which means "to stay informed about their [student] progress in school." Other parents; Sofia, Juan, Maria, Silvia, Andrea, and Lisa, mentioned that in addition to being informed about the academic progress of their children, parent involvement means to motivate children at home to do well in school. Finally, Sofia, Juan, Maria, Lisa and Silvia stated that being attentive to their students' homework is one of their responsibilities as parents. Even though they all admitted to not being able to help their children complete homework assignments because of the language difference, they all agreed that making sure the students have all the materials needed to do their homework and classwork is within the purview of a parent's responsibility. Prior to asking about

their participation in school events, none of the parents mentioned or acknowledged that attending school parent events or meetings was part of parent involvement.

When interviewees were asked "What do you think are the school's expectations for your involvement?" all parents responded, "Yes" or "I believe so." The researcher followed up by asking them about what they believe those expectations are. Maria said "Well, the school keeps me informed about parent meetings and other events through [automated phone] calls." Juan said, "The school sends us the grade reports to keeps us informed about our students performance and if my children do poorly… I guess I am expected to… to do something at home like motivate them and set goals to make sure they improve during the next cycle." Sofia stated, "Yes… I think they [teachers] want us to show up to meetings because they always call me to remind me about them..."

The participants recognize the importance of parent involvement. Each one of them defined the term based on their understanding and experience but their definitions were all different. It is evident they are not sure about what the school administrators and teachers expect from them with regards to their involvement in the education of their children.

Finding #2: Parents motivate students by modeling behavior and storytelling. Parents believe that part of their parental role in education is to ensure they motivate their students to do well in school. Juan, Julia, Paula, Silvia, Lisa and Lupe all agreed that it is very important to keep their children motivated. They mentioned strategies such rewarding the child when he or she improves or continues to do well in school. They also mentioned taking away privileges for when the student does not perform at the level they want them to perform. Both Juan and Silvia explained that they have taking away privileges of using electronic devices or being able to participate in an afterschool school activity to help focus the student on school.

During the individual interviews with Sofia, Andrea and Maria, it became evident that parents motivate their children by modeling desired behavior. Sofia, Andrea and Maria though complete strangers who did not know each other nor participated in a group interview shared a very similar story about how they recently motivated their children through her own example. After the passage of The Safe and Responsible Driver Act (AB 60) in California, undocumented immigrants are allowed to receive driver's licenses. As a result, Sofia, Andrea and Sofia told the researcher how attaining the license was a difficult task because they had to prepare and study the DMV's driver's manual to obtain their driver's temporary permit. Sofia said, "I tell my girls that when one studies hard one can achieve what one wants, for instance, I wanted to get my driver's license. I would get home, prepare dinner, make sure they were doing their homework and then I would set my time aside to study my manual even if I was tired." She added that sometimes her daughter would tell her that she was working too hard and she responded to her by saying, "I want to get my driver's license just as you want to promote from 8th grade, so I have to study if not I am going to fail." Similarly, Maria and Andrea expressed that they demonstrated to their children that one can achieve anything by setting their mind on the goal, just as they were able to pass the test on the first try because they needed to pass the test to get their licenses.

Some of the parents also remarked that they tell stories about the hard work they do in the fields and other jobs. By showing them and telling them how hard it is to work, the parents hope that their child will be motivated to continue with the education and obtain a career or job better than the ones the parents have. Sofia said "I tell my girls, do not get crazy over boys… first get a career. My mistake was falling in love at a young age and not finishing school." Maria stated, "I tell him, do you want to be working long hours under the sun like your dad?" Silvia, Lupe and

Lisa also agreed that they tell stories to their children about the hard work the fathers do to be able to provide them with the basic needs. As a result, parents use modeling and storytelling to provide examples of what they want their children to do or not do.

Finding #3: Teachers not communicating with non-English speaking Latino parents. The parents that participated in this study were parents of eighth grade students. The students had been enrolled at the school since the beginning of their seventh grade. The interviews took place right at the beginning of the last quarter of eighth grade, about eight weeks before middle school promotion. But interestingly, seven out of 11 parents reported that they had not been contacted by their children's teachers, nor had they met teachers in person.

Juan mentioned that he had been called twice from a teacher during the time her daughter has been enrolled at the school. The first time was because her daughter was talkative and not completing the reading logs in English class and the second time was the researcher's call to recruit him for the study. He added that he has a son at the same school enrolled in seventh grade but he has not received any calls about him. Sonia stated that her daughter has been absent a lot due to illness but only one math teacher has contacted her about her daughter's poor academic performance. Lupe said that she has received automated calls from an eighth grade English teacher and that she is getting tired because it seems the teacher only focuses on the negative. Similarly, Lisa mentioned that she only has been contacted by an eighth grade English teacher in regards to her daughter's lack of homework completion. The rest of the interviewees stated that prior to the call from the researcher, who is the eighth grade science teacher of their students, no teacher had contacted them.

Seven out of 11 (64%) of the interviewed parents had not received a call from a teacher and had not met all teachers. These results appear to match the survey results from questionnaire

item #15. As shown in Figure 3, 59% of the surveyed parents reported not having the opportunity to talk to teachers.

Even though parents reported low or no interactions with teachers, every single interviewed parent said they had met with the counselor of their children and felt comfortable talking to the counselors regarding any issue. Surveyed parents' results coincided with the interviewed parents, 77% of those who completed the questionnaire reported having the opportunity to talk to the counselor.

