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## THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL LIFE EXPERIENCES ON THE EXPECTATIONS, ASPIRATIONS, AND DEFINITION OF SUCCESS OF HISPANIC IMMIGRANT PARENTS FOR THEIR CHILDREN

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THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL LIFE EXPERIENCES ON THE EXPECTATIONS,  
ASPIRATIONS, AND DEFINITION OF SUCCESS OF HISPANIC IMMIGRANT  
PARENTS FOR THEIR CHILDREN

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A Dissertation

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THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL LIFE EXPERIENCES ON THE EXPECTATIONS,  
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Anna M. Rocco, Ed.D.

Western Connecticut State University

Abstract

The Hispanic population has become the fastest growing minority population in the United States. Hispanics have the highest high school dropout rate of all demographic groups accounted for in the United States in the most recent census. Reflecting on the import of those two factors and the changing demographics of our school populations across the United States it is imperative to consider the expectations and aspirations held by Hispanic immigrant parents for their children.

This qualitative study explored through case studies the development of parent expectations and aspirations, and the influence of the parents' own personal life experiences, particularly in their own education, on those expectations and aspirations. This study further explored the meaning of "success" through the lens of Hispanic immigrants and how that definition transferred to the children of the parents within this study. The purpose of this study was to give opportunity for the personal experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents to be heard as they shared their personal perspectives of the wishes and dreams that they hold for their US born or next generation children and the influence that their own personal experiences have had on their perspectives.

Data indicated that personal life experiences of participants had a significant effect on the way in which expectations and aspirations are developed and communicated to their children in schools in the United States as well as the ways in which success was identified. Cultural environment and conditions of chronic poverty played an important role in the development of participants' identities. The development of personal identity and self-concept in turn influenced the ways in which participants identified expectations and aspirations for their children. Personal identity and self-concept additionally influenced the manner in which participants defined success.

The findings of this research show that participants identified academic attainment as an expectation and aspiration for their children. Participants viewed academic attainment as a path to a better quality of life but defined academic attainment in multiple ways such as, attend college, earn degrees, and have careers. In contrast, some participants described academic attainment as "study." This may be explained by the significant differences in educational systems in Latin American and Caribbean countries and the United States. This may also be reflective of the conditions of chronic poverty participants reported living in.

Participants also expressed having limited opportunities in their countries of origin. Theories of identity discuss the importance of the availability of opportunities throughout the stage of adolescence and the ability to successfully negotiate crisis during this time as critical in the development of identity and ego development. Participants who have not had these experiences in their home countries may face challenges when supporting their children through exploration of opportunities particularly in adolescence. These challenges may be present because parents have not had the personal experience of navigating through adolescent exploration or because this may be in contrast to cultural beliefs.

This research indicates that it is imperative for community agencies, particularly schools, to understand the influence of personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents. Environments of respect for and understanding of culture must be in place to encourage the involvement of Hispanic immigrant parents. Through this research it becomes evident that parents who have had lower levels of academic attainment and/or academic success and may or may not have successfully negotiated resolutions to crisis in developmental stages may need opportunities to gain success through school or community-based activities of their choosing. It is crucial that immigrant parents are given a voice in the type of opportunities offered to them to provide support in the highest degrees. Opportunities cannot be offered based on what the dominant culture or structures deem to be the need. Bringing immigrant adults together to learn, particularly skills related to the success of their children, supports the building of community, personal pride, and leadership, further fostering the development of self-esteem and self-efficacy.

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2014

APPROVAL PAGE



*School of Professional Studies  
Department of Education and Educational Psychology  
Doctor of Education in Instructional Leadership*

Doctor of Education Dissertation

THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL LIFE EXPERIENCES ON THE EXPECTATIONS,  
ASPIRATIONS, AND DEFINITION OF SUCCESS OF HISPANIC IMMIGRANT PARENTS  
FOR THEIR CHILDREN

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my husband John who kept reminding me of why I started this in the first place. Thanks for all the motivational speeches. You kept me going when I wanted to quit. You learned to cook and clean so I had more time to write. Now that I know you can do it though...

To my son Dan, I hope my work through this process showed you that we are all trying to figure out what we want to be when we grow up. Stay the course and you will accomplish whatever you dream possible. Thanks for making me laugh.

Lastly, this work is dedicated to my mom who taught me that strong women can do anything they set their minds to.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

According to the Pew Hispanic Center, in 2011 Hispanic children comprised 23.9% of the K-12 enrollment in U.S. schools with one-in-four (24.7%) public elementary school students being of Hispanic origin (Fry & Lopez, 2012). The 2010 U.S. Census identified 35% of the population under the age of eighteen as Hispanic. Between the years of 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic population in the United States increased by 44%. The changing demographics of the national population are similarly reflected in the demographics of the district in which this research took place.

Immigration status, poverty, and level of education of parents have a strong impact on the way educational systems are viewed by parents (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). To meet the needs of the families that are served in the district, efforts should be made to more closely examine the cultural values and beliefs Hispanic immigrant parents hold that influence the way success is defined for their children as well as their expectations for the educational attainment of their children. Without an understanding of the importance of these cultural values and beliefs of Hispanic immigrant parents on their expectations for their children as well as their definition of success for their children, educators are essentially left to presume that they know what the parental expectations are, based on the cultural norms in place concomitantly within the school structure. This lack of understanding leads to the presumption that there is one acceptable definition of success as well as one acceptable level of educational attainment.

The purpose of this study was to identify, through the personal narratives of Hispanic immigrant parents, the influence of personal life experiences in their native countries on the

way in which they define their aspirations educational expectations for their children. The study further explored the definition of success they hold.

### **Rationale for Selecting the Topic**

In a report appearing in Education Week, Swanson (2012) stated that high school graduation rates of public school students in the class of 2009 increased to 72%. This is the highest rate of graduation since the 1980s and a 7% increase over the prior 10 years. According to the U. S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 2011 report, Asian and Caucasian students held the highest four-year high school graduation rates, 95% and 94%, respectively. Hispanic students had graduation rates of 71%, while 88% of African American students earned high school diplomas in 2010. The NCES report from the 2010 U.S. Census revealed large discrepancies in high school dropout rates between Caucasian students born in the United States and Hispanic students born in the United States, 6.1% and 11.5%, respectively (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2007). Dropout rates for foreign-born students showed even greater disparities with Caucasian students at 5.4% and Hispanic students at 34.3%. The 2009-2010 Strategic School Profile from the participating district reported graduation rates of 78% for Asian students, 79% for African American students, 82% for Caucasian students, and 61% for Hispanic students. Additional district data indicated dropout rates of 23% and 13% for Hispanic and Caucasian students, respectively. These discrepancies in national and local achievement levels between Hispanic and Caucasian students raised questions and highlighted the importance of considering the need for a greater understanding of factors influencing the expectations and aspirations of Hispanic immigrant parents for their children.

## **Statement of the Problem**

There are many factors that influence student achievement. Student ability, poverty, living conditions, and parent level of educational attainment are all important considerations when examining and defining student success. Research is available on the importance of the role of parents in student success in school. This includes parents' ability to provide encouragement, support at home, and an interest in their child's academic achievement (Epstein, 2001). According to Henderson and Mapp, "The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a major influence on their children's achievement in school and through life" (2002, p. 7). Research is available on the effects of parental expectations on a child's success; what is lacking in the research is the foundational information on the influence of personal life experiences on the development of Hispanic immigrant parents' expectations and aspirations for their children in the US.

Delgado-Gaitan (1987) suggested that inaccuracies in the perceptions of school personnel regarding the lack of willingness of Hispanic immigrant parents to be engaged in their child's education interfere with the development of relationships between school and families. In reality, these misperceptions may be a reflection of the misunderstanding or limited knowledge educators have of cultural beliefs, along with social and historical experiences, that Hispanic immigrant parents may hold. This may also result in school personnel viewing these parents as deficient in their parenting or support of their child in school.

A great deal of research has been done on the relationship of immigrant families and schools, parent involvement, student achievement, and creating multicultural learning communities (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Epstein, 2001; Olivos, Jimenez-Castellanos &

Ochoa, 2011; Ramirez, 2003; Torres, 2009; Valdes, 1996). Most of this research, however, comes from the perspective of the school. This perspective too often, though inadvertently, looks at Hispanic immigrant parents and Hispanic students through the lens of deficiency. According to Epstein (2001) many of today's educators enter schools with an inadequate understanding of the diverse backgrounds, cultures, languages, and social structures of the students and families with whom they work. Without this knowledge they cannot fully understand parents' expectations for their children. Without an understanding of the expectations parents have for their children, teachers cannot be responsive to those expectations. Valdes (1996) argued that many of the programs developed for immigrant parents are derived from what he calls the "deficit-difference paradigm." Valdes also asserted that this way of thinking assumes that non-White parents need to be helped to be more like their White middle-class counterparts.

In an ethnographic study by Chrispeels and Rivero (2001) cultural practices of parents participating in the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) were examined. They found that many immigrant parents bring a concept of their role in the education of their child based on their own school experiences, deeply ingrained cultural beliefs, and patterns of behavior. The parents' perception of their role in supporting their child often was in conflict with how school staff defined "good" parenting. These conflicts of perceptions often led to the misunderstanding that Hispanic families did not sufficiently value their child's education. The need to clarify these misunderstandings further supports this research on the foundational underpinnings of how the expectations and aspirations for children of Hispanic immigrants are influenced.

Research is emerging on the importance of immigrant parents' expectations and aspirations for their children, but little exists on the personal experiences of Hispanic immigrant families that influence their expectations and aspirations for their children. A 2012 search of the EBSCO database using 27 different forms of topic-generic search terms related to this research yielded 2,352 results. When adding the clarifying terms "Hispanic" or "immigrant" the results dropped to 40 items. Of the 40 resulting articles, three were related to the connection between the academic expectations of Hispanic parents for their children and success in school. None of the articles were within the scope of this proposed research, relating to how the expectations of Hispanic parents were influenced by cultural or personal life experiences.

### **Potential Benefits of the Research**

Current research is lacking the context of personal life experiences that the voices of Hispanic immigrant parents bring to support a greater understanding of how their expectations and aspirations for their children in school in the United States are influenced. The personal knowledge that Hispanic immigrant parents share of their own school experiences, their academic opportunities, and the messages and encouragement they received from their own families can bring insight to the expectations and aspirations that Hispanic immigrant parents hold for their children. Research adds to the discussion of the expectations and aspirations of Hispanic immigrant parents, but lacks the context of personal life experiences that the voice of the Hispanic immigrant parent brings for a greater understanding of how those expectations and aspirations were formed.

Maintaining unclear perspectives of parental expectations as well as limited understanding of the personal life experiences of parents may lead to a misinterpretation or

misjudgment of parents' desire to support their children and a misunderstanding of parents' expectations and aspirations for their children in schools. Key factors that define expectations and aspirations of Hispanic immigrant parents, from the parent perspective, must be heard through their own personal experiences.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

The following terms are relevant to this study:

1. *Confianza* is the mutual respect for cultural differences contributing to social relationships and the development of trust between individuals (De la Vega, 2007).
2. *Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT)* is a later version of Grounded Theory developed by Bryant (2002) and Charmaz (2011). CGT is rooted in pragmatism and assumes that neither data nor theories are discovered, but are constructed by the researcher as a result of his or her interactions with the field and its participants. Data are co-constructed by researcher and participants of the study, and “colored” by the researcher’s perspectives and interactions with participants. CGT assumes multiple realities and multiple perspectives on these realities (Charmaz, 2011). Charmaz (2011) encourages grounded theorists to incorporate the multiple voices and views of participants in expressing their lived experiences.
3. *Grounded Theory (GT)* is a “methodology for analyzing qualitative data in order to understand human processes and to construct theory grounded in the data, from the ground up” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 6).
4. *Hispanic* refers to people who classify themselves in one of the specific Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino/a categories including those whose origins are from Spain,



and the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America (U. S. Census, 2010). The Pew Hispanic Center (Fry & Lopez, 2012) reports that the terms *Latino* or *Hispanic* are a matter of personal preference. Most families prefer to identify themselves by their country of origin. For the purposes of this research the term *Hispanic* will be used because it is the term most frequently used in the community in which this study took place and participants in this study are from multiple countries of origin.

5. *Historical Experiences* refers to the personal life experiences of the participant throughout their own history.
6. *Parent* refers to the adult who is responsible for the care and support of the child. If a legal parent/guardian identified another adult as an advocate for the social and emotional support of the child and requested the adult be included in this study that person was included in the interview with the parent.
7. *Parent aspirations* refer to the ideal level of achievement (academic, social, financial) the parent would like the child to attain (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001).
8. *Parent expectations* refer to the realistic level of achievement (academic, social, financial) the parent believes the child will attain (Goldenberg et al., 2001).

## **Overview of the Methodology**

### **Research Questions**

Using a qualitative approach, this research addressed the following questions:

1. What expectations and aspirations do Hispanic immigrant parents have for their child's educational attainment?

2. In what ways do the personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents influence their families' experiences?
3. How do Hispanic immigrant parents define "success" for their child?
4. How do the family structures of Hispanic immigrants support the expectations and aspirations that parents have for their children?

### **Research Design**

The research was a qualitative design using multiple case studies in grounded theory. The multiple case study approach is defined as an in-depth study of two or more subjects through which the researcher examines a particular event or phenomenon. Research takes place in a context that reflects the real life experiences and perspectives of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Gall, Gall, & Borg 2007; Saldaña, 2011). Case study was selected as a vehicle to elicit stories from Hispanic immigrant parents that supported the understanding of how Hispanic immigrant parents define success for their children and the aspirations and expectations that they hold for their children. Interview questions clarified the influence of parents' personal experiences in school and their own lives on expectations and aspirations for their children. Additionally, an intention of the interview questions was to clarify how Hispanic immigrant parents define "success."

This researcher did not seek to verify a particular theory, but rather sought to discover emerging theory grounded in the data obtained from the voices of the participants (Glaser & Strauss, 2012). This research study was an attempt to understand and develop theory relative to how the personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents influence their expectations and aspirations for their children as well as how they define "success" for their children.

## **Participants and Setting**

The research took place in a large urban school district (10,300 students) in the Northeast. According to the 2009-2010 Strategic Schools Profile (SSP) of the district, 33% of students were eligible for free or reduced lunch services, and 19% of students received English Language Learner (ELL) support. The school district's SSP report identified 47.1% of the district population as Caucasian, 35% Hispanic, 8.1% Asian American, 9.7% African American, and .1% as American Indian. Of the student body, 39% of students came from homes where English is not the primary language spoken.

A purposeful sample was selected from parents participating in a voluntary district-sponsored program for Hispanic parents of school-aged children. Parents in the district program were asked to complete a demographic survey (see Appendices A and B). After completing the survey, parents were invited to participate in the study.

## **Procedures**

Following the completion of the demographic surveys and consent forms (see Appendices C and D), open-ended interviews (Appendix E) with participants took place. All interview sessions were recorded, transcribed, and translated. The transcribed interviews were then coded for emerging themes. Additional interviews were held as necessary to clarify any questions or gain additional information.

## **Chapter Summary**

The purpose of this study was to identify the influence of personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents on the definition of success they hold for their children. In addition, this research explores the influence of personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents on their educational expectations and aspirations for their children. It is

hoped that this research will be used to support schools' understanding of Hispanic parents and the perspective that they bring to the education of their children.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Through the personal narratives of participants, this qualitative research study described: (a) the ways in which the personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents influenced their families in the United States, (b) the expectations and aspirations participants held for their children, (c) how participants viewed success for their child, and (d) how family structures supported the expectations and aspirations held by the participants for their children. After completion of coding and identification of five themes a thorough review of the literature to support this study was conducted.

The initial sections of the review of related literature provide an overview of Erickson's (1963) stages of psychosocial theory of identity development, the underlying theoretical framework for this research, as well as additional research on Erikson's stages. The latter sections review the related research on immigration, poverty, success, expectations and aspirations, and being somebody – factors that influence immigrant behaviors.

### **Erikson's Stages of Identity Development**

Erik Erikson was one of the first to develop a theory of identity. According to Erikson (1963), personal identity is based on two observations occurring simultaneously: the ability of a person to identify his or her personal sameness and continuity over time and place, while at the same time understanding that others recognize an individual's sameness and continuity over time and place. An individual's awareness of this ability is what Erikson proposed to call ego identity (Erikson, 1980). Erikson posited that developing an identity is a lifelong process with substantive growth emerging in adolescence and continuing throughout adulthood (Syed, Azmitia, & Cooper, 2011).

## **Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development**

At the heart of Erikson's theory is the idea that a healthy ego identity can only be achieved by the successful resolution of developmental conflicts or crises presented at each of a series of eight psychosocial stages over an individual's lifespan. Erikson uses the term crisis to indicate that this time represents the potential for radical change of perspective of the individual (Erikson, 1980). Based on Erikson's (1980) epigenetic principle, each stage offers a period for psychosocial development however; each aspect of a stage may be presented in earlier stages or in later stages to be mastered with greater maturity (Beaumont & Pratt, 2011). The eight psychosocial stages defined by Erikson are:

1. trust vs. mistrust (birth to 18 months of age)
2. autonomy vs. shame and doubt (2-3 years of age)
3. initiative vs. guilt (3-5 years of age)
4. industry vs. inferiority (6-11 years of age)
5. identity vs. role confusion (12-18 years of age)
6. intimacy vs. isolation (10-40 years of age)
7. generativity vs. stagnation (40-65 years of age)
8. ego integrity vs. despair (65 years of age-death)

If an individual is unable to successfully resolve the crisis within the stage presented, each successive stage will challenge the individual further. The unsuccessful resolution of these challenges decreases the likelihood of achieving positive ego quality at each stage (Jenkins, Buboltz, Schwartz, & Johnson, 2005). Developmental psychologists' work involves documenting change over time in the development of ego identity and includes how earlier experiences predict later outcomes and can alter developmental paths that are taken by

individuals (Syed et al., 2011). Erikson (1980) further suggested analysis of ego must include the individual's ego identity in relation to historical variations influencing his or her childhood environment.

Stages one through four are related to the stages of childhood. Erikson (1980) refers to the school age stage, stage four, as a "most socially decisive stage" (p. 93), in which a child begins to feel that his or her social worth is based on the desire to work hard for opportunities and his or her will to learn rather than on family history, ethnicity, or material possessions. If this understanding is not acquired the future of the child's sense of identity may be threatened.