Andrea stated, "All the counselors speak Spanish, so when I come into the office I just go straight into their offices. I know one of the counselors from years back when she was an elementary teacher and was actually my son's kindergarten teacher. So I feel a connection and she always welcomes me in"

Patricia said, "Whenever I want to know about my son's progress, I walk in and talk to the counselor… she gives me a quick and detailed report about the homework he is missing. Silvia mentioned, "I do not bother calling the teachers, who will most likely not get to me quick…. I call the counselor, she helps me in Spanish and gives me all the information I need." All in all, parents appear to have a better connection with these Spanish speaking counselors than with the teachers. There appears to be a barrier between the parents and the teachers.

Finding #4: Parents do not feel welcome at school. The survey data showed that 21 out of 22 parents felt welcomed at the school. All interviewed parents stated feeling welcomed at the school. When asked about what made them feel welcomed at school parents stated that front office staff was friendly even when they could not communicate because of the language barrier. Andrea reported feeling welcome because she feels like at home. She is able to walk in and go visit some of the administrators and counselors.

However, the researcher noted that parents felt intimidated by the size of the school and not being able to find their way to the classroom. Sofia, Andrea, Maria, Lisa, Lupe and Patricia called the researcher once they were outside the front office. The researcher received them and walked them to her classroom. As they walked to the classroom, Sofia and Andrea, who participated in separate individual interviews, both reported feeling lost and as they walked into the classroom, and said they had never been into the classrooms.

During one of the group interviews, one of the parent reported not feeling welcomed by the teachers. She stated,

> I feel there is some kind of a… a barrier between the teachers and I. And it is not because of the language, because most teachers know some Spanish or with my poor English I can understand a bit. When I ask them about how my child is doing, they just say 'oh… I cannot talk about your child's progress or 'if you want to know how your child is doing, check the grades posted on the wall [pointing at the wall].' How am I supposed to know what they mean? Every teacher seems to have different codes…

Lupe followed by stating,

> The problem is that they [the teachers] do not understand that as parents we request the time off from work or take the time to come to those events in hopes to find out about our students grades and behaviors. In elementary school, I used to get the chance each semester to sit with the teacher and go over my son's progress. ...it was nice to have the one-on-one time... Even when the teacher didn't know Spanish there was a translator who translated everything for me... and helped with the communication.

Lisa then added,

She is right; it appears that as they [the students] go higher, there is a less need for the

parents. However, we [the parents] need to be informed and we need to be able to talk to

the teacher even if it is for a few minutes so they can us how they are doing… but some

of the teachers just put an "x" between us and them [she crossed her arms forming an X].

These three mothers stated that they felt great coming to the office and talking to

counselors who seemed to be most helpful. In conclusion, non-English speaking Latino parents

reported feeling welcome at the school's office because they were welcomed with a warm smile

could be assisted in Spanish. On the other hand, parents appear not have the same welcoming

feelings from teachers due to the set routines and scripted school events.

Finding #5: Non-English Latino speaking parents need different involvement

opportunities. Conventional parent involvement activities include attending events such as

school orientations, back to school nights, and open houses. Every interview participant reported

attending School Orientations because they are mandatory for parents to attend. School

Orientation is an event that occurs every year at the school. This is when students turn in their

registration packet; get their class schedule, and textbook set.

Silvia stated,

When my eldest son attended this school I used to come to all the events but then I

realized they were all the same and ever since I `decided to only attend those that are

mandatory such as School Orientations which happen at the beginning of each year. "

She went on to state; "There is no point in coming to those events to have the teachers go

over procedures. I want to know how my student is doing and behaving in their classes"

Lupe added, "I agree and when I ask teachers about my son's grade, they [the teacher] point at a bunch of numbers that do not make sense at all." Then Lisa reaffirmed, "... If we ask about behavior they want us to call the school to schedule an appointment with them."

Silvia continued,

They do not give us the time... This is why I like that I get this time to tell someone like you [pointing to the researcher] about our concerns about how we feel... I used to like the parents meetings that Mrs. Rodriguez-Cruz [Pseudonym for school's community liaison] puts together. They were the most interesting to me back when my older children where here at this school. Now because I have a baby I am not able to participate in those, right Lupe?!

Lupe responded,

Yes, her [referring to Rodriguez-Cruz] parents sessions were good... she presented about how to read the report cards… we had no idea what GPA was, but I learned that it is important for graduation. She also brought in speakers that talked about how to advice and raise our children. But it is true what she [Silvia] says, we just do not have the interest anymore.

Researcher asked, "Why do you no longer attend those sessions?" Silvia responded, "Well they are the same every year, and it got to a point where I wasn't learning anything new and plus I got busier..."All parents who were interviewed stated that they did not attend most of the events because they do not have time due to other responsibilities such as work and family duties. Work hours were also the most common reason selected by surveyed parents.