Stage five of Erikson's theory focuses on adolescence, ages 12 to 18. During this stage a sense of self and personal identity are beginning to develop supported by healthy relationships with those people around the teen. Adolescence, according to Erikson (1980) was a time for young people to reflect on what their life would become, what job they would hold, what relationships they would have, what beliefs and values they would stay true to. It is during this stage that children become more and more independent, looking at the future in terms of career, relationships, and family. Individuals begin to explore opportunities available to them and begin to form their personal identity based on the success or failures of those explorations (Erikson, 1963).

Erikson's (1963) last three stages refer to the stages of adulthood encompassing young adulthood through death. Individuals seek to form relationships with others. Success leads to healthy relationships while failure to establish relationships may lead to isolation and feelings of loneliness. Progressing further into adulthood, individuals seek opportunities to create and/or nurture things that will outlast them. This can be achieved by having children,

in effect establishing and guiding the next generation, or by the individual creating positive change in their community or world to benefit others. Success at this stage leads to feelings of accomplishment, value, and usefulness. Failure to succeed at this stage can lead to self-indulgent behaviors or the inability to see beyond self to a collective greater good. The final stage is a stage of reflection on the individual's own life. It is the acceptance of one's own life and the significant people in it. Success at this stage results in the ability to feel fulfilled and hold a sense of integrity. Failure at this stage can lead to feelings of despair or contempt of self (Erikson, 1963).

### **Psychosocial Balance in Early and Middle Adulthood**

In a 2011 study by Beaumont and Pratt, identity styles and Erikson's psychosocial balance were examined in young adults. The goal of the research was to examine the role of individual differences in identity processing styles for psychosocial balance in terms of Erikson's stages five, six, and seven – identity, intimacy, and generativity specific to early and middle adulthood. Identity formation is a dynamic process involving self-reflection and identification of the meaning of one's life in relation to an individual's connections to the people and community around them. The goal is greater differentiation and connection to others (Beaumont & Pratt, 2011; Erikson, 1968). When an individual has difficulty establishing this identity in earlier years the individual will have difficulty managing crises in future psychosocial stages and in developing a sense of well-being because the ego has not developed a coherent framework around which to function (Erikson, 1968). Referencing the work of Erikson (1963), the authors state that the crises following the identity stage, intimacy versus isolation, and generativity versus despair, are periods crucial for developing connections to others. The young adult at these stages must develop a balance between



social and personal demands that may be in opposition to each other (Beaumont & Pratt, 2011). In the stage of generativity versus despair individuals must further face these conflicting demands when developing strategies to make contributions to their children (the next generation). According to Erikson if one is unable to find balance between internal and external demands to make meaningful contributions to the well being of their children, the resulting outcome is a sense of despair.

### **Cultural Differences**

It is important to note that the preponderance of research related to Erikson's stages of psychosocial development is specific to the identification of self in terms of Western culture, particularly the United States. Little research exists on the stages of psychosocial development in countries in Latin America. Referencing the work of Schlegel and Barry (1991), Arnett (2000) posits that although adolescence as a life stage is seen as universal, a further life stage between Erikson's adolescence and young adulthood, termed youth, by Schlegel and Barry (1991) existed in only 20% of cultures included in their study. Cultural beliefs and expectations, as well as limitations in education and occupational opportunities can impact the possibilities for exploration in individual lives necessary to the formation of personal identity (Arnett, 2000).

Arnett (2000) also noted that there continues to be a cultural divide between urban and rural areas in developing countries. For example, in China and India young people in urban areas are more likely to experience opportunities for exploration because they marry later, have children later, and have higher levels of education. Contrasting this, young people in rural areas of developing countries like Ecuador, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic have fewer educational opportunities, have children earlier, and have fewer occupational

choices besides agricultural work. Arnett (2000) further posits that psychosocial experiences in underdeveloped countries such as: instability of residence, relationships, and work; identity, feeling of belonging, and envisioning possibilities for the future, may be related at the individual level to unresolved crises in emerging adulthood.

Galambos and Martínez (2007) further explored this concept suggesting that data sources indicate that some individuals in Latin America are able to pursue lifestyle options or delay marriage and children. The data further suggested that these individuals are more likely to be from more developed Latin American countries, wealthier families, and living in urban areas. In contrast, “For many Latin American youth confronted with poverty, child marriage, and inadequate educational and occupational opportunities, emerging adulthood will unfold quite differently” (Galambos & Martínez, 2007, p. 109).

According to Galambos and Martínez (2007) the international community has recognized the importance of learning and understanding, to a greater degree, regarding the transition to adulthood by youth in developing countries. This understanding has led to the beginning of social policies and programs through goals related to the promotion of gender equality, reduction in disparities of access to education, developing employment opportunities, and eliminating chronic poverty. Further research is needed to continue to advance policy development and implementation leading to more optimal conditions for varied opportunities and positive experiences in emerging adulthood globally (Arnett, 2000; Galambos & Martínez, 2007).

As stated earlier the research related to identity development has a primary focus in Western and Anglo cultures. A search of the EBSCO database revealed a dearth of research related to personal identity formation or changes in personal identity of Hispanic or Latino

immigrants. A search of “immigration & identity” yielded 1,491 items. Applying the qualifier “Latino” reduced the number to 31. Similarly, adding the qualifier “Hispanic” reduced the items found to 14. The primary focus of current research is the social, ethnic, racial or national identity of those immigrating to the United States, United Kingdom, or Canada. A large number of articles are reflective of the perception of immigration as a detriment to the identity of the community and/or nation of discussion. Numerous articles focus on maladaptive behaviors of immigrants from Latin American countries, such as the research article titled, “Family Functioning, Identity, and Problem Behavior in Hispanic Immigrant Early Adolescents” (Schwartz, Pantin, Prado, Sullivan, & Szapoczik, 2005). The researchers cite the purpose of focusing on Hispanics to be because of the growing population of Hispanics and the elevated rates of problem behaviors among Hispanic adolescents. Schwartz et al. (2005) draw upon prior research to posit that this may be due to the intergenerational and intercultural conflicts experienced as the adolescent becomes more acculturated and parents hold onto Hispanic cultural values and practices. This type of research demonstrates the deficiency lens through which much of the research related to Hispanic immigrants is explored.

Research by Akhtar (1995) examines the effects of immigration on identity. He wrote, “Immigration from one country to another is a complex and multi-faceted psychological process with significant and lasting effects on an individual’s identity” (p. 1052). Akhtar puts forth the idea that this may be viewed as a time when an individual is coming to terms with a new sense of self and identity while struggling with new ways to communicate and cope with new social demands similar to Erikson’s (1980) psychosocial

stages of development and Mahler's (1971) stage of childhood separation-individuation phase. Akhtar (1995) refers to this stage as the "third individuation."

Akhtar (1995) asserts that all immigrants, at least temporarily, must give up some sense of personal identity or individuality in order to adapt and integrate into a new environment. The ability of an individual to move through this and emerge with a positive psychological outcome is influenced by several factors. First, the anticipated time in a new country affects the mindset of the individual relocating to a new country. Those going to a new country for a shorter duration of time will have different adaptation strategies than those who have left their homes for a new life. Second, adaptation to a new country can be influenced by the degree of choice of an individual in leaving the home country as well as the amount of time available to prepare for leaving. This does not apply to children who do not generally have a choice to leave or to return to the country of origin. Third, the opportunity to return to the home country or a sense of being able to return, may reduce potential feelings of being exiled. Fourth, the age at which an individual leaves the home country can greatly affect the intensity of the effects of immigration on an individual. Younger children may be more adaptable and flexible in their adjustment to a new environment. Fifth, the reasons for leaving the home country may play a role in the successful acclimation to a new environment. Those viewing their immigration as escaping from something in their present situation such as financial hardship, religious persecution, or political oppression may not adjust as readily as those who see their immigration as moving toward new or greater opportunities. Sixth, those who have a stronger ability to psychologically separate prior to immigrating will have a healthier separation at the time of leaving the country and arrival in a new country. Seventh, the degree to which the immigrant feels accepted by the new country

will support psychological adjustment. Those immigrants who feel more welcomed into the culture of the new country will have a healthier assimilation and later associated identity change. Eighth, the degree of cultural difference between the country of origin and the adopted country is an important variable. Immigration from the United States to England, for example, will impact the ability to assimilate to a lesser degree than a move from Ecuador to the United States, or Korea to Canada. Finally, the extent to which an individual can continue his or her role in life or career allows the individual to maintain inner continuity while external factors change around them (Akhtar, 1995). These identified factors can make acclimation and/or acculturation to a new country unique to each individual.

Akhtar (1995) posits that although the variables shared create unique experiences, there is a core process that presents in most immigrants. Akhtar (1995) asserts that this process, “is comprised of four interlinked journeys involving the dimensions of drives and affects, space, time, and social affiliation” (p. 1057). Though not identical, these journeys are similar to the stages of psychosocial development identified by Erikson (1963). Successful resolution of identity conflicts at each of the phases results in a stronger sense of identity and a healthier transition to the new country (Akhtar, 1995).

### **Factors Influencing Immigrant Adjustment**

The following sections address the research related to immigration as well as the emergent themes of this research. The research supporting the influence of identity on each of the identified themes is included where applicable.

#### **Immigration**

Immigration to the United States has a long and complex history. Latin American immigration is complex as well. Researchers cite numerous reasons for immigration to the

United States as well as to other countries. Among those reasons are political asylum, religious freedom, educational opportunities, and economic security. For many, the reason is simply to have a better life for themselves and their families.

In a study published in *The Journal of Latino-Latin American Studies* (Sanchez, 2009-2010) the researcher interviewed 20 immigrants from Latin America residing in a rural Nebraska town. The population of the community under study at the time of this research had grown to approximately 42% Latin American cultures. The purpose of this ethnographic, qualitative study was to understand the dynamics surrounding the integration of Latino immigrants newly residing in a predominantly white, rural community with a focus on the formation of ethnic identity and the ways in which identity affects access to resources in the community.

For this research, observations were conducted from 1998 through 2004. The researcher resided in the community of study for a period of nearly two years. During this time she taught adult English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Sanchez (2009-2010) stated that this helped to support the establishment of trust and respect between herself and the participants. The researcher participated in all aspects of community life, attending town events such as parades, festivals, and church events. As a member of the community, the researcher was seen in grocery stores and the post office. Sanchez (2009-2010) asserts that this made observations possible without changing the environment. She also stated that this supported the foundation of the interviews by allowing the participants to get to know the researcher and establish the relationship needed for participants to share life stories.

Interviews were conducted with 20 Latino residents of the community. Six residents of the community who were identified as public persons based on their field of work in the

community were interviewed and were viewed as instrumental in supporting the bridge between the white and Latino members of the community. Additionally, five non-Latino members of the community also were interviewed. All participants were selected by purposeful sampling. The focus of this research was on the social construction of identity by the Latino members of the community and how that construction influences behaviors. Non-Latino interviews were conducted to determine if there were differences in how Latino, new members of the community construct their reality and the perceptions of the non-Latino, long time members of the community. Following the interviews all observations, field notes, and transcripts were coded for themes (Sanchez, 2009-2010).

Sanchez (2009-2010) noted that all of the participants stated their reasons for immigrating to the United States were for a better life and for better opportunities afforded in the United States. Many of the participants in this study shared with the researcher that they had intended only to stay for a short period of time and return to their country of origin but had not returned. Sanchez (2009-2010) stated that all participants in some way stated that they remained in this community because they believed it to be “calm and tranquil” (p. 127).

In terms of ethnic identity the researcher found when asking participants, “How do you self-identify?” responses included, “I am a good person.” or “ I am a hard worker.” (Sanchez, 2009-2010, p. 127). When asked about ethnicity, responses varied by the ethnicity of the questioner. When asked by a non-Hispanic, they responded with the term “Hispanic.” When asked by another Hispanic, they responded by country of origin (Sanchez, 2009-2010). Sanchez posits that the terms Hispanic or Latino are not terms readily used by Spanish speaking persons but are terms designed by the U.S. Census Bureau that force an affiliation with other Latino/Hispanics by default of the language spoken or broad ethnic heritage.

Sanchez (2009-2010) found that there were some perceived prejudices between the white members of the community and the Latino members of the community. According to the research, many of the Latino participants did not attribute prejudice or discrimination to people “being white” (p. 133) but related their treatment to the fact that “there are good Americans and bad Americans, there are good Latinos and there are bad Latinos” (p. 133). Sanchez (2009-2010) reports that there were equally perceived prejudices among members of national, state, and regional Latino groups. Participants spoke with criticism of residents from countries of origin different from their own.

Members of the population felt most difficulties in accessing services available were predominantly in the area of health care and were based on their ability or inability to communicate in English, not based on participant race or ethnicity (Sanchez, 2009-2010). The participants perceived the schools as good schools and many reported that they spoke to the teachers about their child’s progress.

The findings of Sanchez’s (2009-2010) research indicate that regarding racial or ethnic identity, the participants included in this study had no primary concern with being identified as Hispanic or Latino and identified the label as more of a concern forced by cultural and social institutions. This was especially evident when asked how they identified themselves. The primary responses reflected answers such as: a good person, fathers and mothers, a hard worker. Sanchez also found that language played a large part in the development of identity. Sanchez uses the example of a Latina who is referred to as an American by many Latinos. She was born in the United States and is married to a Mexican immigrant. She does not speak Spanish fluently. Latinos refer to her as an American. White members of the community refer to her as Latina. Language was also a factor in



employment. Those Latino members of the community who spoke English and worked at local factories held better positions than those Latinos who did not speak English well. According to Sanchez most participants did not report wanting to learn English to obtain better jobs, but to make smaller parts of their daily life better.

Interestingly, Sanchez (2009-2010) states that her research began as, “a search for a Latino identity that includes numerous national groups, and many languages and cultures” (p. 153). Sanchez adds that she did not find what she was searching for. Each national group sees themselves with similarities and differences from other national groups as well as regional groups. Sanchez asserts that Latinos in the community of study come together through work, church, stores and daily activities. They come together as Spanish speaking members of a new community, immigrants of Latin America. “It is a heterogeneous Latino community with vastly different opinions on life, as it should be” (Sanchez, 2009-2010, p. 154).

In the 2002 article, “Latino Immigrants: Patterns of Survival,” Zuniga (2002) discusses protective factors identified of importance to the well-being of immigrants. Although the research is specific to refugees it can easily be transferred to this research in relation to the immigrant population of study. The protective factors identified of salience are: social support, psychosocial competence, and cognitive factors (Zuniga, 2002). Research on social support (Barrera, Sandler, & Ramsey, 1981) indicated that perceived support, whether real or abstract, led to feelings of being cared for and led to increased resilience in individuals. Social support from parents led to more positive psychological outcomes in children and was considered to be a critical coping factor.

The second protective factor, psychosocial competence refers to the belief of an individual that he or she has control over the outcome of his or her own life. Individuals display an active coping style, have trust in the people and world around them, and have some sense of agency (Tyler, Brome, & Williams, 1991). According to Masten, Best, and Garmezy (1990) psychologically competent people are those who, despite threats or challenges faced, are able to adapt and/or respond with resilience. Zuniga (2002) notes that prior research found that individuals with lower psychosocial competence scores who were unable to access social supports in their country of origin had greater difficulty coping after coming to the United States. The third protective factor is cognitive ability. According to Zea, Diehl, and Porterfield (1997) those with higher levels of intelligence and the ability to problem solve were able to better compensate for negative experiences. Zuniga (2002) notes that various environmental and ecological factors should also be included in the support of immigrant adaptation to the United States.

### **Poverty**

Phillips and Pittman (2003) assert that although there is a wealth of literature on the topic of identity development as well as the topic of poverty, little research exists on the inherent effects of poverty on the formation of identity. In their 2003 article, "Identity Processes in Poor Adolescents: Exploring the Linkages Between Economic Disadvantage and the Primary Task of Adolescence," the researchers argue that very little of the available research focuses on potential differences in identity development of adolescents living in poor socioeconomic conditions versus those living in middle or affluent conditions but has instead been more focused on the development of ethnic identity (Phillips & Pittman, 2003).

Phillips and Pittman (2003) discuss three categories as having strong correlations to the experiences and outcomes of poverty. They are: “derogatory self-relevant information, limitations in opportunity structures, and excessive stress” (p. 116). Opportunity structures are key to the identity development of adolescents and young adults (Phillips & Pittman, 2003). As discussed previously, adolescence is identified as the stage during which exploration of opportunities takes place (Erikson, 1963); youth define themselves and their personal identity. This stage of exploration can be hindered by a lack of opportunities available in a cultural context as well as a socioeconomic context resulting in a stunted attempt at identity exploration (Arnett, 2000; Galambos & Martínez, 2007; Phillips & Pittman, 2003). Chronic poverty can also lead to socioemotional maladjustment due to repeated and prolonged exposure to multiple stressors. On-going stress may lead to the draining of personal motivation of adolescents living in chronic poverty (Phillips & Pittman, 2003). “Not only do poor adolescents hope for less in life, they also expect less out of life” (Phillips & Pittman, 2003, p. 117).

Phillips & Pittman (2003) examined the identity theories of Marcia (1980), Grotevant (1987), Berzonsky (1997), and Kerpelman, Pittman, and Lamke (1997). The authors hypothesized that the development of identity in adolescents may be confined by lack of positive affirmations and self talk, limited opportunities, and the effects of chronic stress and negative life experiences. These contributing factors may result in unexplored opportunities that contribute to the development of a complete and matured identity (Erikson, 1963; Marcia, 1980; Phillips & Pittman, 2003).

## Success

Success is viewed in a myriad of ways. What individuals attain and identify as success is directly influenced by what individuals value (Feeny & Wang, 2010). In research there are numerous articles on success in the work place, success in marriage and relationships, and academic success. However, there is a dearth of research related to the meaning of personal success of individuals or the characteristics of successful individuals not specific to the areas mentioned above. To support this research the terms “success,” “life satisfaction,” and “well-being” were used to search for relevant related research.

A study by Rennemark and Hagberg (1997) investigated the relationship between an individual’s sense of coherence (SOC) (Antonovsky, 1987) and his or her evaluation of their own life history, as remembered and reported, according to Erikson’s psychosocial developmental stages. This research further examined the link between SOC and Erikson’s theory to the individual’s sense of well-being. The definition of SOC is as follows:

Sense of coherence is a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that (1) the stimuli deriving from one’s internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable and explicable; (2) the resources are available to meet the demands posed by the stimuli; and (3) these demands are challenges worthy of investment and engagement. (Antonovsky, 1987, p. 19)

Antonovsky (1987) identified three core components of SOC: comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness. Comprehensibility is the belief that events in life occur in an orderly and predictable manner and the individual maintains an understanding of the events and can reasonably predict what may occur in the future. An individual’s sense of

comprehensibility is influenced by cognitive and emotional factors. Manageability is a belief that resources: skills, abilities, or support, are available to control the situation and not feel victimized. Meaningfulness is the belief that things in life are important and worthy of investment. This is the motivational component. An individual believes that there is good reason or purpose in caring about what happens in life and receives satisfaction in caring. A strong sense of meaningfulness supports the individual's view of problems as challenges, not misfortunes (Antonovsky, 1987; Rennemark & Hagberg, 1997).