Summary

        This chapter presented the qualitative and quantitative data collected through the phenomenological interviews and parent involvement questionnaires. A total of 33 non-English speaking parents participated in the study. Eleven participants shared details about their experience of being non-English speaking Latino parents of children at the middle school level and what they do to be actively involved in the education of their children. 22 non-English speaking parents received, completed and return a Parent Involvement questionnaire. The responses from the questionnaires and the interview questions were coded and analyzed in the search for possible answers to the leading questions of this investigation. After careful analysis, five primary themes were identified. First, there is discrepancy in the definition of parent involvement among the parents. Second, parents believe that one of their main roles is to motivate students. They so do by modeling behavior and storytelling. A third key finding is that it appears teachers are not communicating with non-English speaking parents. In addition, most non-English speaking Latino parents report feeling welcome by most personnel but they report a barrier greater than the language barrier that prevents them from having engaging conversation with teachers. Finally, there is a need for involvement opportunities that are different from the traditional back-to-school night, open houses, etc. Parents need involvement opportunities that have an educational or informative component and a space to be able to express their thoughts and concerns about the education of their children.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the causes that limit the participation of non-English speaking Latino parents at parent school activities and to characterize their commitment to the education of their children in secondary education. The study was conducted in a community that is prominently Latino, in the central coast valley of California. A total of 33 non-English speaking Latino parents participated in this study. The parents participated in one of three ways: (a) a one-on-on one interview, (b) a group interview or (c) they completed a paper questionnaire sent home. The data collected through the phenomenological interviews and questionnaires were analyzed to draw possible answers to the following questions:

- What activities and arrangements do non-English speaking Latino parents identify as their responsibility in supporting their children as students in public schools?

- What factors hinder their participation at school activities?

- What constitutes a welcoming school environment for Non-English Latino parents?

- Are parents who perceive their children's school as welcoming more involved than parents who don't feel their children's school is a welcoming environment?

The phenomenological interviews and sent-home surveys cross-validated the data since both methods collected evidence that supported five primary themes in relation to the research questions. These themes can be found in Figure 4.

Discussion

The positive effect of parent involvement in education cannot be denied. The participants of this study agreed that they play a key role as parents by being involved. In the current study,
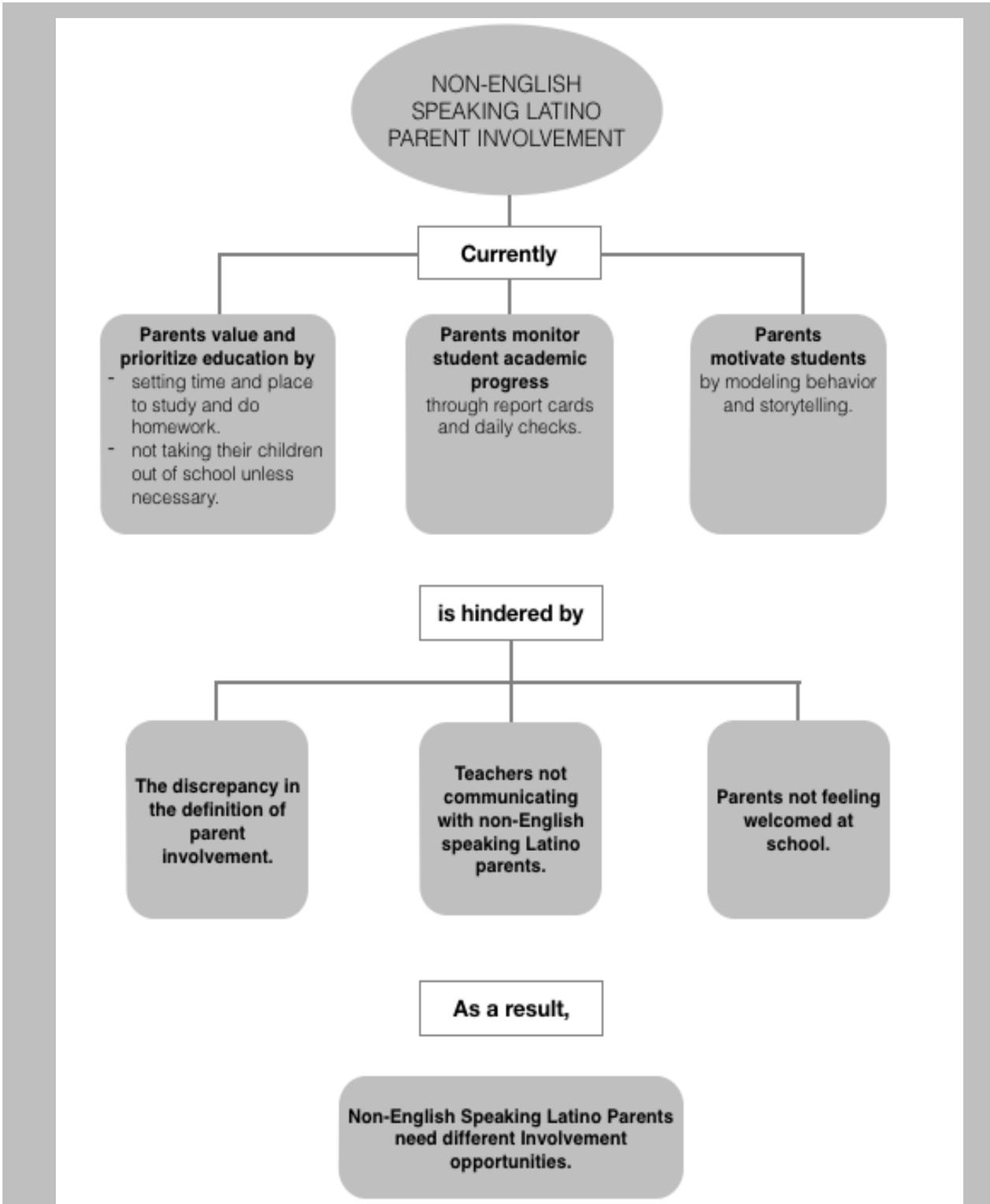
Figure 4. Visual representation of the themes and findings for this research.