In the study by Rennemark and Hagberg (1997) 58 participants were administered Antonovsky's SOC questionnaire. After completing the questionnaire, each participant took part in a life history interview. The participants were asked to describe their lives according to identified themes. During their interview participants were guided through Erikson's stages by the researcher. Immediately following the interview, participants were asked to evaluate their perceptions of their lives using a 3-point Likert-type scale, 0 = bad, 1= neutral, and 2 = good.

The results of the research indicated that there was an overall relationship between perceived life history of participants and SOC. Participants who viewed their life history positively had a stronger sense of coherence. In relation to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, results indicated: high self-evaluations of the trust and autonomy stage were associated with a sense of manageability and meaningfulness, high self-evaluations of the identity stage were positively associated with a sense of manageability, high self-evaluations of the intimacy stage had a positive association with comprehensibility and manageability. These results led researchers Rennemark and Hagberg (1997) to posit participants' remembrances of positive solutions of psychosocial conflicts led to later life perceptions of

life as coherent and meaningful. Overall, high sense of coherence scores were correlated positively to trust, autonomy, and intimacy. These results support Antonovsky's theory (1987) that SOC develops over time throughout the life span of the individual. The results also support Eriksonian (1963) theory that an individual's present view of life is determined by past experiences (Rennemark & Hagberg, 1997).

### **Expectations and Aspirations**

As discussed in previous sections of the literature review, expectations and aspirations can be strongly influenced by healthy formation of identity, socioeconomic status, and cultural beliefs and values. According to Kaplan, Liu, and Kaplan (2001), "Among the family process variables that seem to be most important to children's academic performance is parents' educational expectations for their children, which consistently has been a strong predictor of student achievement at all levels" (p. 360).

In 2009, Mexican-American high school students ( $n = 298$ ) participated in research to examine the relationship of four factors, perceived parental educational involvement (PPEI), acculturation, gender, and self-esteem on academic achievement and aspirations of Mexican American high school students (Carranza, You, Chhuon, & Hudley, 2009). Desimone's (1999) multidimensional framework of parental involvement was utilized to measure seven factors. Five of the seven factors are reflective of parent viewpoints and two are reflective of students' views. Researchers asserted that few studies involving the examination of these variables in their composite are available and are necessary for a more thorough understanding of the outcomes of Mexican American youth. This study investigated a model of academic achievement and aspirations reflective of perceived parental educational

involvement, acculturation, and self-esteem, along with background variables of parental level of education attained and students' generational status (Carranza et al., 2009).

Structural equation modeling was used to assess the generated hypotheses. Results indicated that only parental expectations showed a direct effect on both students' GPA and academic aspirations. Student self-esteem had a direct, positive effect on academic aspirations solely. This partially supports the researchers' hypotheses that "proposed direct effects of perceived parental educational involvement, students' level of acculturation, and student's self-esteem on student's educational outcomes" (Carranza et al., 2009, p. 325). Researchers did, however, find a direct effect of the level of acculturation of the student on achievement and acculturation after controlling for the effects of parent level of educational attainment and generational status. More simply put, higher levels of acculturation attained by the student were indicative of higher GPA and academic aspirations. Additionally, indirect findings of self-esteem showed that students tended to perceive higher parental expectations and reported higher academic aspirations and GPA status when they themselves had higher levels of self-esteem (Carranza et al., 2009).

Research by Kaplan et al. (2001) examined the relationship between parents' level of educational attainment, the level of academic expectations they hold for their adolescent children (as perceived by the child), and the degree to which negative self-feelings of parents affect that relationship. Researchers questioned how the extent of parents' feelings about themselves and their own level of educational attainment may be related to the ways and degree to which educational expectations are communicated to their children. Building on the extensive review of the research of parents' educational expectations and children's academic achievement by Seginer (1983), Kaplan et al. (2001) examined the degree to which

children are apt to internalize, follow, and embrace their parents' expectations when considering parents' feelings of self. The focus of this study was "the moderating effect of parents' negative self-feelings, or lack of negative self-feelings on the relationship between parents' educational level and their aspirations for their children" (Kaplan et al., 2001, p. 361).

This study included 1,864 sets of parents and their children from a school district located in the western United States. Parents were originally assessed as seventh graders in 1971 when participating as a panel study of students. Data were gathered again from these same participants using interviews conducted in the 1980s. Data gathered were designed to measure psychosocial and sociodemographic characteristics. Additionally, self-reports of life events and the participants' ability to cope with events were measured. Data regarding negative self-feelings were also collected at this time. Data collection took place again through interviews in the 1990s when the adult participants were between 30 and 40 years of age with children of their own. Their children, between the ages of 11 and 15, were asked questions related to perceived parental expectations for educational attainment and were also asked to self-report on their academic performance (Kaplan et al., 2001).

Results indicated statistical significance, demonstrating a positive relationship between the educational attainment of parents and the perceived parental expectations of their children and negative statistical significance between parental negative self-feelings and the perceived parental expectations of the child. According to Kaplan et al. (2001), the moderating effect of strong negative parental self-feelings increased the effect of parents' educational attainment on perceived parental expectations. The authors posit that parents with healthy levels of self-esteem, ability to cope when dealing with adversity, and



possessing perceived self-efficacy skills are more able to be emotionally available to their children, have less focus on their own unmet needs, and are more likely to provide children with opportunities to develop their own interests and abilities than parents with relatively lower or negative feelings of self (Kaplan et al., 2001). Additionally, the authors assert that in some circumstances the parent holds negative self-feelings regarding their own personal circumstances, but view their child's education as a means to ensure a better life for themselves and their families not as a means to mitigate the parent's own negative self-feelings. Parents in these circumstances are more likely to communicate realistic long- and short-term goals to their child, focus on academic achievement for the child, and provide daily support in meeting goals.

### **Be Somebody**

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary the meaning of the word *somebody* is, “<sup>1</sup> one or some person of unspecified or indefinite identity, <sup>2</sup> a person of position or importance.” People use the word with great frequency as in, “Somebody will be here in a moment” or “I need to speak to somebody” and “Somebody should do something” using the first meaning. Equally frequent is the use of the phrase, “I want to be somebody.” There is no specificity to the term *be somebody* and yet it is often used by people to define what they want to be. Academic articles related to the term “be somebody” are difficult to come by. Most information related to being somebody can be found on blogs and web posts related to philosophy.

The articles “‘Becoming Somebody’: Central American Immigrants in U.S. Inner-City Schools” (Suarez-Orozco, 1987) and “‘Becoming Somebody’: Youth Transitions Through Education and Migration in Peru” (Crivello, 2011) were selected for this literature

review. Although the titles would lead the reader to believe that these articles would provide insight to the definition of the term, becoming somebody, they do not support the understanding of how the term is defined but do further illuminate the pervasive need of immigrant parents for their children to be somebody.

Suarez-Orozco (1987) conducted an ethnographic study of 50 recent immigrants to the United States attending school in two inner-city high schools. All participants had entered the United States within five years prior to the start of the research. The 30 male and 20 female participants were between 14 and 20 years of age. The study consisted of participant observations, ethnographic interviews with students and their parents, and the administration of Thematic Apperception stories. Suarez-Orozco examined the parental expectations of new arrivals. She noted that parents articulated the primary reason for leaving their country of origin was for the improved well-being of their children. Suarez-Orozco (1987) cited one mother's response: "We came here for them [her children], so that they may be somebody tomorrow. I am too old, at my age it is too late for me" (p. 290). Suarez-Orozco posited that despite challenges faced in their living situations at the time, the student newcomers were still able to see that they had more and better opportunities to study, more support, and greater opportunities for future jobs in the United States than in their home countries.

From the research Suarez-Orozco (1987) stated that universally participants identified academic achievement as the single most significant route to improved status mobility. Suarez-Orozco noted that the majority of parents included in the research stated that they had to leave school in their home countries because they could not afford schooling in the remote rural areas in Central America or they were needed to contribute to the family income by

working. Therefore they could not continue with their schooling. This belief of study participants that education, knowledge, and personal effort in the United States were the key factors for status mobility was in contrast to their belief about their countries of origin where participants felt that social status was dependent on networks and nepotism.

Suarez-Orozco (1987) asserted that student participants in the research were aware of the sacrifices that their parents had made and hardships they continued to endure in a new country. Suarez-Orozco (1987) contended that this places a psychological burden on the student participants. According to the researcher, participants felt a strong desire to achieve in school and make their parents efforts worthwhile by “*lleagndo a ser alguien*’, becoming somebody” (p. 293). Another parent interview illuminated this further when the parent stated that she made it clear to her children that they came to the United States so the children could become somebody. Her child articulated that he knew his mother wanted him to lead a life that was different than the life of sacrifice that she had to live when she was young.

It is important to note that the participants in this research were first generation immigrants to the United States. They left their home countries during their adolescence and, according to Suarez-Orozco (1987), emigrated from countries that were in political and civil unrest. This article supported the understanding that immigrant parents communicate the need for their children to find their way in a new country and become somebody. It likewise highlights the vagueness to which one can interpret the meaning of the phrase, be somebody.

In the research article, “‘Becoming Somebody’: Youth Transitions Through Education and Migration in Peru” (Crivello, 2011), the relationship between migration and educational aspirations is explored. The author asserted that migration is connected to the process of becoming somebody and high educational aspirations by young people and their

parents. The research drew on survey and qualitative data collected on a cohort of children participating in a longitudinal study of children in poverty in Peru. The researchers are tracking the children of the cohort over a 15-year period of time. The study began when the children were 8 years old (2002) and will continue into their early adulthood, concluding in the year 2017.

Crivello (2011) asserted that fueled by international pressure to get a larger number of children educated globally, the link between migration and education is gaining attention in academic research. The main hope for escaping poverty, particularly rural poverty, and status mobility of young people growing up in resource-poor communities is education. However, the desire for education is not often matched by access to quality schooling particularly at the secondary levels in underdeveloped countries. Crivello (2011) posited that migration for education is the response to the gap between the desire to increase educational opportunities and access to quality schooling, particularly in rural Peru.

Data for this research were drawn from data collected through the Young Lives (YL) qualitative study. YL is a long-term study (2000-2017) tracking the life course of 12,000 children and young people growing up in Peru, Ethiopia, India, and Vietnam. The intent of the study is to improve the global understanding of child poverty, causes and consequences, and the impact of policies and interventions on the lives of children of poverty. Three thousand children are followed in each of the four countries, a cohort born in 1994 and a cohort born in 2000-2001. The study will capture, over time, experiences from childhood through adulthood. Intergenerational practices will also be encapsulated in the study. Data from surveys have been collected three times (2002, 2006, and 2009) with plans for further data collection in 2012 and 2015. The YL research study includes in-depth semi-structured

interviews between survey rounds. These interviews include approximately 50 children as a sub-sample in each country along with their caregivers, peers, teachers, and members of the community. Data from interviews were collected in 2007 and 2008 and further interviews were planned for 2011 and 2013.

Four communities within Peru were selected for the in-depth interviews to capture the uniqueness of participants based on location, region, poverty, and ethnicity. The four communities were considered rural jungle, rural mountain, urban market town, and urban shanty town. The four areas have differences in levels of access to school, income sources, population density, and also differences in native language spoken (Crivello, 2011).

Peru is a country with high levels of internal mobility, particularly rural to urban migration (Crivello, 2011). By the third administration of the YL survey, one in four participating households had moved, illustrating the high levels of mobility. Survey results from the older cohort suggest their migration was linked to their transition to secondary school. The main reason given for leaving their previous home by the 15-year-olds included in the survey was “to study” (p. 398). Examination of the survey data indicated that 19% of rural mothers had never attended school in comparison to 4% of urban mothers. Fifty-three percent of rural mothers attended school between 1 and 6 years. Forty-eight percent of urban mothers attended school between 7 and 11 years. Most of the 12-year-old children included in the study had already completed more schooling than their mothers. Even though the education level of mothers was low, over 60% of caregivers had high aspirations for their child’s education, expressing a desire for the child to attend university or a technical school (Crivello, 2011).

Crivello's (2011) research explored two of the case studies from the YL research. Crivello profiles Maria and Elmer, brother and sister. These cases were selected to illustrate how migration can be multi-faceted even within one family. The cases of Maria and Elmer demonstrated how migration involves intergenerational negotiation as well as negotiation within households.

Maria migrated (rural to rural) for better schooling. Her village did not have a secondary school so she was sent to live with her grandparents. Maria's parents felt the school located an hour from their home was better. Her parents sent money to pay for her schooling and she assisted her grandmother with chores. Although Maria enjoyed the comfort of living with electricity and running water she missed her parents and eventually returned to her village. Once there she began to work to earn money to help support her family.

Elmer emigrated (rural to urban) to live with his sister just before beginning secondary school. His 25-year-old sister sent for him to help care for her two children while she and her husband worked. In exchange for his help with the children, his sister would pay school-related expenses for Elmer. Elmer's sister had left home when she was just 13-years-old so Elmer did not know her well, but he and his mother saw this as an opportunity for them to learn more about each other. Elmer's mother believed strongly that education was better for Elmer in the city. She stated in her interview that she did not want "him to be like me, with no education" (Crivello, 2011, p. 401). Crivello asserted that these case studies illustrated the growing value that families in chronic poverty place on education and the role that migration plays in status mobility.

To further illustrate the growing value of education and the connection to migration Crivello (2011) discussed a group activity in which selected participants from one of the poorest regions of Peru were asked to complete a story about what a teacher would tell a boy about to enter secondary school. Examples of the boys' statements were:

- That he should study.
- So that he can be a professional.
- That he should keep studying so he doesn't have to go to the fields. (p. 402)

The boys were next asked what the boy's father would tell him about secondary school.

Their responses were:

- That he should work so he can be educated.
- That he should keep studying so he's not like him [the father]. (p. 402)

Crivello (2011) asserted that these statements are indicative of the fact that the boys have the idea that progressing educationally is a pathway to a better life and to becoming somebody of value. Crivello postulated that there are four dimensions to the promise of a better life and these dimensions are connected to mobility. First, she suggested that education is a pathway to literacy, which was considered empowering by both adults and children. Second, education is a route to becoming a "professional." A professional life is thought to bring security and respect to the individual. Third, a promise of a better and different life than that of their parents comes through education. Fourth, for many, mobility is viewed as crucial to the process of becoming somebody by virtue of education and work.

For children growing up in chronically, resource poor communities access to school is limited. To pursue their education beyond primary school requires traveling greater distances to a secondary school. Crivello (2011) made a link between the four dimensions to

a promise of a better life and migration. Crivello asserted that youth generally do not choose to migrate for the sake of migration but to fulfill their aspirations of schooling and job opportunities that will enable them to create a better life. Crivello quoted one Peruvian mother who spoke of the need to leave home as inevitable. She stated, “She’s got to become something, she has to become something...they can’t stay here...with a profession that takes her far she won’t experience many difficulties” (2011, p. 407).

### **Chapter Summary**

The focus of this research was to support the understanding of the cultural and personal context that the voices of Hispanic immigrant parents bring to support a greater understanding of how their expectations and aspirations for their children in school in the United States are influenced. This chapter provided a review of literature supporting this research. The literature available on the sociocultural and personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrants and the effects of those experiences on the expectations and aspirations that they hold for their children is limited. However, Eriksonian theory (1963) related to the psychosocial development of identity provides the theoretical foundation for this research.

According to Erikson (1980) identity development is a lifelong process with the most substantive growth occurring in the stage Erikson refers to as the adolescent stage. It is during this stage that the adolescent explores opportunities available to reach a sense of self. These opportunities may be constrained by factors of poverty, and/or culture resulting in a stunted sense of identity leading to challenges in later stages of identity development (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1980). An individual’s healthy sense of identity encompasses each of the areas explored through this research. This healthy sense of identity influences the ability of parents to support children in their healthy development and their attainment of academic and



personal goals. Akhtar's (1995) work presents the potential changes in identity that immigrants may experience in relation to adaptation or acculturation to a new country and the key factors influencing a healthy resolution of identity crises experienced during this time.

The research of Rennemark and Hagberg (1997) supported the theory that those who perceived their life history in a positive manner were able to attain a sense of coherence in life. This sense of coherence correlates to the positive resolution of crises in Erikson's theory of psychosocial development leading to the development of a healthy sense of identity. As indicated by the research of Carranza et al. (2009), parents with higher levels of self-esteem originating from a healthy personal identity were able to mitigate the effects of lower personal educational attainment and more effectively communicate the importance of education to their children. The literature included here supports the understanding of the importance of developing a healthy sense of identity and the process an individual engages in the forming of individual identity. As seen in the literature regarding identity development most research has been conducted in Western cultures, predominantly the United States and other primarily Anglo, industrialized countries. Little research exists on the development of identity in Latin American cultures particularly. Cultural traditions, beliefs, and expectations are strong influences of identity development and need to be explored further as our country becomes more globalized.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to explore the development of Hispanic immigrant parents' expectations and aspirations for their children, and the influence of the parents' own personal life experiences, particularly through their own education, on those expectations and aspirations. This study further explored the meaning of "success" through the lens of Hispanic immigrant parents and how their definition transfers to their expectations for the children of the parents in this study. This chapter provides details of the methodology used to examine this topic and includes the following sections: (a) biography of the researcher, (b) ethics statement, (c) description of the setting and participants, (d) research questions, (e) description of the research design, (f) timeline, and (g) efforts to support the trustworthiness of the study.

### **Researcher Biography**

"Persons choose to do research because they have a dream that somehow they will make a difference in the world through the insights and understandings they arrive at" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 15). As an educator for 27 years I believe that we all possess a desire to make a difference in the world. For many of us that desire is what brought us to the field of education in the first place, the desire to be a part of a career that makes a difference whether to the world, the community that we work and live in, or to one life that we may touch. I have spent the past 12 years as the principal of an elementary school in the community in which this research took place and have seen the increasing rise in the Hispanic population and the concurrent increase in the achievement gap between our Hispanic and non-Hispanic students.

In my role as principal of an elementary school it has been my responsibility to provide programs for all families that help them to support their child's learning in the home. Many of our programs are designed for the Spanish-speaking parent as our school population is approximately 60% Hispanic. The programs that have been developed were largely absent of the knowledge of what Hispanic immigrant parents bring to the table in terms of their own personal experiences that have been influential on their expectations and aspirations for their own children as well as the knowledge of how Hispanic immigrant families view success.