parents appeared to play a role in the education of their children in one of three ways: (a)

prioritizing education, (b) monitoring academic progress and (c) motivating. First, parents

monitor students' progress through report cards, and daily check-ins. The vast majority of

parents, both interviewed and surveyed, reported that they of ask their students about what they

learned at school that day, check for their students' daily homework and ensure their students

have the necessary materials to do any school assignments. Several parents emphasized how they

set daily routines at home that gave priority to homework and provided time for their student to

study. In addition, non-English speaking Latino parents described the importance of grades and

reported knowing how to acquire the information and understanding the grading systems of their

students' teachers. Many parents mentioned that they monitor the GPA of their students because

they know of its importance as they move into high school and eventually college.

In addition to showing that they value education and monitoring student progress, parents

reported that the number one thing they can do as supportive and involved parents is to push and

motivate their children to do better. Non-English speaking Latino parents indicated the

importance of making sure their students stay motivated. They provide that motivation by

storytelling and modeling behavior. All parents mentioned expressing to their students that they

want them to do well in school so that they can obtain a better job or professional career than

their parents have. Parents hope their children will not have to work in jobs that are physically

laborious or pay low wages.

One parent, Maria, mentioned how she communicates and reminds her daughter of her

aspirations for her. She tells her daughter to get the best out of her education and the

opportunities it provides because although she had hoped to complete a higher level of education

in Mexico, her grandfather did not allow her to receive an education beyond fourth grade,

because he believed girls were meant to stay at home and learn how to take care of a family and home. However, to Maria, it is important that her daughter does well in school and obtains a higher degree. This is just an example of how parents share their aspirations with their children.

The actions mentioned above can be qualified as parent involvement. According to Trivette and Anderson's (1995), definition of parent involvement, these parents behaviors correlate with three out of the four categories. The parents set the home environment for their students to complete their assignments; they communicate their parental aspirations, and maintain parent-child communication about school. These are forms of informal parent involvement and as also reported by Padron, Waxman & Rivera, (2002) these are the ways Latino parents use to demonstrate their commitment to the success of their children's education.

The fourth category described by Trivette and Anderson (1995) is parental participation in school activities. Interestingly, when parents were asked to define parental involvement, they voiced the behaviors they do at home; none of the parents named attending and participating in parent school activities or events as a means of being involved. Out of the 11 parents that were interviewed, none referenced school events prior to being asked specifically about those events. They also reported they had not attended the current school year's parent events. As one of the teachers who was present during the 2014-2015 Back-to-School and Open House Night events, I can attest that none of the interviewed parents were present during those events. The time of the interview was the first time I interacted with any of these parents face-to-face.

The data collected through the parent involvement surveys also demonstrated a low percentage of parent participation. Fifteen out of 22 (68%) of the surveyed parents stated that they attended school activities. It was not specified whether this was based on the last two years their students have been at the middle school, or if they took into consideration the events they

attended when their children were in elementary school. The interviewees reported being more

frequently present at school and attending parent-teacher meetings when their children were at

elementary school. Additionally, parent-teacher meetings at the middle school are only

scheduled when a parent, teacher or counselor requests it. Usually these meetings occur, when

students have are having behavioral problems or are performing low academically.

Previous research has indicated that the formal parental involvement of Latino parents is

not as high, when compared to their other ethnic groups (Lee & Bowen, 2006). One of the

reasons why non-English speaking Latino parents are not participants of school activities is

because of language differences (Lee & Bowen, 2006; Lee et al., 2012). The participants of the

current study acknowledge that language is a barrier only when they try to help their children

with homework assignments. Furthermore, nine out of the interviewed parents stated that even if

the academic instruction was in Spanish they would still struggle to help their students with any

homework assignment as the curriculum is too rigorous and many of them only have an

elementary-level education. A participant, Juan, said "What my daughter is learning is much

more complicated than what I ever got to do in high school." Though they do not have the skills

to help them in English, most parents said that they make sure their children get help from older

siblings and encourage students to go ask for help from the teachers during lunch, before or after

school. In addition, the parents encourage the students to use the internet as a resource or go to

the library to get help. The parents in the study also reported that they did not feel language was

a barrier when communicating with school personnel which matches the findings by Zarate

(2007). The low presence or participation of non-English speaking parents in school activities

can be attributed to several factors that surfaced through the testimonies collected from the

parents (refer to Figure 4).

First, it is evident that there is a discrepancy in the definition of parent involvement. As stated above, parents recognized that their involvement is a must but their ways of being involved in the education of their children do not necessarily include being present at school meetings. They also understand that the teachers and administrators expect them to be involved but the parents were unable to state what they school expects from them.

The fact that they are not sure what is expected of them leads to the second hindering factor which is that parents perceive that teachers are not communicating with non-English speaking parents. Surprisingly, seven out of 11 parents reported not being contacted by a single teacher since they enrolled their children at the schools. They reported receiving school automated machine calls to remind them about school events or important reminders and information regarding general school guidelines. They mentioned feeling included because those messages were communicated in Spanish. However, they reported not having the chance to talk to the teachers of their children on a one-to-one basis. These results were also supported by the survey results which indicated that only 8 out of 22 (36.4 %) parents had been able to talk to all the teachers of their children. As reported by some of the interviewees, even though they try to make contact with the teacher and find out about the progress of their children, at events like back-to-school nights and open house, nothing at these events enables them to engage in conversation with the teachers. Parents appear to be discouraged from attending those events because the parents expect to be able to talk to the teachers about their students but teachers have set times of 15 minutes to do a presentation about class rules and routines and they disregard parent individual inquiries. As a result, parents do not find it worthwhile because it is the same routines, year after year.

Because of the fact that parents are dismissed with a simple message, such as "if you

want to talk about the progress about your children, call the office to make an appointment," the participants report feeling rejected at school. Silvia stated, "I feel there is some kind of... barrier between me and the teachers. And it is not because of the language." As a result, the last identified hindering factor is parent do feel but do not feel welcomed at the school. First of all, as parents they did not welcomed at the teacher's classroom and, as stated by one of them, there seems to be a great barrier in addition the culture and language barrier. The barrier they mention is the fact that school orientations, back-to-school nights and open houses, which are traditional and conventional parent involvement activities, have become structured events with set times in each classroom, and do not allow for parents and teachers to engage in conversation about their students.

Despite the fact that parents reported feeling unwelcome by teachers, they reported feeling welcomed at the front office by school personnel. Survey results also match by finding that 95.5% of the surveyed parents felt welcome with the exception of one parent who did not respond. When asked what entails a welcoming environment, interviewees mentioned being received by friendly staff that greet and smile every single time they come into the office. Parents mentioned that even when the front office attendant does not know Spanish they are able to find someone to assist them on their own native language, so they do not find it intimidating to visit the school. Survey results also collected similar information. These results refute the findings by Carreón et al. (2005) in which immigrant parents reported feeling disrespected, distant and confused about school's cultural world.

In addition, the vast majority of interviewed and surveyed parents stated that they had had the chance to meet and talk to the counselor of their children. The counseling team at the school site of 1,200 students is served by four counselors. All the counselors are Latinas and are

bilingual in English and Spanish; as a result, parents report feeling comfortable contacting them directly whenever needed. Patricia and Silvia stated their ability to be able to call or walk into the counselor's office to request their son's progress reports. It is important to remark that the counseling office at the school site is accessible to any parent as soon as they walk into the office. As a parent walks in they are welcomed by the front desk secretary and to their right they are able to see the office doors of each counselor. Andrea stated, "...it is very easy to just walk in and say the name of the counselor and they front desk secretary just lets you in."

In essence, the communication and feelings towards the school personnel varies depending on the type of personnel the parents interact with. However, it is of concern to know that parents do not have strong communication with teachers. After all, education should be a partnership in which the parents and teachers are in constant communication to ensure the success of the student. It appears that parents feel more comfortable approaching office personnel and counselors because they speak their language. As stated by Good et al. (2012) parent involvement is influenced by trust and mutual understanding from all parties and it is evident that the participants of the study trusted and felt more comfortable with counselors and office personnel than with teachers who seemed to lack communication skills and the understanding about their needs.

Another key finding of the study was that parents find that school-hosted events have become irrelevant to them. As previously mentioned, parents do not attend back-to-school and open house nights because they do not see the purpose of visiting teacher classrooms when they are not able to discuss student academic and behavior performance. Lisa and Silvia admitted to no longer being participants of parent events such as ELAC and Migrant meetings because the information provided is not relevant or they already know it. At one point, those meetings

seemed informative and educational for them but not anymore. Therefore, parent involvement event organizers such as community liaisons, EL specialists and school administrators should take notice of participating parents who may be losing interest, and engage them by having them participate in the event planning process. Another way for these parents to participate is to have them be the presenters or the facilitators of talks. Lee et al. (2012) also argue that parental involvement is mainly dependent on schools' commitment to connect with parents and to provide school-related information and programs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, non-English speaking Latino parents understand that they play a key role in the educational process and success of their children. Their parent involvement is done by advising, communicating, monitoring, supporting and motivating their children at home. Though their participation at school events is low and almost absent, this is not due to not caring about education. In fact, non-English speaking Latino parents do value education and make it a priority in their lives, believing that it will be the way for their children to obtain better opportunities than the ones they had. In addition, non-English speaking Latino parents are apparently not intimidated by language nor by the cultural differences. The fact is that these parents do not participate in formal parent involvement activities because they find no value in these events do not meet their needs. As a result, the schools have to find ways to make school events valuable to parents if they want these parents to be participants. Meanwhile, non-English Latino parents will continue to make their best efforts at home to ensure their children are nurtured and motivated to do well in school.

Implications and Recommendations

Parent involvement is considered a necessary component to students' academic success.

This study sought to take a deeper look into understanding the involvement of a specific group of parents who are often considered invisible at the school site and school district. The insights gained through this study can help the school site to be able to consider and generate new forms of parent involvement opportunities. The Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) required for the Local Control Formula Funding (LCFF), which is how the state of California determines how much funding is provided to the local educational agencies, establishes 8 areas as state priorities. The third priority in the list is parental involvement; this includes efforts "to seek parent input in making decisions for the school district and each individual school site, and including how the school district will promote parental participation in programs for unduplicated pupils and individuals with exceptional needs" (CSBA, 2013). In addition, the California Department of Education (2014) states, "Statute requires the inclusion of parents, including parents or legal guardians of targeted disadvantaged pupils in the planning and implementation of the LCFF." As a result, all schools in California need to understand the reasons that limit parents' participation and find ways to make them part of important decision-making processes such as the development of yearly LCAP.