Personal biases from professional experiences could affect the analysis of the data in research. I made every attempt to minimize bias through maintaining and analyzing a reflexive journal, ongoing peer feedback, and conducting a dependability audit of the analyses and coding of interviews. It was my purpose through this research to let the stories of the Hispanic immigrant families be told in their own voices so that any insights and understandings that may be arrived at will support our Hispanic students.

### **Statement of Ethics and Confidentiality**

In February of 2013 a proposal for this research was submitted and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the university (see Appendix F). Prospective participants were given an overview of the research including the rationale for the research, the time requirement for them as participants, and their right to terminate participation at any time without consequence.

All participants in this research study signed a consent form (see Appendices C and D) explaining the possible content of questions that could be asked during the interviews. They were also informed that they would receive a gift card valued at 10 dollars as a show of

appreciation for their participation. The consent form contained an assurance of confidentiality.

All data were obtained by this researcher and maintained in a secured environment. The interpreter, transcriptionist, and translator were required to sign confidentiality agreements before beginning the research. Pseudonyms were used for all participants to maintain confidentiality.

### **Description of the Setting and Participants**

#### **Setting**

The research study took place in a large urban school district (10,300 students) in the Northeast. This urban school district consisted of 17 schools: 13 elementary schools serving grades kindergarten through grade five, 2 middle schools serving grades 6 through 8, and 1 high school serving grades 9 through 12. According to the 2009-2010 Strategic Schools Profile (SSP) of the district, 33% of students were eligible for free or reduced lunch services, and 19% of students received English Language Learner (ELL) support. The school district's SSP report identifies 47.1% of the district population as Caucasian, 35% Hispanic, 8.1% Asian American, 9.7% African American, and .1% as American Indian. Of the student body, 39% of students come from homes where English is not the primary language spoken.

#### **Participants**

Prior to starting the research study, the researcher obtained consent from the Western Connecticut State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix F). After receiving IRB consent, the researcher spoke with the district superintendent and building principal. The proposed study was described and consents from the superintendent and principal (see Appendices G and H) for the study to be carried out were obtained.

A purposeful sample was selected from parents participating in a voluntary district-sponsored program for Hispanic parents of school-aged children. Parents in the district program were asked to complete a demographic survey (see Appendices A and B). After completing the survey, parents meeting the criteria of being of Hispanic descent and being an immigrant to the United States were given an overview of the research and were invited to participate in the study.

Willing participants were drawn from parents who attended the Lee y Serás program. This voluntary program is offered in various elementary schools in the school district where this research took place. Lee y Serás was developed by the Scholastic Corporation and is a collaboration among Scholastic, the Verizon Foundation, and the National Council of La Raza. School districts and organizations can purchase the program and materials from Scholastic. The Lee y Serás program consisted of a series of six weekly workshops for parents in support of children's early literacy skills. The two-hour sessions were held in Spanish. Additionally, participants in Lee y Serás attended field trips that offer experiences to families that they may not have access to without the support of the school district. Lee y Serás was sponsored by Children First, a community agency dedicated to the support of children, their families, and the schools they attend. The Children First organization has had a long established relationship with the school district in which this study took place.

After participating in the Lee y Serás program for six weeks with the potential participants, I met with the parents as a group to explain the research and answered questions about the procedures. Consent forms (see Appendices C and D) were then provided to the potential participants and were read, signed, and returned to the researcher. Initial interviews were scheduled at the convenience of each participant.

Eleven parents initially agreed to participate. One of those parents did not attend the scheduled meeting and did not respond to calls to reschedule. A second parent was not called to return after a brief initial meeting during which I determined that the participant seemed to have an understanding that this process would be therapeutic in nature. I referred the parent to a community agency that I felt might best meet his needs. Table 1 provides the demographic information of participants. Participants are described in greater detail in Chapter Four.

Table 1

*Description of Participants*

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Participant	Country of origin	Age at time of interview	Gender	Years of education completed	Years in US
Parent 1	Ecuador	38	Female	4	14
Parent 2	Ecuador	35	Male	6	15
Parent 3	Ecuador	42	Female	6	11
Parent 4	Ecuador	48	Female	6	15
Parent 5 (Grandparent)	Dominican Republic	65	Female	3	33
Parent 6	Peru	53	Female	12	29
Parent 7	United States	27	Female	9	NA
Parent 8	Mexico	36	Male	3	17
Parent 9	Ecuador	47	Male	12	14

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## **Research Questions**

Using a qualitative approach, this research addresses the following questions:

1. What expectations and aspirations do Hispanic immigrant parents have for their child's educational attainment?
2. In what ways do the personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents influence their families' experiences?
3. How do Hispanic immigrant parents define "success" for their child?
4. How do the family structures of Hispanic immigrants support the expectations and aspirations that parents have for their children?

## **Description of Research Design and Procedures**

This research held no preconceived theories as to how personal life experiences influence the aspirations and expectations of Hispanic immigrant parents for their school-aged children and sought to develop theories from the families studied. Within the genres of qualitative research various methodologies were considered for this research. Grounded theory was selected as the methodology to support the emergence of theories as the data collected revealed connections and contrasts between and among the families interviewed and their shared experiences. "Grounded theory serves as a way to learn about the worlds we study and a method for developing theories to understand them" (Charmaz, 2011, p. 10). According to Charmaz (2011) her work on the constructivist approach to grounded theory with Bryant (2007) places an emphasis on the realities between participants and researcher, and an interpretive understanding of data to support developing theories rather than the application of theory to data.

## **Instrumentation**

This research study was a qualitative study using case study as the research methodology. The study consisted of in-depth interviews with nine individual parents using semi-structured, open-ended interview questions (see Appendix E) developed by the researcher. Interview questions were developed using suggested methods for open-ended interviewing by Charmaz (2011). A Hispanic colleague who works closely with the community from which participants were selected reviewed the questions and probes for appropriateness. Interviews took place at a time and setting of convenience for the parent. A translator was present during interviews when requested by a parent. Six of the nine participants requested the interpreter be present for their interviews. These interviews were recorded, transcribed, and translated. Additional interviews took place after initial coding to confirm emerging themes.

## **Demographic Survey Procedures**

During the final session of the district-sponsored program, I provided an overview of the purpose of the research. A demographic survey (see Appendices A and B) was distributed to parents along with consent (see Appendices C and D) to participate. The intent of the survey was to identify parents who were immigrants to the country, their country of origin, and other basic demographic information. Support from a translator was given to complete the survey as necessary. I administered the survey along with the facilitator of the parent program. Parents who consented to participate were asked to give me times and days that were convenient for them to meet and contact information so they could be reached to schedule the interviews. Parents were contacted within the week following this meeting.



## **Interview Procedures**

Open-ended interviews occurred at the school where the Lee y Serás program took place at the request of each participant. Interviews were between 90 and 120 minutes in duration. Second interviews were conducted to clarify any questions or gain further information from the participants. All interviews were recorded and sent to a professional transcription service. Following transcription the documents were translated to English when originally in Spanish. Open-ended interview procedures were selected to provide opportunities for parents to expand on their stories. This format allowed me as the researcher to capture the thoughts and feelings of the participants that standard interview questions may not have adequately captured (Charmaz, 2011). Interview questions focused on: (a) background and school experience of the parent, (b) success, aspirations, and expectations for the child, and (c) family structure and support of child by family.

To be consistent with qualitative research and grounded theory methods, interview questions (see Appendix H) were unstructured to allow for flexibility in the interview and allowed me to draw from participants his or her assumptions and interpretations of situations in a constructivist manner (Charmaz, 2011). Flexibility in the interview sessions allowed me to pursue themes, ideas, and issues that emerged. Charmaz (2011) suggests open-ended interview questions be clustered into three types: initial, intermediate, and ending questions. Questioning in this manner allowed the interviewer to go back to earlier lines of questioning after initial analysis to deepen the level of data gathered through the interview. The tone of the ending level of questions brought positive closure to the interview for the participant.

For the parents to be most comfortable disclosing their personal information *confianza* was established prior to the interviews taking place. De la Vega (2007) refers to

*confianza* as mutual trust, a term that he states is imperative to developing relationships within the Hispanic culture and making connections among members of the Hispanic community. To establish *confianza* I participated in each of the district program sessions offered to parents as well as additional activities such as field trips for parents participating in the programs. Additionally, meals were provided before each of the Lee y Serás sessions, which I attended. By spending prolonged periods of time in the parent programs and activities associated with the programs, as well as the conducting of interviews, I was able to establish *confianza* within the selected population. The Hispanic facilitator of the program, who has familiarity with the participants, was present to support the participants' level of comfort through the research process and served as a translator during the interview process when possible.

### **Data Analysis**

Through a grounded theory approach to research and data analysis there was a constant comparison of the similarities and differences between the participants. The process of collecting and analyzing the data simultaneously allowed for exploration of in-depth themes that consistently emerged between participants (Charmaz, 2011). These leads supported the generation of categories, beginning in the abstract and developing to formal themes. This led to the development of theories explaining the questions being examined in this research (Glaser & Strauss, 1999).

**Coding.** According to Charmaz, “Coding is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data” (2011, p. 46). In grounded theory, coding shapes the frame from which the researcher builds the analysis. Initial coding was done by hand and began with words that reflected actions (Charmaz, 2011; Saldaña, 2011).

By looking for language that reveals action the researcher is less likely to jump to conclusions about theories before doing more extensive analysis of the data (Charmaz, 2011). This initial coding allowed themes to emerge for further analysis. This also provided the opportunity to identify any areas needing additional data.

During the initial phase of coding, key phrases were marked and notes were jotted about the emerging concepts. Constant comparative methods were used while viewing statements within the same interview, as well as statements made in interviews with different participants. Data were also compared in earlier and later interviews when applicable. In vivo codes were used whenever possible to maintain the voice of the participant through the interview.

The first phase of coding, initial coding (Charmaz, 2011), generated 100 codes (see Appendix I). Charmaz suggests coding with four selected practices: word-by-word coding, line-by-line coding, incident-to-incident coding, or the use of comparative methods. Line-by-line coding was selected, utilizing in vivo to ensure that the participants' descriptions of events stayed as close as possible to the meaning intended and to capture the participants' voices in the coding (Charmaz, 2011). After initial attempts at line-by-line coding, it was determined that incident-to-incident coding would better support the analysis of the data. Charmaz (2011) refers to incident-to-incident coding as the "close cousin" (p. 53) of line-by-line coding. Incident-to-incident coding supports the researcher in developing ideas that arise across observations and interviews when attempting to step into the life of a participant. As ideas evolve the researcher can then compare incidences, sorting like and dissimilar events across participants.

After initial coding, focused coding (Charmaz, 2011) was implemented to further develop the central themes using the most frequent and significant codes emerging from the initial coding of the data. In this second phase of coding, the original list of 100 codes was condensed to 40 codes and subcodes (see Appendix J). Codes were condensed or eliminated because they occurred infrequently, were redundant, or were able to be merged with like codes. The most significant and frequent codes were used to sift through the data, and decisions were made as to which codes to categorize to move toward a more analytic framework. These codes guided the generation of five themes that will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

### **Timeline**

The research study followed the general timeline below:

1. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (Appendix F) – February 2013.
2. Following approval of the IRB, district consent letters (Appendices G and H) were signed, demographic survey (Appendices A and B), and parental consent forms (Appendices C and D) were distributed to potential participants – February, 2013.
3. Demographic surveys were collected at the same session that they were distributed to potential participants – February 2013.
4. Interview dates were set, conducted – March, 2013.
5. Remaining individual interviews conducted consecutively – March to June, 2013.
6. Journal and memos were generated throughout the duration of the study.
7. Transcription and coding of transcripts – July to October 2013.
8. Interviews and coding were repeated as needed for clarification.

9. Conducted member checking – October 2013.
10. Wrote summary of case studies – November 2013 to January 2014.
11. Conducted confirmability audit – February 2014.

### **Establishing Trustworthiness of the Study**

Lincoln and Guba (2006) have identified four criteria that should be present to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Krefting (1991) suggests that multiple strategies used to establish trustworthiness be present to ensure the quality of the research. Multiple strategies were implemented during the course of the study to reduce any threats to validity and ensure the trustworthiness of the research.

To reduce the threat to credibility, also known as truth-value, it was imperative to establish mutual trust, referred to as *confianza* among the group of parents participating in the research. To do this I spent prolonged periods of time with the parents during the school programs including sharing meals before each session and attending field trips with the group. Periodic member checking was used to verify truth-value, and keep researcher bias in check. A peer reviewed all procedures and notes. Additionally, a reflexive journal was maintained throughout the study to maintain awareness of researcher bias and provide triangulation of data.

Multiple methods were used to support the dependability and confirmability of the research. The reflexive journal helped to ensure that my personal background and experiences as a school administrator did not bias the research. The journal contained notes related to observations, thoughts, feelings, and frustrations related to the research process. Member checking was used as appropriate. The reflexive notebook also served as a vehicle

to conduct an audit trail. A colleague objectively reviewed research procedures and research findings. Triangulation of data sources was also used as feasible.

To support transferability of the research, rich descriptions of the participants, context, and setting of the research are given. This thorough description will allow future researchers to determine if the findings are transferable to their own context. An attempt was made to include a representative sample of the population being studied in the research relative to socio-economic status, educational level, and country of origin. However, because the participants were drawn from a volunteer population, this is a limitation of the study.

### **Summary**

This study was designed to explore the development of Hispanic immigrant parents' expectations and aspirations for their children, and the influence of the parents' own personal life experiences, particularly through their own education, on those expectations and aspirations. This chapter outlined the method in which the research was conducted. This chapter provided details of the methodology used to examine this topic and included the following sections: (a) biography of the researcher, (b) ethics statement, (c) description of the setting and participants, (d) research questions, (e) description of the research design, (f) timeline, and (g) threats to trustworthiness of the study. Chapter Four will provide an in-depth description of the participants, the specific details of the analysis of the interview data, and a complete explanation of the findings of this research.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF DATA AND EXPLANATION OF THE FINDINGS**

The purpose of this study was to explore the development of Hispanic immigrant parents' expectations and aspirations for their children, and the influence of the parents' own life experiences, particularly through their own education and personal experiences, on those expectations and aspirations. Through personal interviews, this study further explored the meaning of success through the lens of the Hispanic immigrant parents and how their definition transfers to the children of the parents in this study. Additionally, the family structure of the participant families and the influence of those structures on the expectations and aspirations of Hispanic immigrant families were explored.

Chapter Four presents a discussion of the research findings from the interviews conducted with nine parents whose children attended schools within the district in which this research was conducted. The research questions under investigation in this study were:

1. What expectations and aspirations do Hispanic immigrant parents have for their child's educational attainment?
2. In what ways do the personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents influence their families' experiences?
3. How do Hispanic immigrant parents define "success" for their child?
4. How do the family structures of Hispanic immigrants support the expectations and aspirations that parents have for their children?

Nine individual interviews were conducted over an eight-month period to answer the research questions. All interviews were conducted in person at a location of the participants choosing. With one exception, the interviews were conducted at a school in the district

where this research took place. A translator was available for each participant. Each participant is representative of one case

This study was designed as a multiple case study using constructivist grounded theory methodology. According to Charmaz (2011) constructivist methodology “places priority on the phenomena of the study and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants” (p. 130). Mills, Bonner, and Francis (2006) state that the relationship between participant and researcher is transformed from previous thinking of researcher as data gatherer. During the process of interaction the researcher and participant give and take from each other in the co-construction of knowledge. The researcher’s questions guide the participant to reflect on aspects of their lives or past experiences in ways that do not occur in everyday experiences (Charmaz, 2011). This reflection leads the researcher to not only look at how the participants view their situations but also to theorize on the thinking of the participants, always acknowledging that the resulting theory is an interpretation (Bryant, 2002).

This chapter begins with individual profiles of each of the nine participants. All names used are pseudonyms to protect anonymity of the participants. The analysis of the interviews is then described. Finally, the themes generated from the data collected and their relationship to the research questions are presented.

### **Description of Participants**

Eleven parents initially agreed to participate. One of those parents did not attend the scheduled meeting and did not respond to calls to reschedule. A second parent was not called to return after a brief initial meeting during which I determined that the participant seemed to have an understanding that this process would be therapeutic in nature. I referred



the parent to a community agency that I felt might best meet his needs. All of the participants were involved in a voluntary program that was sponsored by the district in which the research took place.

The participants were between 27 and 65 years of age ( $M = 43$ ). Three of the nine participants were male. One participant was the grandparent and legal guardian of the child enrolled in the school district. One married couple participated. They were each interviewed separately and additionally had one interview together. Participants reported attending school between three and twelve years in their country of origin ( $M = 6$ ). Countries of origin of participants included Ecuador, Peru, Mexico, the United States, and the Dominican Republic. All of the participants reported that their children received free or reduced meals at the schools attended.

### **Case Profiles**

#### **Case 1: Sofia**

At the time of this interview Sofia was a 38-year-old Ecuadorian mother of five daughters, 10 to 22 years of age. Two of her children were born in the United States and three were born in Ecuador. All five children now reside in the United States. Sofia resides with her husband, three youngest children, the brother of her husband, and a friend of the family. During the time of this interview Sofia was in remission from non-malignant leukemia.

Sofia lived and attended school in the countryside of Ecuador. She completed four years of study. Sofia's parents did not attend school and were unable to read or write. When Sofia no longer attended school, at age 9, she worked in the family fields with her mother and took care of the animals. She also started to work cooking and washing for others. At

the age of 17 Sofia became a housekeeper. Sofia left Ecuador for the United States when she was 24 years old, following the father of her third child. Their daughter, an infant at that time, remained in Ecuador with Sofia's mother. At the time of the interview their daughter had just reunited with the family at age 14. Since coming to the United States, Sofia has worked at a variety of jobs and was working for a dry cleaning company.

### **Case 2: Miguel**

Miguel was a 35-year-old Ecuadorian father of three daughters, 10 to 14 years of age at the time of the interview. Two of his three daughters were born in the United States. The oldest child, a daughter, was born in Ecuador. Miguel's oldest daughter had recently reunited with the family in the United States after living with her maternal grandmother and aunt for the past 14 years. Miguel is the husband of Case 1 – Sofia. Miguel resides with Sofia, his three daughters, brother, and family friend.