Based on these findings, non-English speaking Latino parents are knowledgeable and understand the needs of their students. As a result, their opinions need to be heard, considered, and taken into account. However, administrators and other school officials will have to ensure that event invitations sent to parents are clear and state the importance of their presence; otherwise, these parents will believe that it is just another structured and irrelevant event they don't need to attend. As previously noted, many of the participants of this study were willing to participate in it because they were being given the opportunity to express themselves and share their opinions and ideas related to the education of their children. This sentiment was also

expressed from Latino parents that were participants of Delgado-Gaitan's (1991) parent-school empowerment process.

The recommended action plan is for school administrators to:

1. to provide a safe setting and opportunity for parents to be able to express their concerns and frustrations in their own language to school site representatives.

2. to provide non-structured opportunities for parents to be able to meet and talk with the teachers of their children, such as semestral teacher-parent conferences to share and discuss student successes and challenges.

3. to find ways to encourage teachers to communicate with parents even if the home language is marked as Spanish and the teacher is monolingual in English.

4. to provide parent involvement activities that are engaging and allow parents to partake in decision making.

5. to find ways to have informal parent-teacher interaction such as providing conversation tables in the mornings or afternoons.

Recommendations for Future Research

The parent involvement of non-English speaking parents is an understudied phenomenon, and understanding about their involvement is necessary to develop new opportunities to invite to all parents to participate in school regardless of their language proficiency. Further research should look into:

1. Comparing the parent involvement of non-English speaking Latino parents vs. English speaking Latino parents.

2. Examining school administrator and teachers' perceptions of parent involvement.

3. Investigating whether non-Spanish speaking teachers are less likely to call parents
    when the home language is marked as Spanish, and whether the availability of
    interpreters limits teacher-parent communication.

Summary

Parent involvement is a dynamic and complex process that is highly regarded as a key factor to student achievement. Although the participants in this study have different backgrounds and life experiences, they all they have similar reactions and feelings of responsibility towards the education of their children. This study confirm that non-English speaking Latino parents do care for and value the education of their children. The participants recognize education as a gateway for their children to obtain a more advantageous job and lifestyle. Furthermore, as parents of children in school, they acknowledged the importance of participating in the education process of their children. Parents also identified one of their responsibilities as being up to date and informed about the overall academic progress of their children. Finally they believe that as parents they need to motivate and make sure their children stay on track and meet all necessary requirements of their education.

There are barriers that limit their participation in school events, but those barriers do not include the most obvious barrier, language. Instead, parents named as barriers not feeling welcomed by teachers and very limited communication between teacher and parent even when parents show up to events at school. In addition, there is a discrepancy in the definition of parent involvement and no clear understanding about what schools expect from parents.

Finally, I must emphasize that these non-English speaking Latino parents may lack English skills and they are conscious that they have to overcome a big barrier to let their voices be heard and counted. When given the trust and space to share their stories and ideas, they

willingly do so, as demonstrated by 33 parents who willingly participated in this study. They shared an hour with me talking about their aspirations and private home life in hopes of helping me improve parent involvement opportunities. These parents care a great deal for their children, and education. They wish nothing but the best for them. As a result, these parents are willing to invest anything to ensure the success of their children, and it is up to the school officials to provide them with the proper tools and opportunities, so that together they work to achieve student success and eventually contribute to closing the Latino achievement gap.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Latino Parental Involvement Survey - English Version
Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. All information provided by you will remain anonymous and confidential. Your answers and opinions will be reports as part of a group.

Name:_____

1. What is your country of origin? _____
2. How long have you lived in the United States? _____
3. What is your current job position/profession? _____
4. Do you speak English? __ Yes   __ No   __ A little
5. In what language do you prefer to get information about your child's education?
      __ Spanish   __ English   __ Both
6. What is the primary language spoken in your home?
      __ Spanish __ English __ Both
7. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?
      __ Elementary School   __ Middle School
      __ High School   __ College/University
8. What is your current marital status?
      __ Single, never married   __ Single, engaged to be married
      __ Married   __ Separated
      __ Divorced   __ Widowed
9. How many children live with you? __ 1   __ 2   __ 3 __ 4 __ 5 ___ Other: ___

10. Which schools do your children attend?

      _____
      _____
      _____
      _____

The following question[1] are about your involvement and opinions about your child's

---

[1] The survey includes items from Conducting the Parent and Family Involvement Survey for your school(s): Instructions and Guidelines, Parent Involvement Project (PIP) Parent and Teacher Questionnaires and a dissertation by Subramaniam.

education. For each statement below, please check one answer that matches your opinion. Your responses will remain confidential.

1. I attend schools activities (school orientations, back to school night, etc).
   ___ agree   __ disagree

2. What activities do you and/or your spouse attend?
   __ School Orientations
   __ Back-to-School Nights
   __ Open House Nights
   __ Parent Teacher Conferences
   __ Migrant Parent Meetings
   __ ELAC Meetings
   __ PTA Meetings
   __ Other: _____
         (Please specify)

3. If you do not attend the activities above, what makes it difficult for you?
   __ not having transportation
   __ not having child care
   __ needing an interpreter/translator
   __ my work hours/schedule
   __ inconvenient meeting time
   __ not knowing when the events take place.
   __ other responsibilities: _____