Miguel lived and attended school in the countryside of Ecuador, completing Grade 6. Miguel recalled that his father completed fifth grade and his mother Grade 2. After completing Grade 6 at 13 years old, Miguel ran away from home and went to work on a banana plantation. He lived with others who worked in the same fields. Miguel left Ecuador when he was 20 years old. He came to the United States because he felt he needed to find work to provide for his new family. Additionally, his father did not approve of the woman who had his child and whom he wanted to marry. His father sent him to the United States to get Miguel away from the woman to whom he is now married. After coming to the United States, Miguel worked in a number of jobs. At the time of the interview he was working for a dry cleaning company.

### **Case 3: Isabella**

At the time of the interview Isabella was a 42-year-old Ecuadorian mother of four children, two girls and two boys, 5 to 9 years old. All four of Isabella's children were born in the United States. Isabella lives with her four children and her spouse. Isabella's youngest son is in a special education program. Isabella stated that the doctors have told her that her son has "mental retardation."

Isabella attended school in the countryside of Ecuador, completing Grade 6. At that time she lived with both her parents and grandparents. Isabella stated that neither her parents nor grandparents attended school and did not know how to read or write. Isabella completed Grade 6 at the age of 13. At that time she began working in the fields full time. She left Ecuador at age 31 to find work in the United States. After arriving in the United States, she worked at a number of jobs. Isabella stated that she was a stay-at-home mom.

### **Case 4: Antonella**

Antonella was a 48-year-old Ecuadorian mother of six children, four boys and two girls, 6 to 30 years of age at the time of the interview. Antonella's three oldest children were born and continue to reside in Ecuador. Her three younger children were born in the United States and live with Antonella in their home. Antonella's husband returned to Ecuador four years prior to the date of the interview due to residency status.

Antonella attended school in the Ecuadorian countryside, completing Grade 6. She then attended an academy to learn to sew. Antonella's mother died when she was three years old. Her father and a woman she referred to as her stepmother raised Antonella and her siblings. Antonella was unsure if her father or stepmother attended school, but thought her mother had because she had been told her mother was a nurse.

After leaving school Antonella worked in the fields for many years. Seeking a “better life” for their family, Antonella’s husband came to the United States. Antonella followed eight months later at age 33. Their three oldest children, 15, 7, and 4, remained in Ecuador with the paternal grandparents. After arriving in the United States, Antonella worked in a number of positions. At the time of the interview she was working in an area grocery store.

### **Case 5: Mariana**

Mariana was a 65-year-old Dominican woman who was the legal guardian of her 8-year-old granddaughter. In addition to her grandchild, Mariana has five adult children, 37 to 53 years of age, three female and two male. Her adult children were all born in the Dominican Republic. Four of her five adult children reside in the United States, one has returned to the Dominican Republic. Mariana’s adult children were of school age when they came to the United States. They attended some school in the US but none of the children completed high school. The boys left school at 15 years of age. One daughter left school at the age of 13; the other two daughters stayed in school longer but Mariana states that they did not graduate. Mariana lives with her granddaughter.

Mariana attended school in the countryside of the Dominican Republic, completing Level 3. Mariana reported that after she stopped attending school at age 8, she went to work in the fields with her parents and eleven siblings. They worked each day from dawn to dark. Mariana stated that neither her mother nor father attended school.

Mariana had her first child at age 12, her second at age 14. She continued to work in the fields until she found work as a domestic. She cleaned houses to provide for her children. Mariana left the Dominican Republic at 33 years of age to improve herself and to give

something better to her children because she felt she had little in the Dominican Republic. When Mariana came to the United States her children remained with family members until reuniting two years later.

After coming to the United States Mariana worked at a number of jobs. At the time of the interview she was caring for an elderly man as a nurses aide with a local agency. Mariana had been caring for the same man for 13 years.

### **Case 6: Emily**

Emily was a 53-year-old Peruvian mother of one daughter, age 10. Her daughter was born in the United States. Emily lives alone with her daughter.

Emily lived and attended school in the capital city of Lima, Peru. She completed high school in a school at which students learn a trade. Emily became a commercial secretary and worked for an accountant in Peru. She stated that her mother did not attend school. Her father did attend but did not graduate from high school.

Emily married at age 18. After marrying, she and her husband came to the United States seeking a better life. After arriving in the United States Emily worked cleaning commercial buildings as well as a number of other jobs. At the time of the interview Emily was employed as a nanny.

### **Case 7: Camila**

Camila was a 27-year-old Puerto Rican American mother of four children, two boys and two girls, 4 to 11 years of age at the time of the interview. Camila resides with her fiancée and four children. Her fiancée is the biological father of the two younger children.

Camila was the first of those participating in the parent program to express her desire to be interviewed for this study. She does not identify herself as Puerto Rican American, she

relates more closely to her Puerto Rican background. Although she was born in the United States, Camila spent part of her adolescence in the care of her maternal aunt in Puerto Rico and attended school in Puerto Rico. Her parents were both born and raised in Puerto Rico. Camila's life story in many ways parallels the stories of participants born and raised in countries other than the United States, indicating a strong cultural component.

Camila attended school in the United States completing Grade 7. At that time she was sent to Puerto Rico to live with a relative. While there she attended Grades 8 and 9. When she returned to the United States she re-entered Grade 9 but dropped out of school after becoming pregnant at age 15. Camila later received her diploma through the Even Start program.

Camila stated that her parents attended schools in Puerto Rico. Her mother completed Grade 6 and she did not know what grade her father completed, but he did not complete high school. Camila was working for the Head Start program and was working towards her certificate as a Child Development Associate (CDA) through online courses.

#### **Case 8: Tomas**

Tomas was a 36-year-old Mexican father of three boys, 5 to 10 years of age. All three boys were born in the United States. Tomas resides with his wife and children.

Tomas was born in and attended school in an urban area of Mexico. Tomas completed Level 3 of primary school. Following the death of his father when he was 5 the family moved. Tomas went to school but soon left. It was at this time that Tomas, age 9, began selling candy on the streets of the city to help financially support the family. At age 11 Tomas began working for a mason. He continued that work until age 17.

At 17 Tomas left Mexico for the United States seeking better work with better pay. He came to the United States with family members. Shortly after he arrived in the US, Tomas found work with a painting company and has continued to work with that company for 17 years.

**Case 9: Javier**

Javier was a 47-year-old Ecuadorian father of four children, three boys and one girl, at the time of the interview. Two of his children were born and reside in Ecuador. His two younger children were born and reside in the United States. Javier lives with his wife and two youngest children.

Javier was born and attended school in the Ecuadorian countryside. He completed the US equivalent of high school in Ecuador. Javier's father died when Javier was 1 year old, and because of this Javier and his siblings were needed to help support the family financially. This required all of the children to work while attending school. Javier recalls working in the fields at the age of five, planting corn and caring for the animals.

After leaving school, having completed Grade 12, Javier worked for a company driving buses, trucks, and cars. He later saved enough money to purchase his own small truck and worked for himself as a driver. At 35 years of age Javier and his wife left Ecuador, coming to the United States to earn money to create a better life for his children in Ecuador. The couple wanted to earn enough money for the children remaining in Ecuador to continue their education there. One child remained in Ecuador with the maternal grandmother. The second child remained in Ecuador with his biological mother. Upon arriving in the United States, Javier found work at a landscape nursery. He has continued to work for the same nursery for twelve years.

## **Findings**

After professional transcription and translation, the interviews were read and reread and I began the analysis of the data. The first phase of coding, initial coding (Charmaz, 2011), generated 100 codes (see Appendix I). Charmaz suggests coding with four selected practices: word-by-word coding, line-by-line coding, incident-to-incident coding, or the use of comparative methods. Line-by-line coding was selected, utilizing *in vivo* to ensure that the participants' descriptions of events stayed as close as possible to the meaning intended and to capture the participants' voices in the coding (Charmaz, 2011). After initial attempts at line-by-line coding, it was determined that incident-to-incident coding would better support the analysis of the data. Charmaz (2011) refers to incident-to-incident coding as the "close cousin" (p. 53) of line-by-line coding. Incident-to-incident coding supports the researcher in developing ideas that arise across observations and interviews when attempting to step into the life of a participant. As ideas evolve the researcher can then compare incidences, sorting like and dissimilar events across participants. In the second phase of coding, focused coding (Charmaz, 2011), the original list of 100 codes was condensed to 40 codes and subcodes (see Appendix J). Codes were condensed or eliminated because they occurred infrequently, were redundant, or were able to be merged with like codes. These codes guided the generation of five themes.

### **Development of Themes**

Using an inductive approach, themes were generated from empirical data produced from participants' interview transcripts. Techniques suggested by Ryan and Bernard (2003) to draw themes from data, repetition, and the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 2012) were used. The process began with line-by-line coding as initial coding



(Charmaz, 2011) and was later changed to incident-to-incident coding. According to Charmaz (2011) the goal at this phase of coding is to remain open to the exploration of any theoretical possibilities that can be pulled from the data. During this initial phase of coding, key phrases were marked and notes were jotted about the emerging concepts. Constant comparative methods were used while viewing statements within the same interview, as well as statements made in interviews with different participants. Data were also compared in earlier and later interviews when applicable. In vivo codes were used whenever possible to maintain the voice of the participant through the interview. Through the second phase, focused coding (Charmaz, 2011), the most significant and frequent codes were used to sift through the data, and decisions were made as to which codes to categorize to move toward a more analytic framework. After coding, cross-case analyses, and within-case analyses, five overarching themes emerged. These themes will be discussed in detail in the next section.

**Poverty.** Theme one refers primarily to poverty in the participants' countries of origin, but also emerged as an on-going theme for participants in their financial conditions at the time of the interview. Theme one emerged from the following five codes: access to school, Exposure to violence, family separation/leaving home country, loss of loved ones, and lack of opportunity.

**Identity.** This theme relates to how participants view themselves within the context of their own world. Participant identity supports many of the aspects of this research and is closely linked to how participants perceive success as well as to what expectations they hold for their children. Theme two emerged from the following three codes: attitudes towards school, self-image/self-worth, and outlook on their lives, past, present, and future.

**Defining success.** This theme refers to the manner in which participants define the qualities held by persons with whom they identify as having success in life. Theme three emerged from the following four codes: academic achievement, ability to provide, effort, and respect.

**Expectations and aspirations.** This theme refers to the desired expectations and aspirations held by the participants for their children. Theme four emerged from the following four codes: education, better life through study, better than me/not like me, and the participant's message to child.

**Be somebody.** This statement, "be somebody," was a recurring response by participants when asked several different questions related to what participants wanted for the future of their children. Although this term lacks a concrete definition, the pervasive nature of this response within and among the nine interviews led to the emergence of the term as a theme.

### **Discussion of Themes**

In this section, each of the five themes is discussed in detail. For each theme, evidence from the data is presented to support the identification of the topic. The evidence presented is shown in the form of direct quotes, paraphrased statements, and the researcher's interpretations of the data from interviews and coding memos. All participants are identified by their pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

Each theme will be discussed in order. First, a description of each theme is presented. Next, support from the codes informing the theme will be provided from the data of all participants. Following that a summary of the theme in relation to the research question(s) is

addressed. Finally, after all themes are discussed, a summary is provided at the end of the chapter.

### **Theme One: Poverty**

The theme of poverty was pervasive within and among all nine interviews. All participants reported living in conditions of poverty in their country of origin. Additionally, at the time of the interview, the children of each of the participants received free lunch under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) income eligibility guidelines. Children from families with incomes at or below 130% of the poverty level income rate are eligible for free meals (USDA, 2013).

Research indicates that families living in chronic poverty face multiple stressors impacting their ability to make decisions and plan beyond meeting immediate family needs. These stressors can lead to health issues, substance abuse within the family, domestic violence, and lack of education. Environmental factors such as lack of opportunities for employment, quality of or access to quality health care, quality of available education, or violence within the community may also add to tensions affecting those living in chronic poverty (Dyk, 2004; Seccombe, 2000).

In the results of a survey published by the Pew Hispanic Center (Fry & Lopez, 2012) the primary reason given by Hispanic immigrants for coming to the United States was for better economic opportunities. More than half of respondents (55%) identified this as their main reason for leaving their home country. In this same survey, 87% of respondents said the opportunity to get ahead was better in the United States than in their country of origin.

Poverty is a complex construct. At its most simplistic, poverty is indicated by a lack of material wealth or belongings. However, the complexity of poverty can be indicated by a

lack of basic human needs and rights resulting in challenging life circumstances as reflected in the codes emergent in the data. Theme one was supported by five codes: access to school, Exposure to violence, family separation and/or reason for leaving home country, loss of loved ones, and lack of opportunity.

**Access to school.** The code, access to school, supported the theme of poverty. Each of the participants reported that he or she did attend school for some period of time. For seven of the nine participants the school attended was located a distance from their homes. To attend school they had to make the long walk each day in conditions that were at times difficult. Sofia explained, “For the kids to get to where they used to teach us was hard to get to, for them (teachers) too. Sometimes we waited an hour, two hours. They didn’t come. There, they were not responsible.” Antonella explained that during her walk to and from school, “the girls would pull my hair and pinch me.” She explained that she did not like this part of school.

Physical accessibility comprises just one part of this picture of access to school. When I asked Mariana if she thought she and her 11 siblings did not attend school because of money she stated:

I don’t think it was because of the money, maybe it was.... How can I tell you, because of the mistake of being ignorant, and one is like.... stupid. We all went some years only. They [parents] took us out to work. Since dawn in the morning we were already in the land.

Of the nine participants, eight stated that neither parent had attended school or had not attended school for any significant period of time. The ninth participant, Antonella, was unsure if her mother had attended. She passed away when Antonella was a young child. The

woman who raised Antonella did not attend school. Isabella lived part of her young life in the care of her grandparents. I asked her if her grandparents told her anything about school and she responded, “They didn’t say anything. It was nothing. It wasn’t important to them.”

When discussing the cost of education, each participant told me that there was no tuition fee to attend school, but there were additional costs that needed to be considered. Although families did not have to pay tuition for a child to attend, they were responsible for paying for all supplies including materials for the upkeep of the school, school supplies for the child, and uniforms. Uniforms were required for all students attending public schools.

Another barrier to school attendance was the loss of income of the child worker while attending school. Seven of the participants reported that they were needed to work to help to support the family. Tomas was one of the participants who lived in a more urban area than the other participants. I asked Tomas if it he thought it was hard for his mom to make the decision for him to stop going to school at 9 years old. He responded, “I made the decision. I was young but I saw my mom struggling, and I just decided to leave school and to start working, and saving money at home for my brothers.” Eight of nine participants, including those participants who attended school for the longest periods of time, talked about how early their days would start, caring for their own animals raised by the family for food, and the number of responsibilities they had. They would leave school to work in the fields with their parents or the girls would be responsible for cooking for the whole family while they worked the fields. Mariana related her story:

I started working when I was seven years old and a little bit. I had to stand on a stool. I cooked the food to take to my mom to the coffee plantation. I parboiled a potato, yucca, the things I took her to eat.

When making the decision to continue with school or go to work Miguel stated, “I talked to my mother, she said she needed help and I went to work to have something to help her with.”

**Exposure to violence.** Eight of the nine participants’ stories included reports of exposure to violence. These incidences occurred within the participants’ homes, schools, and within their communities. Reports of alcohol related to the abuse also emerged in some but not all of the interviews. For the most part participants’ stories related to physical abuse, but in some cases reports included verbal abuse as well. Tomas recalled that while working for a mason, as a young boy of eleven, people would throw bricks at him, scream at him, and “called me pig.” After identifying school as her “safe environment,” Camila stated:

I don’t want my kids to suffer the way I did. So I don’t treat my kids the way my parents treated us. They used to call me ‘nigger’... Not just only the hitting, there were drugs involved, and liquor, and all that stuff.

Isabella retold the story that her grandfather told her of being beaten so much as a child that he ran away from home and grew up as a “street child.”

Corporal punishment at school was discussed by five of the nine participants. All five participants attended schools in rural areas, three from Ecuador and one from the Dominican Republic. Mariana reported that the teachers could hit the children for any reason because “parents gave them the authorization.” The children were hit with a big ruler or a belt. Antonella added that she never wanted to ask questions at school because they would be taken out to the slate-board and “embarrassed,” and the other students would laugh. Isabella described the teachers at her school as being “very bad.” Isabella explained what she meant with further detail:

The teachers were very bad there, because they had these rubbers, the ones they use to tie animals. They had a piece of those and they hit the boys in the back, they hit them... They hit the animals more though.

The most vivid response to the use of corporal punishment at school came from Sofia. Sofia spoke with a general dislike of the teachers in her country of origin. She frequently compared the teachers in the United States to the teachers in Ecuador. Sofia believed that the teachers in the United States “are good to kids...they look for ways to help them; they give them psychological help.” In contrast to this she spoke of teachers who not only “took a stick and beat us” but also spoke of a teacher who “liked to punish us.” Sofia related the following story:

There was once that one of our teachers came to this country [United States]...and my schoolmates came over here. Since the teacher who taught us was not a teacher here, to avenge themselves, they hit him, they grabbed him and they beat him because now he was unable to beat us.

Participants also disclosed information related to abuse in their homes toward their mother by their father. Six of the nine participants shared memories of this type of abuse. Sofia talked with me about her brother who left home at age 9 because, “he couldn’t deal with the fact that my dad hit my mom a lot. So he went out looking for money to give to my mom.” Emily stated that this was a part of the environment that she grew up in stating, “That happened with my sister, my niece. It’s common you know because we grew that way in this environment.” Emily explained further:

I saw sometime my, my daddy hurt my mom. He go (sic) drinking into the night and everybody is afraid because maybe he's coming to hit my mom. And everybody is sleeping with my mom to save her, you know?

Emily later talked about being abused by her husband as well. When Antonella discussed her father she replied, "men are men." Two participants shared stories of their own physical abuse in the home. Sofia described her home environment:

My father was very severe with me. We were always, how can I tell you, scared. Always we had to look forward to see if he came because sometimes he would be drunk.... We would hide so he would not hit anybody.

Of the three participants who did not report abuse of the mother in the home, two had fathers who had passed away when the participants were 1 and 5 years old, respectively. They did not report any other adult male living in the home after the deaths of their fathers. The third participant lived for much of her young life with her grandparents alone, and then later with her mother, stepfather, and grandparents.

**Family separation/Leaving country of origin.** Family separation was a recurring topic and was embedded in the issue of poverty. Seven of the nine participants left their home countries for the United States seeking a better life and financial stability for themselves and their families. The following statements are representative of the reasons participants gave for leaving their home countries:

- Emily said, "I bring my brother, I bring my sister. For a better life!"
- Isabella said, "To do something. There you work all day, but only get about three dollars, when I was there, for a day of work."