4. I make sure that my child completes his or her homework.   ___ agree   __ disagree

5. I ask my child what he or she is learning at school.   ___ agree   __ disagree

6. I get most of my information about my child's progress from report cards

                                                               ___ agree   __ disagree

7. I understand the grading system of the school.   ___ agree   __ disagree

8. I am able to contact my child's teacher's easily.   ___ agree   __ disagree

9. I know the process to contact my child's teachers.   ___ agree   __ disagree

10. I feel welcomed at the school.   ___ agree   __ disagree

11. I feel the office personnel is friendly and approachable. ___ agree   __ disagree

12. I am able to be assisted in Spanish when I walk into the school's office.

                                                               ___ agree   __ disagree

13. I have had the opportunity to talk to principal and assistant principals.

                                                               ___ agree   __ disagree

14. I have had the opportunity to talk to my child's counselor. ___ agree ___ disagree

15. I have had the opportunity to talk to all the teachers my child has.

                                              ___ agree ___ disagree

16. I enjoy attending school events and parent   ___ agree ___ disagree

17. How often do you let your child miss school days?
    __ My child does not miss school days.
    __ about once a week
    __ about once a month
    __ about twice a year
    __ about once a year
    __ during Latino holidays
    __ during Holidays of my country: _____

18. How often do you take your child(ren) out of school?
    __ I never take out my child out of school.
    __ about once a week
    __ about once a month
    __ about twice a year
    __ about once a year
    __ during Latino holidays
    __ during Holidays of my country: _____

17. What are the reasons you take your child(ren) out of school? (Check all that apply)
    __ To go to doctor appointments.
    __ To attend religious events.
    __ To attend family related events.
    __ When he or she is sick.
    __ To help me with a sick child.
    __ To help me at home.
    __ For family Emergencies (funerals, sickness).
    __ To celebrate other holidays that are not celebrated by school.
    __ To go out on vacation.

18. When you take your child(ren) out of school, how long does your child(ren) usually stay out of school?
    __ 1-2 days
    __ 3-5 days
    __ 1 week
    __ More than 1 week
    __ Does not apply

19. Is there anything else about your parental involvement you would like to add?

_____
_____
_____

Latino Parental Involvement Survey - Spanish Version
Encuesta de Participación de los Padres Latinos

Gracias por tomarse el tiempo para completar esta encuesta. Toda la información proporcionada por usted permanecerá anónima y confidencial. Sus respuestas y opiniones serán informes como parte de un grupo.

Nombre:_____

1. ¿Cuál es su país de origen? _____

2. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha vivido en los Estados Unidos? _____

3. ¿Cuál es su actual puesto de trabajo / profesión? _____

4. ¿Habla usted Inglés?   __ Sí   __ No   __ Un poco

5. ¿En qué idioma prefiere para obtener información acerca de la educación de su hijo?

    __ Español   __ Inglés   __ Ambos

6. ¿Cuál es el idioma principal que se habla en su casa?

    __ Español   __ Inglés   __ Ambos

7. ¿Cuál es el nivel más alto de educación que ha completado?

    __ Escuela Primaria   __ Escuela Intermedia

    __ Escuela Secundaria   __ Colegio / Universidad

8. ¿Cuál es su estado civil actual?

    __ Soltero/a, nunca casado   __ Soltero/a, acompañado/a

    __ Casado   __ Separado

    __ Divorciado   __ Viudo

9. ¿Cuántos niños viven con usted?   __ 1 __ 2 __ 3 __ 4 __ 5 ___ Otro: _____

10. ¿A qué escuelas asisten sus hijos?

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

Las siguientes preguntas son acerca de su participación y opiniones sobre la educación de su hijo. Para cada declaración, por favor marque una respuesta que coincide con su opinión. Sus respuestas serán confidenciales.

1. Yo asisto a las actividades escolares (orientaciones, De Regreso a la escuela, reuniones de padres, etc). ___ De acuerdo ___ En desacuerdo

2. ¿A qué actividades escolares ha asistido usted o su pareja?
   __ Orientaciones a principio de año escolar
   __ Noche De Regreso a la Escuela (Back to School Night)
   __ Casa Abierta (Open House Night)
   __ Conferencias de Padres y Maestros
   __ Reuniones de Padres Migrantes
   __ Reuniones de ELAC
   __ Reuniones de la PTA
   __ Otro: _____
   (Por favor especificar)

3. Si usted no asiste a las actividades mencionadas arriba, que le impide o le hace difícil asistir?
   __ No tener transporte
   __ No tener cuidado de niños
   __ Necesito un intérprete / traductor
   __ Mis horas de trabajo / horario
   __ El horario es inconveniente
   __ No saber cuando se llevan a cabo los eventos.
   __ Otras razones (Explique):
   _____
   _____

4. Yo me aseguro de que mi hijo termine su tarea.
   ___ De acuerdo ___ En desacuerdo

5. Mi hijo/a y yo hablamos acerca de lo que él o ella está aprendiendo en la escuela.
   ___ De acuerdo ___ En desacuerdo

6. Yo recibo información sobre el progreso de mi niño por medio de las boletas de calificaciones.

___ De acuerdo   ___ En desacuerdo

7. Yo entiendo el sistema de calificaciones de la escuela.
    ___ De acuerdo   ___ En desacuerdo

8. Yo puedo comunicarme con el maestro de mi hijo con facilidad.
    ___ De acuerdo   ___ En desacuerdo

9. Yo sé el proceso de como contactar los maestros de mi hijo.
    ___ De acuerdo   ___ En desacuerdo

10. Yo me siento bienvenido/a en la escuela.
    ___ De acuerdo   ___ En desacuerdo

11. Siento que el personal de la oficina es amable y accesible.
    ___ De acuerdo   ___ En desacuerdo

12. Cuando entro a la oficina de la escuela, siempre hay alguien que me puede asistir en
    español.
    ___ De acuerdo   ___ En desacuerdo

13. Yo he tenido la oportunidad de hablar con director y las subdirectoras.
    ___ De acuerdo   ___ En desacuerdo

14. Yo he tenido la oportunidad de hablar con la consejera de mi hijo/a.
    ___ De acuerdo   ___ En desacuerdo

15. Yo he tenido la oportunidad de hablar con todos los maestros de mi hijo/a.
    ___ De acuerdo   ___ En desacuerdo

16. A mi me gusta asistir a los eventos escolares para padres.
    ___ De acuerdo   ___ En desacuerdo

17. ¿Con qué frecuencia usted deja a su hijo/hija pierda días de clases?
    __ Mi hijo no pierde días de clases
    __ Aproximadamente una vez a la semana
    __ Aproximadamente una vez al mes
    __ Unas dos veces al año
    __ Aproximadamente una vez al año

__ Durante eventos de mi país: _____

18. ¿Con qué frecuencia saca a su hijo/a de clase?
__ Yo nunca sacó mi hijo/a de la escuela.
__ Aproximadamente una vez a la semana
__ Aproximadamente una vez al mes
__ Unas dos veces al año
__ Aproximadamente una vez al año
__ Durante las vacaciones de mi país: _____

19. ¿Cuáles son las razones que toma su hijo (a) de la escuela? (Marque todo lo que
    corresponda)
__ Para ir a citas con el médico.
__ Asistir a eventos religiosos.
__ Cuando él o ella está enferma.
__ Para asistir a eventos relacionados con la familia.
__ Para ayudarme con un niño enfermo.
__ Para ayudarme en casa.
__ Para salir de vacaciones.
__ Para Emergencias familiares (funerales, enfermedad).
__ Para celebrar eventos que no se celebran por la escuela.
__ Otro:_____

20. Cuando saca a su hijo/hija de la escuela, ¿cuánto tiempo permite que su hijo/a pueda estar
    fuera de la escuela?
    __ 1-2 días
    __ 3-5 días
    __ 1 semana
    __ Más de 1 semana
    __ No aplica

21. ¿Hay algo más acerca de su participación en la educación de su hijo/a que le gustaría
    añadir?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Muchas gracias por su participación.

Appendix B

Semi-Structure Interview Questions[2]

Part I: Demographics

1. What is your country of origin?
   ¿Cuál es su país de origen?

2. How long have you lived in the United States?
   ¿Cuánto tiempo ha vivido en los Estados Unidos?

3. What is your current job position/profession?
   ¿Cuál es su actual puesto de trabajo / profesión?

4. What is your marital status?
   ¿Cuál es su estado civil actual?

5. How many children do you have and what grade are in?
   ¿Cuántos niños viven con usted y que grado cursan?

Part II: Interview Questions

1. How would you define parental involvement?
   ¿Cómo define usted el involucramiento de padres en la educación de sus hijos?

2. What do you think is the impact of parent involvement on the education of your child?
   ¿Que impacto tiene el involucramiento de los padres en la educación de sus hijos?

3. What do you think are the school's expectations for your involvement?
   ¿Cree usted que la escuela tiene expectativas de su involucramiento?

4. What do you to support your student? How are you involved?
   ¿Qué es lo que usted hace para apoyar a su hijo/a en lo academico? ¿De qué manera está usted involucrado?

5. How often do you take your child(ren) out of school?

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[2] Some of the interview questions come from Barriers to and Facilitators of Latino Parent Involvement: One Georgia District's Perspective, a dissertation by Subramaniam.

¿Con qué frecuencia saca usted a su hijo/a de la escuela?

6. In what ways, does the school encourage your participation in your child's education?
   ¿De qué manera la escuela promueve su participación en la educación de su hijo/a?

7. In what ways does the school discourage your participation in your child's education?
   ¿De qué manera la escuela impide su participación en la educación de su hijo?

8. Do you feel welcomed at school?
   ¿Se siente bienvenido en la escuela?

9. Do you know you can visit your child's classrooms?
   ¿Sabía usted que puede visitar los salones de clase de su hijo/a?

10. Do you think that the personnel at school is friendly and approachable?
    ¿Cree usted que el personal de la escuela es amable y accesible?

11. Have other parents talked with you about their experience at this school?
    ¿Ha hablado usted con otros padres acerca de su experiencia en esta escuela?

12. Is there anything else about your parental involvement you would like to add?
    ¿Hay algo más acerca de su participación en la educación de su hijo/a que le gustaría añadir?

Appendix C

Parent Language Survey

Name: _____ Period: _____

Answer the following questions.

1. I speak
   a. Only English
   b. Only Spanish
   c. Both English/Spanish
   d. Other: _____

2. My Mother/Guardian speaks
   a. Only English
   b. Only Spanish
   c. Both English/Spanish
   d. Other: _____

3. My Father/Guardian speaks
   a. Only English
   b. Only Spanish
   c. Both English/Spanish
   d. Other: _____

4. My parent(s) asks me what I did in class.
   a. everyday
   b. sometimes
   c. never

5. My parent(s) check my homework.
   a. everyday
   b. sometimes
   c. never