- Tomas said, “I was praying to be, to do something that it was going to help me out and that’s how at that time my brother came... Well money, that’s what makes everybody come here.”
- Mariana said, “To improve, to improve a little bit, or to give something better to my kids, because there I really did not have a lot.”
- Antonella said, “I thought that here it was a better life.”
- Miguel said, “ I told my father, ‘I need to look for a way of living because I am older.... Look for new ways there [United States].’”
- Javier said, “I came because I was married at the time and let’s say to buy a house or get something for the future, to give a good education to my family we needed money. I saw possibilities to give my family an education and give them everything.”

Of the two remaining participants, one gave as the reason for leaving her home country that she wanted to follow the man she loved. They married here in the United States. The final participant was born in the United States to parents of Puerto Rican descent so this was not applicable to her story.

The desire to make a better life for their families was pervasive throughout each of the interviews. As shown above, this was a primary motivating factor for participants leaving their home countries. In discussion of leaving their countries, participants spoke of separations this created within their families. Five of the participants left young children in the care of family members in their home countries to come to the United States. Residency status sometimes interfered with the ability of parents to see their children for many, many years. In Antonella’s case, she has not seen her children in Ecuador since leaving the country

16 years earlier. For many of the participants this was a source of multiple emotions: sorrow, sadness, guilt, and suffering.

Antonella attempted unsuccessfully to bring her children to the United States. She felt that the paternal grandparents wanted the children to work so they took them out of school. Antonella stated that although she told her son that he needed to stay in school and study he was “under their [grandparents] orders” and had to abide by their rules. Antonella said, “I didn’t fight for my other boy. Of that I was guilty.” When speaking of her attempt to bring her daughter, thirteen at the time, to the United States, Antonella talks about becoming fearful for her daughter’s safety. Antonella became tearful stating, “I wanted her by my side, but...but...that’s the way things are.” The daughter ended her journey and returned safely to Ecuador. In our last interview Antonella spoke of the challenges she was facing. She now has three children here with her, and her husband, the father of all six of her children, returned to Ecuador. His residency status made him unable to remain in this country. Antonella talked of their separation with great sadness.

Mariana separated from her five children to come to the United States in search of a better life. Her children ages 4 through 14 remained in the Dominican Republic with the paternal grandmother and maternal aunt. Two years after arriving in the US, Mariana was able to bring three of her five children to live with her. The children had not attended school in the Dominican Republic and according to Mariana resisted school in the United States. This made the transition for the children very difficult. Mariana states, “They went to school, but they didn’t want to study, almost none of them wanted to study.” Mariana speaks sadly that her boys, “didn’t take the good way.” Both male children had difficulty with drugs and “went to the streets” after leaving school at 14 and 15 years old. Mariana’s youngest son was

deported after being arrested. Her oldest son is currently in prison in the United States. He is the father of the granddaughter who Mariana is raising. The mother of her granddaughter brought the child to stay with Mariana when she was having trouble, and never returned for her. Mariana revealed that to provide for her children after they came to the United States she sometimes worked three jobs daily, sleeping only an hour to an hour and a half each day. She expressed feeling “guilty” that she was working day and night and was not able to help her children. Mariana feels that because of this, “they got off track.” Mariana also feels that she does so much more for her granddaughter than she did for her own children adding to her feelings of guilt.

The issue of separation for Sofia and Miguel, who are married, is multi-faceted. Sofia discussed her brother leaving home at the age of 9. Sofia states that he left because he couldn’t deal with the fact that her dad hit their mom a lot, but also that he left “looking for money to give to my mom.” Sofia conveyed the sadness her mother felt. “My mom cried a lot because she didn’t know where he was. There’s a lot of delinquency in Ecuador, so she thought he might already be...;” implying that her brother may have been believed to be dead. The uncertainty of her brother’s well-being was hard on the family.

Sofia was pregnant when Miguel left Ecuador for the United States. When Sofia joined Miguel in the United States one year after he arrived, Sofia separated from her 8-month-old daughter and her two older children from previous relationships, ages 8 and 6 years old. The children remained with the maternal grandmother until she passed away and then went to live with their maternal aunt. Sofia also discussed having to leave the two older girls, one a newborn and the other 2 years old, with her mother to try to earn money to support them. Sofia was just 17 when she left to work as a domestic.

At the time of the interview two of the children who were living in Ecuador had come to the United States and reunited with Sofia, Miguel, and their two sisters who were born in the United States. When asked if their 14-year-old daughter adapted well to coming to live with them. Miguel said, "I didn't even know her. I met her here." Sofia stated, "She didn't [adapt]. Not at first. She didn't have any friends. She wasn't in school. She only knew us. At the beginning it was hard. Sometimes she is overwhelmed." The older of the two daughters that came from Ecuador is not Miguel's biological child. She attended school in Ecuador completing six years. After she completed her schooling, Grade 6, she remained at home. Since arriving in the United States she has gotten a job at a factory.

Javier also had two children in Ecuador. One child lived with the maternal grandmother for a period of time but now lives with the paternal aunt. The other child lived with his biological mother. Javier talks to both of his children each week. Javier came to the United States to be able to send money to the boys in Ecuador to be able to keep them in school. He felt that he has been able to do that. He also felt that the older son who lives with the aunt might have done better in school if he were there to guide him more closely and is concerned that because they send him money to buy everything, he is not responsible. Javier felt that the child who lives with his biological mother has her to talk to him all the time and that makes a difference.

Camila also spoke of the separation of her family. Although Camila was born in the United States she spoke of many of the same issues as those born outside of the United States. Camila's parents were from Puerto Rico. Camila stated that her mother attended school until Grade 6 and she was unsure of how long her father attended but knew he did not finish high school. Issues of drug and alcohol abuse, as well as physical abuse in the home

caused Camila's mother to send Camila and her siblings to live in Puerto Rico with her maternal aunt. Camila described this time as a good time for her. Her aunt was a nurse. Camila described her as very strict but that she "guided them." She stated that this aunt treated them as if they were her own children. After living for two years with her aunt in Puerto Rico, Camila returned to live with another maternal aunt. She stayed there until she moved in with her boyfriend at 15.

The three male participants in the study also discussed separation from their mothers. Miguel, Tomas, and Javier talked of very strong bonds with their mothers and the difficulty they had in leaving their home countries and separating from them. Miguel said, "I really loved my mom, it was hard to come here." Tomas and Javier's fathers both passed away when the men were very young. They both reported that their mothers were very strong figures in their lives. Javier said, "My mother taught me to be a good man." They both attributed their success as men to their mothers. It was difficult for the men to leave their mothers.

**Loss of loved ones.** The death of loved ones was common among the participants. Those who suffered these losses discussed how the death of family members influenced their families. Tomas' father was murdered when Tomas was just 5 years old. He had an older sister and two younger brothers. Javier was just 1-year-old and the youngest of nine children when his father died from a fall related to alcohol. Camila lost her very good friend whom she looked up to and admired when she was murdered by her husband. As stated previously, the stressors of chronic poverty may lead to higher incidences of substance abuse, domestic violence, and higher incidences of living in unsafe environments (Dyk, 2004; Seccombe, 2002).

Miguel talked about his close relationship with his grandparents. He stated, “When I was about to finish school my grandmother died. That was very hard for me. It was a big shock to me.” Antonella’s mother passed away at the age of 23. Antonella was just 3 years old with two younger brothers, 2 years and 6 months of age. She was unable to state the cause of her mother’s death. Antonella shared that she suffered even though her stepmother was good to her. Sofia talked about the loss of her siblings. Sofia’s mother gave birth to twelve children, eight of whom passed away. Five of the children died at birth or shortly there after, one at 6 years old, one at 10 years, and one at age 14. Sofia did not know the causes of death. Mariana lost a son at the age of 5. She did not share the causes of death. This may have been indicative of the quality of, or access to, medical care in the areas that participants lived (Dyk, 2004; Seccombe, 2002).

**Lack of opportunity.** The theme of poverty was also reflected in the discussions of participants related to the availability of opportunities in their home countries. As stated previously, nearly all of the participants related that they left their countries of origin seeking a better life and/or financial security. Supporting this were the discussions regarding the lack of opportunities that participants felt they had available to them in their home countries. Tomas stated that he thought he would be in the United States three years; long enough to earn enough money to help his family in Mexico. The opportunities in the United States were greater than the opportunities he could see for himself in his home country. The following statements are representative of the views of the participants:

- Sofia said, “We had no opportunities to choose. The truth is I didn’t expect to do anything, or rather nothing because my parents didn’t have anything. All we ever had was work to do.”

- Antonella said, “We lived our life for food. I think that I do with my life [sic], nothing here [Ecuador].”
- Isabella said, “The way it is there. You work. I didn’t have the possibilities to do, to continue to study.”
- Emily said, “In my country they don’t have nothing, nothing for to do. Everybody is running out.”
- Mariana said, “When I was a child I wanted to be a police officer. My childhood was very limited to working with my father so there were no possibilities for me.”
- Javier said, “I never thought about what I would be when I grew up. I knew only that I would work.”

The need to see possibilities or opportunities in the future was a driving factor of participants in choosing to immigrate to the United States. This discussion of opportunities emerges again when discussing the participants’ expectations for their children.

### **Theme One Summary and Relation to Research Questions**

To summarize, theme one was a pervasive theme of poverty. Theme one permeates Research Questions One, Two, and Three. All participants identified themselves as having grown up in poverty. Additionally some of the participants described current financial challenges, and each of the participants’ children received free or reduced-price meals based on USDA income eligibility guidelines. The complexity of poverty is evident in each of the voices of the participants. Participants spoke with consistency of incidences of abuse, family separations, loss of loved ones, their reasons for leaving their home countries, and what they viewed as a lack of opportunity in their home country. Each participant’s story revealed how deeply the consequences of poverty have reached into his or her personal history.

Theme one addressed Research Question Two on the ways in which the personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents influence their families' experiences. The theme of poverty was pervasive throughout all of the participant interviews.

Four of nine participants reported abuse in the home, which has influenced the way in which they parent. For example, Miguel and Sofia shared that they do not want to "force" their children to do things. They referred to their parents as ordering them to do things. They would like their children to try things for themselves. Sofia believes if she forces an idea on her children of what to be in the future they will rebel. Camila also spoke adamantly that she would never treat her children the way she was treated. She does not want them to suffer as she has suffered from her parents' abuse. Emily reported abuse by her husband. She shared that she tells women that men cannot abuse them in the United States. She encourages women to call the police if they are abused. Emily also shared that she talks to her daughter about how a husband or boyfriend should treat women. Sofia and Miguel also stated that they would not tolerate anyone mistreating their daughters. Sofia shared that she did not believe her daughters would stay with a man that mistreated them. She stated that her husband has set a good example for her daughters because he treats her well.

Three of the nine participants stated that the reason they were unable to attend school to Grade 6 in their country of origin was because they were needed to work and earn money to help support the family. Three other participants stated they did not continue school after Grade 6 because of the cost and the need to work. Javier continued to Grade 12 after working for three years upon his completion of Grade 6. He went back to finish his education while working full days.



Six of the nine participants shared that their families' poverty kept them from having their own dreams as children. As Isabella stated, "We were very poor. I didn't have an option. It's the way it is there, you go to work." Poverty also limited their dreams for themselves. For example, Javier shared, "When I was little what I dreamed was that my mom, she didn't have possibilities, but in my dream because we did not have a gas kitchen we cooked on wood, my dream was to have that."

All of the participants were adamant that their children would get an education. Participants identified education as the way for their children to have a better future, be more successful, to have more or be better than the participant, or to be "somebody." Poverty and the stressors that occur in chronic poverty created limitations on participants' opportunities for schooling and their dreams for their futures. All of the participants spoke of the many opportunities their children will have and they view education as the vehicle to achieving those opportunities. Javier stated that his son and daughter living here in the United States have more opportunities than his children in Ecuador. Javier has many dreams for his son, but stated that he knows he has to respect his son's opinion on what he would like to do. Antonella also sees her children living here having more opportunities than the children in Ecuador but equates this to a different way of thinking in Ecuador. She stated, "They take a different way to live. As long as they have enough for the day, but I tell them it is not like that." Sofia stated that her daughters have many more opportunities than she and her husband had and she wants them to choose what they will do in the future pursuing a career that they would like and will make them happy. Emily tells her daughter that anything is possible for her if she continues to try and works hard. Participants also spoke of supporting their children in school.

Seven of nine participants said they would do whatever they needed to support their children in their education. Mariana stated that she would, “fight for her granddaughter.” Javier identified support as a big difference between his schooling and his son’s schooling here in the United States. When asked how school was different for his son, Javier stated, “He has me.” Although Javier had a loving relationship with his mother, she attended school for only a brief time and was not able to help him with his schoolwork. This desire to provide emotional and financial support to enable their children to pursue their educations is another indicator of how strongly participants feel about their child attaining an education.

Poverty also had influence in participants’ current living situations. Sofia stated that they work so many hours that they have little energy when they come home for the children. She shared that if she and her husband had more education perhaps they would have different jobs that they would not be so tired from, and would not have to work so many hours giving them more time to be with the children. Antonella shared that she has had to request to change her work hours to get her children to school. This caused her hours to be reduced and she is now struggling financially. Antonella wants her children to have good jobs so “their families don’t lose out.” She also stated that having money creates less stress in families.

Participants’ experiences related to growing up in environments of poverty had an impact on the variety of ways in which participants viewed themselves, their children, and living in the United States. The influence of these experiences encompassed school experiences as well as experiences within the family home.

## **Theme Two: Identity**

The theme of identity emerged from the identification of data related to how the participants view themselves as well as how they view themselves within the context of their

own worlds (Erikson, 1963). Theme two emerged from the following three codes: attitude towards school, self-image or self-worth, and outlook on life (past, present, and future).

**Attitude toward school.** Attitude toward school was explored with each of the participants. As stated previously, participants attended school for varying lengths of time. Participants reported attending school between three and twelve years in their country of origin ( $M = 6$ ). Regardless of the length of time attended, all participants reported that they liked school. Participants who reported the use of corporal punishment at school still reported that they liked school.

Sofia, the participant who reported negative feelings towards the teachers, stated that she liked school. Sofia completed four years of school in Ecuador. She said that her father “was not able to give me all six years of studies.” Sofia felt the work was easy but would have gotten harder if she had continued. When asked what part of school she liked best Sofia responded, “I liked doing the handwork, putting things together.” When asked if her parents had wanted her to continue her schooling, Sofia said, “They had also not studied. They didn’t know how to read or write either.” Sofia did not recall either parent telling her anything about school. She only recalled being told that, “they would have to work to get along.” Sofia expressed her feelings about how important she believes school is. She tells her daughters, “Study so that you don’t suffer what I have suffered and continue to suffer for not having studied.”

Miguel completed six years of school in Ecuador. Miguel also reported that he liked school. Miguel’s parents were very strict about school. They required him to get good grades or they would not get him the sneakers he needed to play soccer or they would not get him a present for Christmas. Miguel states that he was an average student. He explained,

“The day you would stand out, it [grade] will be a 20. On an exam I got 14 or 13, I think math. They didn’t buy me the shoes. That’s it!” Miguel liked school because of the things he learned and all the friends he had stating, “so I felt good there.” His parents wanted him to continue his schooling but he wanted to be independent and help his mother financially. Miguel expressed that he had “suffered.” When asked what he meant by suffering he explained:

I suffered in a way. If I had finished school in my country I would probably have gotten a professional title. I could have been somebody there. I wouldn’t have had to come here.... Sometimes I hurt my hands. They [children] see me. They see how my hands are. ‘Look, that happens because I didn’t finish school and I have to work hard.’

Antonella attended school in Ecuador where she completed Grade 6. Antonella said, “I liked to go, we learned. I liked that. But one has the mind like just imagining, restless, restless. I didn’t understand the stories.” Antonella shared with me that she was “ashamed” to talk at school. She worried that she would be punished for asking questions. Antonella explained that her parents told her she needed to study “so you are not a donkey.” The term Antonella used directly translates to donkey, but is also a colloquial and pejorative word in Spanish to describe a “stupid kid.” Antonella’s responses were conflicting. She talked about her discomfort with school at the same time telling me how much she liked school. Antonella appeared to be very genuine in speaking about how she liked school. This was also consistent with her feelings about the importance of school that she shared throughout our interview sessions.

Antonella stated that her father did not attend school. She was unsure about her mother attending school, but believed she attended for some time because she had been told that her mother was a nurse before she passed away. Her stepmother did not attend school. Antonella reported that her parents told her it was important for her and her brothers and sister to attend school. The children were told, “You have to do things for your good.” Antonella believed school is very important because, “You will find a better job and have better information to share.”

Mariana attended school for three years in the Dominican Republic. Mariana said, “I liked school a lot. I wanted to be a police officer I used to say when I was little.” Mariana stated that in her third year of school the teacher abused her. When asked to tell me more about that later, she stated that the teacher told her to meet him somewhere or he would not allow her to pass to the next grade. She stated that she told the teacher she would get her father and never met with him [teacher]. In an attempt to clarify, I reviewed the original transcript in Spanish and translated it myself. I then reviewed the professional translation, and finally had a second native Spanish speaker review this portion of the text as well. Mariana stated, “*Después entonces ya yo estaba grandecita y entonces maestro se propasó conmigo y yo se lo dije a mi papá y él lo hizo que me sacó de la escuela y no me dejó volver.*” My translation of her statement was, “after I was a big girl then the teacher molested me and I told my dad and he got me out of school and did not leave me again.” The first translation by the professional translator read, “I was older and then my teacher abused me and I told my father and what he did was to take me out of school.” The third translation done by a Spanish speaking professional from Ecuador was, “I was getting older and the classroom teacher started to be improper with me. I told my dad and he took me out of school

completely.” There were nuances in the translations that made it difficult to identify what actually occurred. The statement that she made ended with, “I really liked school.”

Mariana talked about how much she liked school and how sad she was that she could not attend any longer. She liked learning and particularly liked math. Mariana stated that she had many friends and at that time “it was nice to be a kid. At that time we were innocent.” When asked if her parents ever spoke to her or her siblings about school, she replied, “My mom didn’t know, neither my father. They didn’t talk to us about school.”

Mariana’s children came to the United States to reunite with Mariana. They had not attended school in Ecuador and did not want to attend school in the United States. Although Mariana wanted them to attend school, they left. When asked if she thought the lives of her adult children would be different if they remained in school Mariana said, “They would have a better life even if they didn’t study much, but a little. They would not be working so much. They would be more comfortable.” Mariana is raising her granddaughter and when asked what she wants for school for this child she stated, “Mine didn’t study. I want for her that at least she goes further on.”

Tomas attended three years of school in Mexico. He left school to work to help support the family after the death of his father. When asked if he liked school when he did attend Tomas responded, “I missed it.” I also asked if his mother ever talked to him about school or if she wanted him to be in school. Tomas stated, “Probably like any mom, they want the best for their kids, but it didn’t happen.” Tomas tells his children “not to stop school, never stop school.” He stated that if the children do well in school their lives will be better.

Camila was born in the United States. Her parents were both born and raised in Puerto Rico. Camila attended schools in both the United States and in Puerto Rico. She attended school in the community where the research took place from kindergarten through Grade 7. Family issues with substance and physical abuse were the cause of Camila being sent to Puerto Rico to live with her maternal aunt. There she attended schools for Grades 8 and 9. Upon returning she repeated Grade 9 and stayed for a short period of time. Camila left school at 15 when she was pregnant with her first child. When asked why she left school at that time Camila stated, “The kids were making fun of me.”

Camila stated that her mother went through Grade 6. She was not aware of what grade her father completed but knew that he did not complete high school. In response to being asked what her parents told her about school she responded, “I never heard anything from my parents about school.” Camila shared that she did have mentors through the school system. She shared that her mentor talked to her about how important school was to becoming a better person. Camila stated, “It was more like home at school with the mentoring and the teachers, and that stuff. Home was just all fighting.” She referred to school in the United States as “her safe environment.” Camila also felt successful when attending school in Puerto Rico.

Camila returned to school through the Even Start Program and received her high school diploma. She continues to take online courses to earn her certification as a Child Development Associate (CDA). Camila stated that the best part of school, both then and now, besides the sense of security that she had there, is, “learning more and knowing I am becoming a better person than what my parents was (sic).” Camila tells her children that school is very important to them.

Emily attended school in Peru. She stated that she went through the equivalent of what would be high school in the United States. Emily attended a vocational school, as did her six siblings, where she studied to be a commercial secretary. Emily believes that her father sent her and her siblings to vocational school so “they teach you something for your future.” Her oldest brother attended a University in Peru, obtaining a degree in Business Administration. Emily stated that her uncle paid for her brother to continue on in school. When asked if she liked school Emily replied, “Oh, I loved it! I loved it!” Since arriving in the United States Emily has taken English classes for adults and has completed her Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED).

Emily was unsure of what grade level her father had completed but knew that he could read and write. Her mother did not attend school. Emily talked about how her brother and sister taught her mother to write her name. Emily stated that her older brother and sister also helped her with her schoolwork.

Emily identified her father as the biggest influence in her schooling. She states that he always checked to be certain their work was done and asked them if they needed anything for school. Emily remembered her father telling the children, “You need to finish high school, I don’t have money for university, but you have to finish high school.” In contrast, Emily said that her mother “did not know about school because she never went to school.” Her mother did not tell them school was important. Emily said, “My mother don’t (sic) tell us it’s very important school. For her it’s important to you cook, clean. You serve the man. You don’t know cooking, you don’t know to scissor [sew], or clean the house, you not good woman.” Emily tells her daughter, “You need to go to school because it is better for your future. You’ll have your own money, your own car, you not depend on nobody.”



Isabella attended school in Ecuador. She stated that she completed six years of school as did her six siblings. Isabella felt that school was harder in Ecuador than here in the United States. As an example Isabella said, “If you were doing a history sentence I had to learn it in my mind. Read it without looking at the page, memorize. If you didn’t do good they would leave you in the same grade.” Isabella stated that she felt school was different than here. When asked what she liked about school Isabella shared that she liked everything that was taught to her. She liked all subjects but knew more about math.

Isabella shared that because she was the oldest child and neither her mother nor father knew how to read or write, she had no help with her studies. When first asked what her parents told her about school, Isabella replied, “Nothing, they only told us we had to study.” Isabella explained that she felt this was because they did not go to school. She said that she did not know why her mother did not go but she felt her stepfather had not gone to school because she was told he “was lazy and didn’t like to go.” Isabella talked about it being very strict at school. She shared that if students were late to class they were made to stay late and clean the classroom. Isabella was one of the participants who also reported the use of corporal punishment at school.

Isabella talked about the work she had to do after school. When she and her siblings arrived home at one o’clock they would go to work with their parents in the fields and tended to the animals that they cared for. Isabella said that the fields and animals did not belong to her family; they were only under the care of her family. Isabella lived with her grandparents for most of her young life before returning to live with her mother. When asked what her grandparents told her about school she replied, “It wasn’t important for them.”

Isabella states that school is important for her children. She tells them how hard school was in Ecuador and how the teachers mistreated the children. Isabella tells her children it is important for them to “listen and attend well” in school. Isabella also believes, “God wants them to get [education] so that all of them do good in life.”

Javier attended school in Ecuador. He completed 12 years of schooling, the equivalent of high school in the United States, as did all eight of his siblings. Javier reported that he did well in school. He stated that he earned grades of 20 in all of the subjects. This was the highest level you could obtain. Socially, Javier enjoyed school. He knew everyone in school as they were all from the same small town. He was a friend with everyone because they all knew each other.

Javier’s mother was a widow supporting her nine children. Javier stated that attending school was important to his mother. Despite the very long walk to get to the school and her need for help with the fields she required her children to go each day. Javier believed his mother wanted her children to attend school because she felt she had no opportunities without school. Javier reported leaving school around noon, walking to his home, and working in the fields until dark. Even when he was in high school he was never bothered that other children came from more prestigious schools because he had “so much support and willpower” from his mother. Javier said, “Her parents never told her to go to school and she wanted to learn. You have to go to school to learn. The things that you learn everyday will help you.”

Javier said, “My mother told me every day of my life to work hard in school and pay attention to my studies.” Javier stated that this is the same thing he tells his son now. The only difference Javier said, “I am here to help him with everything.”

**Self-image and self-worth.** To interpret participant's views of themselves several sub-codes were utilized; participant source of pride, support systems, faith in God and spirituality, the statements "not like me" and "better than me," language, and suffering. Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs and self-actualization supports these subcodes.

Throughout the interviews with participants, discussion arose regarding what participants felt most proud of. Three of the participants identified their source of pride as their family. For three others, their pride was in their accomplishments. Three of the participants struggled to identify something that they felt pride in.

When Isabella was asked what she was most proud of, she paused for a long period of time. I chose to not prompt her, instead letting her take the time she needed to think. When she did respond she said:

That I have my kids here. That I have. When I came from Ecuador, when I came I suffered a lot in the way I came. It was difficult to come. I came by boat. It took only 12 days for the boat to get here to board from Guatemala. We crossed by foot, walking through the mountains and here in the border we walked also like two or three days. The first time we crossed the desert. The thieves came to steal from us, to kidnap the girl that was with us. We were very tired, and we couldn't even walk. Our legs were hurt and tired. We got there and after the police took us. They deported me twice. The third time I came here.

When asked if that was what she was most proud of, she restated, "I don't know. Just that, it's just that I have." When Isabella was asked if she felt that she was successful, she stated with a laugh, "I don't know." Isabella compared herself to another Ecuadorian who came to the United States at the same time. She stated, "He is doing better. They [he and his wife]

came here almost like me, same year, same time they've been here. I say he is like me [undocumented], but he did a lot."

Isabella has family here in the United States. Both her sister and brother live in the same community that she lives in. Isabella also has cousins in the community. When asked if the family members help each other Isabella replied, "I don't ask them for help. Because we are always working we almost never meet." When asked if she has friends in the community Isabella responded, "No, I don't have many friends. I mostly go with my kids and my husband. We stay there all together, at home."

Isabella talked about her faith. She and her family attend a Catholic church each week and her children go to catechism classes in preparation for receiving the sacraments. Isabella makes reference to God throughout her interview. She stated, "God wants them to get [an education]." Isabella's five-year-old son was diagnosed with mental retardation and she worries about him and "wishes and asks God that he speaks soon."

Isabella would like to be able to help her children more at home with their homework. She stated that because she does speak English sometimes she is able to help them and sometimes she cannot. She had enrolled three of the children in the afterschool program so they were able to get help with their homework.

Sofia talked about pride as a quality of a successful person. When asked what she was most proud of she stated that she was most proud of her husband. When probing questions were asked, she was unable to expand on her thinking on her of sources of pride. Sofia did state that she wanted her daughters to be successful by their own efforts and "feel proud of themselves for their effort." Sofia is concerned that the example she and her

husband have given their daughters is that they “are dedicated to work and earn money, nothing else.”

Sofia speaks often in her interviews of her suffering. She tells her children to study so they “do not suffer what I have suffered and continue to suffer for not having studied.” Sofia also spoke about the suffering she endured to get to the United States; stating, “I came eight days on a boat on open water, then three weeks by bus and on foot.” Sofia wants her girls “to be prepared in life so they do not suffer like we are.” Sofia also tells her daughters, “Take advantage. Don’t lose out because we would have wished to have what you have now.”

Sofia was diagnosed with non-malignant leukemia five years prior to the interview. She had a tumor in her brain causing blindness and deafness. Sofia underwent treatment and at the time of the first interview stated that she was fine. During that time she stated that she relied heavily on the friend she had. Sofia stated that the facilitator of the Lee y Serás program helped her a lot at that time. Sofia also expressed that the teachers at her daughters’ school helped her as well. They helped with food and clothes for the children. Sofia felt that the teachers also helped the girls because they were so sad. When the family needed to move to a larger home the children had to change schools. Sofia said this was hard for all of them because school was like family to them, the teachers and the students. At the time of the last interview Sofia explained that she had been back in the hospital for illness related to the effects of the treatment of leukemia with radiation. Sofia stated that she was well again but tired easily.

When discussing her illness Sofia shared that before she got sick she felt she “mistreated” her daughters. Sofia said, “I don’t know what I had in my head.” She stated that after getting sick and needing them to help her she is no longer “rude” to them.

Sofia would like to help her children more but does not feel that she can. She relies on the school to help the children. They are enrolled in the afterschool program for help with their homework. When they are upset about things she goes to the school to seek help from the teacher or school social worker.

Miguel, who is married to Sofia, was asked what he was most proud of. He replied, “That I have beautiful daughters.” When asked to think about something that he had done or accomplished that he might be proud of, he stated, “I think that it can be more. All the friends that I have here. All that I have suffered with her. My friends tell me I have overcome a lot!” Miguel feels he has “inner strength.” When he discussed his wife’s illness he said:

I’ve been through a lot, many problems with my wife, sometimes economic situations, because sometimes I worked and it wasn’t enough. Sometimes I couldn’t work weeks because I was with her. Sometimes the boss wanted to kick me out of work but I went back begging. Strong and hard.

Miguel stated that he gets help from his brother who lives with him. Miguel has a second brother who also lives in the community. Miguel stated that his brothers do help him with his children. The brothers were very helpful when his wife was ill and in the hospital. At that time Miguel’s brothers would get the children on and off the bus, pick them up from school if they were ill, and would make meals for them.

Miguel identified religion as a big part of his life as a young child when he lived with his grandparents. He describes them as “very, very religious.” They began and ended each day with prayer and before eating meals “the very first thing was to thank God for our blessings.” Miguel said that his family attends mass at the Catholic Church each weekend.

Miguel said that he worries about the girls’ progress in school. He said, “I worry more everyday because I realize that I don’t even understand English.” Miguel tries to help the girls with the things he understands. He related that when he tries to help them with their homework his older daughter would tell him, “Daddy you can’t read this because it’s in English.” Miguel added, “I say now I regret that I did not learn English.” When Miguel feels the girls need help emotionally he seeks the help of the school social worker.

Antonella described her greatest source of pride as her relationship with God. When asked the question, “What are you most proud of?” Antonella stated, “That God keeps us, and I feel healthy and strong.” When asked to elaborate she stated, “God is very important to me. He makes my heart.” Antonella stated that she attends church each week. When asked why religion was so important to her she replied, “God gives us everything...the day, the dawn everything, everything he gave easily...he meets all the needs we have. Although not with money, but with the ideas he puts in our heads.”

When discussing support systems Antonella stated it was hard to be both mother and father. Antonella stated that she does everything by herself. Her husband no longer lives in the United States. At the time of the last interview Antonella shared that she was finding it difficult to work the number of hours that she needs to work to provide for her family and care for the children. Antonella had one sister who lived in the same community as she did. This sister sometimes helped by caring for Antonella’s children. Her sister began working

and no longer helps Antonella. Antonella said that she spoke with her boss about changing her hours and was able to change the starting hour of her workday. She stated that this has helped, but she is not working enough hours.

Antonella shared that she would like to help her children more, especially with their studies. She stated, “It’s important to their lives!” She confirmed that she attended the classes for Spanish speaking parents at the school and had earned eight certificates for completing the classes. Antonella said that when she and her husband first came to the United States she tried to get her husband to take English classes. She said she told her husband, “Let’s learn English. Let’s do it, it is very important. Antonella stated, “He always said ‘No.’ He didn’t pay attention to anything.”

In coding Antonella’s transcribed interview, the code “not like me” occurred six times. Additionally Antonella stated that she told her children, “I don’t want you to fail like me. Fail like me. That you have my life.” Antonella shared that she tells all her children that she wants a better future for them. She said, “I am in my place, I don’t have the requirements. I tell them I cannot look for a good job because I do not have high school.” When asked what she tells her children about school Antonella replied, “Keep studying. That’s the best. If somebody can be successful they have to continue reading.”

When Mariana was asked what she is most proud of she replied:

I had my mother with me until I gave her the last goodbye. I’m very proud because she told me that she didn’t want me to put her in an institution. She wanted to go to Santo Domingo and I went with her and I took care of her until the end.



Mariana stated that this made her feel good about herself. She felt that when she helped her mother that was doing the thing that would help her most. Mariana believed that in helping her mother she was helping God.

Mariana also took pride in her job of caring for an elderly man. During the first two interviews she discussed how she had cared for him for 13 years and felt very close to him. At our third interview, held several months after the first two, she explained that she had gone to the Dominican Republic for two months. Mariana had requested permission for the time off from her employer. When she returned, the man's daughter told she was no longer needed. This was very upsetting to Mariana. She felt she had done a good job caring for the man, had grown to know him well, and would miss him very much. Mariana said if she had known she would be not be with this man when she returned she would not have gone.

I asked Mariana about her faith. She revealed that she has a very strong faith in God and stated, "When you don't have faith in God one can't be strong." Mariana prays the rosary every day and instills this in her granddaughter. Mariana said she prays the most "for my children that are off track." Mariana also stated, "When you help God your Father you don't lack for anything. Sometimes I'm short but with God I lack for nothing."

Mariana stated that she "had little success in life." Mariana related that she felt she had "been through a lot," in her childhood, with her children, and when she lost her home and all her belongings to a cyclone. Mariana also stated that she wanted what every mother wants for her children, for them to be successful. She wanted them to at least finish high school. She very quietly added, "None of them is going to finish." Mariana stated that her own children didn't study, but she will, "God willing," push her granddaughter to "at least" go further on than her own children did.

Mariana talked about support she gets from her family. When she first came to the United States she felt she had very little help. She came with her husband but he returned to the Dominican Republic. At the time of the interviews Mariana stated that her sister did help her with her granddaughter. Her sister sometimes cares for the grandchild when Mariana needs her to. Mariana stated that her daughters help her with things such as paperwork and legal things but are not open to helping her to care for the granddaughter. She has also gotten help from the Hispanic Center in the community. Mariana attends parent activities for Hispanic parents at the school. She feels the sessions help her with her granddaughter.

Mariana worries that if something should happen to her there would be no one to care for her granddaughter. Her daughters have told Mariana that they will not care for the child as they have their own children to take care of. Mariana stated that the child's father would be out of prison in three years. She added, "If God gives me three more years. ... While I am strong I am going to fight for her."

Tomas expressed pride in multiple areas of his life. Tomas shared this statement:  
I'm proud of myself because without my father, I've been doing good. I'm proud of my wife, my family, my sister. It's hard to explain, it's a lot of people that, everybody's been involved in my life and... I don't know how to describe it.  
Tomas added that he is proud that he is able to provide for his family and that his wife is able to be at home with the children and not work. Tomas is proud of how hard he has worked and the quality of the work that he does now as well as his work as a child.

Tomas expressed great pride in his mother. When speaking of his mother his eyes brightened and filled with tears. He credits his mother for his being the man he is today. He

had not seen his mother since he left Mexico 17 years earlier. Tomas stated, “My mom to me means everything.”

Tomas also expressed pride when speaking about his sons. He believes his son is a very good artist and stated, “He draws beautiful pictures. Beautiful. At his age, the way his mind is drawing pictures, it’s incredible.” Tomas stated that he thinks his oldest son wants to be a doctor. Tomas said, “I know it is going to be hard, but they’re going to work and I hope that one day they get what they ask for.”

Tomas is proud of the personal relationships that he has. These relationships have been a strong source of support for Tomas. He is proud of his relationship with both his sister and brother-in-law. Tomas stated that his sister has always been there for him as he has been for her. They talk often each week and his sister’s family lives in the same community. Tomas related that his relationship with his brother-in-law is a strong one. Tomas stated, “We’re close. Our lives has (sic) almost been the same, you know, the way we’ve struggled.”

Tomas spoke of the relationship he had with his employer. Tomas worked with the same man since the time that he came to the United States. Tomas stated that he has been like a father to him. He said, “I told him that he is the dad.” Tomas expressed that he and his boss are very close and they trust each other. His boss has helped him to learn, “What is good, what is the culture here, about marriage.” Tomas added that his boss has helped him to learn English and is helping him “to get his papers.” When Tomas spoke about his boss he added, “If my boss is talking to somebody about me he’s going to refer to me as a good person, a person that is not going to do bad stuff or make somebody else bad.” This was important to Tomas and a source of pride.

Tomas described himself as a successful person. He expressed that he feels respected by everybody around him and he respects them in return. Tomas stated that he feels successful because he is happy with what he has and the way his life is. He added that he would continue to live his life the way he has. Tomas said that he wants his children to be happy and taken care of and he feels that is the case.

When asked if he wanted an interpreter for our interview Tomas stated that he did not need one. During the interview he said that he learned English when he came to the United States. Tomas learned English by watching television in English and “listening a lot.” The family speaks Spanish at home. When asked about the ability of his children to speak Spanish, Tomas stated, “It’s [Spanish language] going to be valuable to them and I hope that they don’t lose it.”

Throughout the interview Tomas referred to himself and his family as blessed even through his challenging childhood. I asked Tomas about his faith. He stated that he and his family do belong to a Catholic Church but do not attend mass weekly. When asked if he was more spiritual than religious he expressed that he does not consider himself Catholic. He considers himself to be “somebody that believes in God.” Tomas explained:

You have to believe in somebody or believe in God to do what’s best for you. If you don’t believe in nobody (sic) and you thinking that you’re doing everything on your own, that’s not true. So I believe that if somebody is watching us, I don’t know who they are, I think, you know, something good is going to come.

Camila expressed that she was proud of herself. She explained, “I want a lot of stuff. I know little by little I am accomplishing it, that’s what makes myself proud.” Camila identified herself as a successful person. She stated, “Once I started having my kids, that’s

what made me a better person and believing more in myself to accomplish the things that I want. And I know that I will.” Camila was taking online courses to complete her CDA certification. She explained that she is doing this because she “wants to succeed in life.” Camila would like her children to look up to her.

Camila discussed the dynamics of her family when she was a child. She described domestic violence in the home as well as substance abuse. When she discussed this she stated, “I don’t want my kids to suffer the way I did.” Camila felt she had “low self-esteem” because of the way she was treated as a child. When asked if she felt she was valued at home as a child she simply replied, “No.” She did identify school as a place where she felt valued particularly by the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, the social worker, and her mentor. Camila also felt that the aunt she was sent to live with in Puerto Rico cared for her and treated her as if she were her own.

Camila describes herself as being “rescued” by the boyfriend that she lived with at age 15 when she returned from Puerto Rico. Camila had known him for five months when they began living together. She declined to give his age at the time. Camila had her first child at 16. She stated that she left school because the other students were making fun of her. Camila reported that her aunt that was living in Puerto Rico was angry with her. Camila shared that she told her aunt, “I don’t have you here with me, I don’t have my parents with me. I had to find a way to make my own life.”

Camila has maintained a minimal relationship with her family members. She stated that her mother lives in the community where Camila lives but they rarely speak. She had not spoken to her father in approximately 15 years. Camila spoke of her siblings. She stated that she has tried to help them but “they make excuses all the time.” Camila added that two

of her siblings would come to her for money. She told them that she could no longer help them because she had to help her own children. Camila said, “They always treated me like I’m the rich one in the family. I wish I was. I just kind of like backed away.”

When asked who she gets support from, Camila responded that she gets help for the children from the teachers and programs that are offered at the school. She tries to attend as many classes as possible and goes to PTO meetings. Camila stated, “I think it makes them [children] happier knowing that I’m trying to participate in the school.” Camila also stated her boyfriend of seven years, the father of her two youngest children, is a help to her with the children. They are not legally married but Camila states that they consider themselves married. The two oldest children refer to him as “dad.” He helps the children with their homework. Camila stated that she and her boyfriend share the same ideas about parenting and school for the children.

Camila shared that she had developed a close relationship with her boyfriend’s family. Camila related that her boyfriend’s mother is more like a mother to her than her own mother. She looks up to her boyfriend’s mother. Camila explained:

She never left her kids. She was always there for them no matter what was going on in the family. They [the parents] were always there no matter what was going on they were still there. They never left their kids. They never sent their kids somewhere else. So I really look up to them.

Camila stated that all of her boyfriend’s siblings live in the same community as Camila. They see each other often and speak almost every day. His mother, who lives in another state, calls one of her children every day. Camila said, “My mom lives here and I haven’t talked to her in like a month and a half.”

I asked Camila where she thought her desire to succeed came from. She stated, “I don’t want to see myself as my parents.” She is also motivated to provide for her children. Camila said, “I know I don’t have the money and all that stuff, but I know they have everything they need. But for what I have before [childhood] I didn’t want them to go through that.”

Camila related that she wants her children “to be better than me.” When asked if she could explain what she meant she stated, “I don’t want them to drop off and then go back. I want them to go to directly to whatever they want, like a career they choose.” When asked what she wished for herself, Camila whispered, “To erase my past.”

Emily speaks with pride about many things in her life. Emily is proud of her daughter and tries to tell her how proud she is of her often. Emily also expressed pride in her ability to bring family members from Peru, particularly her brother. Emily’s brother came to the United States when he was 20 years old. Emily was only 24 years old. She helped him to come and, once he arrived, he studied, worked for many years, and became a nurse at a city hospital.

Emily also expressed pride in her job. Emily is a nanny for three different families in an affluent community. She goes to each home a different day of the week for whatever hours the families need her. Each family has three children with the oldest child being 9 years old, the youngest just 1 year old. Emily voiced pride in telling me that the families tell her that they love her. She spoke proudly of the fact that when she goes home “Everything is ready, everything is clean, kids’ clothes are folded, they say, ‘Emily, I love you!’”

Emily spoke very frankly about her abusive marriage. Emily stated that this was how and when she learned to be strong. Emily stated that she married in Peru when she was 18

and he was 28 years old. Emily stated that she felt her husband kept her like a slave. She explained, “You know he was ten years older than me. He had a lot of womens (sic). It’s like, what is this they call this guy when you have? Like a slave.” Emily explained she was working as an office building cleaner with her husband and the company paid him her salary. She had to do everything at home, and her husband never took her out. One of the women who worked with her told her she should get to keep her money. Emily demanded that her husband pay her the money she earned. In return she had to pay for half of everything.

Emily recalled the story of a time when her husband had beaten her. The next day the neighbor in the apartment building went to her and said, “I think your husband beat you. You need to call the police.” Emily was afraid to call the police but told her husband she would call if he hit her again. She said her husband did not believe her, but when it happened again she called the police. After they left the city for this smaller community, Emily went to the Hispanic Center with her husband for legal advice. She became interested in the English classes that they were offering. Emily’s husband did not want her to take the class. Emily expressed gratitude to the Hispanic Center, “God bless the Hispanic Center. They helped me a lot you know.” The staff at the center helped Emily to take English classes, get a job, and divorce her husband. They later helped her to get her GED. When speaking of the help she received from the neighbors in the city, Emily stated, “You know one word can change your life. I can’t believe it, but one word can change your life. Don’t be afraid.”

Emily talked of an extensive support system of friends and family members. When speaking of caring for the children Emily stated, “We share the kids, we help a lot. You help me. I help you. We have a lot of kids, like seven!” These children are the children of



Emily's sisters, nephew, and neighbors. They help each other to care for the children. Emily shared that she gets support from school programs for both children and parents.

When we spoke about emotional support, I asked Emily whom she goes to if she had a problem. Emily stated, "I go to my mirror." There she tells herself, "I have something forward in the future, something better. That's therapy I say." She also interjected, with a laugh, "or my sister." Emily stated she learned this through the Hispanic Center. Emily shared that she is very close to her sister, and they help each other in many ways. Emily stated that she sees her family often. Two of her sisters live in Emily's community and her brother lives in a neighboring state.

Emily, like other participants, talked about the role of religion in her life. Emily belongs to and attends a Catholic Church in the community. She passes along her beliefs to her daughter. Emily shared that her faith has helped her to stay strong. Emily explained, "With faith, when you have no job, I say, I find something better. Something better is waiting for me."

Javier was different from the other participants in that when asked what he was most proud of he did not hesitate before stating, "I am proud I guess, of the person I was before and the person I am now. The ideas I have, the things I wanted to do, the strength that I have." When asked where he felt his strength came from Javier replied, "My mother. Everyone in my family is strong. Strong to work, strong in mind because of my mom." Javier stated that he is grateful for all the things his mother taught him morally. He believes she is very strong. Javier shared, "Even at her age [86] her mind is strong. Now she takes care of the property of my brother and sister. The last day that I saw my mom was the day I came here."

Javier also spoke with pride about his job. Javier explained that he has worked for the same landscape nursery for 12 years. Javier explained that he works very hard at his job. He helps everyone and he is very responsible at work. He stated that the customers are very happy. The other “guys” and the owners are very “happy with me,” and he has never had any problems there. He stated that he feels that over the years he has been given many opportunities to learn new things through his job.

Javier’s feelings towards his mother were pervasive throughout his interview. He credits his mother for the man he is today. Javier shared, “I love my mother. My whole life my mother taught (sic) me to work, respect everybody. She taught me to be a good man. Everywhere, in my country, here, everywhere, respect everyone. To be good to my wife.” When discussing the challenges of his childhood he stated that he was never bothered because he had so much “willpower and support” from his mother.

Javier is close to his siblings that live in the United States. One brother and two sisters reside in the same community as Javier. They speak often to be sure they are all doing well, everyone is working, no one is sick, and they see each other weekly. Javier also shared that there are many people in the community from Ecuador that help each other. Javier explained, “If we know of someone [from Ecuador] who has had a bad accident, is very sick, or in trouble we do fundraising.” When asked about his faith Javier stated that they belong to a Catholic Church, but because he works so many hours the family does not attend regularly. Javier added, “I respect God.”

Javier talked about his job as another source of support. Javier explained that when he went to work at the company, he spoke only Spanish and worked with men who spoke only English. Javier stated, “The people I worked with told me every day that I had to try to

“speak whether it was right or not. They would help me to learn.” Javier shared that work has been very good to him. Everyone has always respected him there and he is always respectful.

Javier explained to me that he is able read and write in both Spanish and English. When asked how he learned to speak English so well he responded:

When I came here when I started to work in the company that I am now. I was in (sic) that time six months here. I start work in that company, where only the two bosses and other three American guys. I didn't to (sic) talking English in that time because I was six months here. But I went to work there. It was harder for me because I, I couldn't understand. Everyday in my job what my boss is telling me, or the other three guys are telling me. It's for that I have to watch TV, TV all in English, do reading books. I did get a dictionary to consult what word. I was reading along the roads when I was driving, the signs. If I didn't know the word says, I write the word then come in the night to my home to see what the words mean in the dictionary. I did learn a little more every day, every day. Because there, in my job, they told me, you, if you don't know, you speak bad, you have to talk! Don't be ashamed. Don't have shame talking, if you are talking bad. You have to talk! Good or bad, you have to talk every day. If you talk bad, we have to explain, we have to help you. If you don't know, you have to, to ask everything you have to ask, or anything, but you have to learn. Yeah, they told me that also, every day.

Javier requested a translator for the interview because he wanted to be sure to answer the questions “well.” He was concerned that if he misunderstood any words in a sentence he would not be able to give the response he wanted. Javier transferred between English and Spanish throughout the interview.

When Javier was asked if he felt his childhood was a happy one he replied, “Not so happy. I never had a toy. I never had shoes. Until I was 14 I had only plastic boots.” Javier recalled when he got his first pair of leather shoes. Laughing, he explained that when he put the leather shoes on for the first time he could not walk well in them and fell twice. Javier stated that as a child he dreamed that his mom would get a gas stove because they could only cook on a wood fire. Javier does not want his children’s lives to be as hard as his so he wants to help them as much as he can. Javier wants his children to feel good about themselves and “to dream.” Javier added, “It costs nothing to dream.”

**Outlook on life.** The Merriam Webster dictionary defines “outlook” as: <sup>1</sup>the way a person thinks about things: <sup>2</sup> the future of someone or something: <sup>3</sup> point of view: <sup>4</sup> the prospect for the future. Participants’ outlooks on their futures varied greatly. Five of the participants were not able to visualize the future and their data are reflective of being grounded in their past personal experiences. In six of the nine cases the worries that participants expressed paralleled those experiences.

When reviewing the transcript of the interviews with Sofia and Miguel, I became aware that their responses to questions related to their lives here in the United States and their outlook on their lives were very much grounded in their past experiences and were indicative of regrets. For example:

- Miguel said, “I realize now that it would have been good to study...but at that moment I wanted to be independent.”
- Sofia said, “The girls need to be prepared so that they don’t suffer like we are. We have to work.”
- Sofia tells her daughters, “We would have wished to have what you have now.”
- Miguel stated, “I regret not learning English.”

When discussing opportunities for the children Miguel stated, “In our country it used to be after they finish high school they invent anything that they are.” In discussion of whether that was the case now, Sofia stated that the laws have changed. Interestingly, she added, “Now a man can’t mistreat women, or the father a son.” Both Sofia and Miguel stated that they would not accept their daughters being treated badly by a man. Sofia added that the daughters would not accept it themselves. She stated that her husband is a good example for the daughters. Sofia added, “He hasn’t been a bad person with me. He treats me well and even withstands all my diseases for a long time.”

Sofia and Miguel verbalized opportunities that they believe may be available to their daughters, however, Sofia worries, “The example of us, they only understand the example that’s in front of them that we are dedicated to work to earn money, nothing else.” In discussion of other worries the couple have for their children Miguel stated that he worries that he will not be able to financially provide for the children to go on to higher education.

Sofia’s worries paralleled her personal experiences. When asked what she worries about most for her daughters Sofia stated, “It worries me that they let themselves be won over by some man, that he does her harm, gives her hopes, and abandons her.”

Isabella, like Sofia and Miguel, stayed very grounded in her past. It was very difficult for her to speak of the future and she provided little information. Isabella came to the United States to find work and earn money because her opportunities were limited in Ecuador. Isabella worked for two years after coming to the United States. She stopped working when she had her first child. Isabella is happy that she is in the United States. She stated that if she had stayed in Ecuador and had her children there she would not be able to keep them in school because of the cost.

When asked what she worries about, Isabella stated her worries are for her children. She worries that her children will have friends that will “take them the wrong way in life.” Isabella also worries that her “daughters will get families early then they cannot work anymore.”

Isabella had shared in her interview that her youngest, 5 year old, son had been diagnosed with mental retardation. I probed this with her to gather data on what she may or may not see for the future for this child. Isabella said she would like the same for all four of her children. She would like to see them “do good in life.” When asked to explain what this meant to her she explained that this would be, “To do whatever they decide. Learn.” This will be explored further in theme four. With further probing about her 5 year old son’s future she stated, “I don’t know. I just wish and ask God so he speaks soon.”

Isabella stated that she would also like her children to be able to buy a house, not live in an apartment as the family did at the time of the interview. She revealed that this has been a source of problems for her family. When asked how this had been a problem for her family, she replied that they have had to move from place to place. Isabella stated that the frequent moves were because the apartments had been too old, “Sometimes it crumbles and

there are many bugs. Yeah in an apartment where we could live where not too many bugs.” Isabella shared that it is important for her that her family be able to stay in one place.

Antonella likewise struggled with envisioning a future or being able to verbalize future plans for herself or for her children. It was difficult to draw information from Antonella regarding her three younger children living here in the United States. During our first two interview sessions, Antonella spoke only of her children who were living in Ecuador.

Antonella spoke of wanting to learn more herself. She reported that she would like to attend more classes for parents. Antonella spoke of wanting her children in Ecuador to continue on in school. When asked if this was realistic for her oldest son, who was thirty years old at the time of the interview, she stated that it was possible because they have night classes for adults. Antonella had difficulty when asked if she had any future goals for her children. She stated that she wants them to get an education, but she was not able to define this any further. Again this was explored further in theme four.

Mariana, similar to Antonella, Isabella, Miguel, and Sofia, spoke primarily of her past and the struggles she has had and continues to have. Mariana spoke little of the future. When asked if she was content in her life Mariana replied, “Yes, I don’t complain of even some things have happened. I have a quiet life at least.”

Mariana spoke of her worries. She worries for her granddaughter. Mariana does not know what will happen to the child if she is no longer able to care for her. Mariana’s adult daughters have told her that they will not care for the child. Mariana believes that if her son, the father of her granddaughter, was released from prison he would care for his daughter.

When asked if she worries that her granddaughter's mother would come back for her Mariana stated, "No. Her mother, I know has no possibilities." Mariana shared that her granddaughter sometimes asked to talk to her mother. Mariana stated that she tells her granddaughter that her mother "must be somewhere working or something is happening." She added, "I couldn't tell her, 'No, your mom, your mom left you.' I never tell her that." Mariana shared that she also worried that her granddaughter is very distracted by things. At the time of our third interview Mariana revealed that her granddaughter had been referred for evaluation for Special Education services. Mariana was unsure of the process and asked if I could help her to understand what would occur in the process and what it would mean for her granddaughter. I asked her if she had attended the planning and placement team meeting (PPT) and if there was an interpreter there to translate. Mariana stated that she did attend the meeting and there was an interpreter. With the support of the interpreter I explained to her the process and what types of evaluations may take place. I explained to Mariana that I could only generalize the process for her and recommended that she speak to the social worker at school to review the evaluations suggested so she understands more clearly.

During the third and final interview, when asked if she was happy now, Mariana responded, "I am better off than when I was young. Then I had to work hard only to put food on the table." Mariana's response to being asked what she wanted for her future was, "To rest. I have always had to work and do everything. I want to rest."

Camila views herself as a successful person. She identifies herself as a success because she has made herself a "better person," she "believes in herself," and is "accomplishing the things I want." Camila stated that she believes in her ability to do things, and "I know that I will." Camila revealed that she wants her children to look at her and say,



“Mommy did this.” Camila was taking online courses for her CDA certification. Camila tells her children, “I don’t want you guys doing it [courses] online, but this is something that I’m trying to do because I didn’t get the opportunity to go to college. So for me... it’s just like another step.”

When asked what she wanted for herself she stated, “I want to succeed in life.” As stated in a previous section, Camila is deeply motivated by her need to not be like her parents. She stated that she sees her parents and says, “Some go through the same path. I’m not like that. I want to go up. I want to go up that path.” When asked during her interview if she had a wish for herself she whispered, “To erase my past.”

When speaking of the future for her children, Camila shared that she would like them to finish school and have good careers. She stated that she would like them to wait and “finish everything” before having a family. When asked if she would like her children to have a lot of money she stated, “Enough to survive through a lifetime.”

When asked if she had any worries for her children she said, “I don’t think I have any worries right now. Everything’s going too well.” At a different point of the interview when speaking about her family she stated she worries about telling her children about her past. When asked what she meant by her statement Camila replied:

Like my parents hitting each other and all that stuff. Not just only the hitting, there was drugs involved and liquor and all that stuff involved. That’s what’s holding me back. I don’t want to tell them they used drugs and all this stuff because then they’ll be like, ‘I want to be like him.’ They try to look up to somebody, and I don’t want them to do that.”

When asked during another point in her interview if she had a wish for herself she stated, “To erase my past.”

When talking about her own future Camila shared that she would like to open her own business. She would like to start with a small bakery and if that goes well expand to a restaurant. Camila stated that she would like to go back to school again and is looking for a culinary program. She would like to have a successful business so that if it continues, her children could take over or “they would be set for college.”

Throughout Emily’s interview she used the statement, “nothing is impossible” numerous times. During our second interview I asked her to tell me more about this. I asked her if this was something she had learned from someone in her life. In response Emily stated, “It’s coming from me. Nothing is impossible. Because you see, it’s like how you live. You know, I saw the life, how I lived and nothing is impossible. Only when you die.”

This type of response was pervasive throughout Emily’s interview sessions. When speaking of her childhood Emily stated that her father wanted his children to attend a vocational school so they would have a skill for their future. Emily expressed that she gives this same message to her daughter. When her daughter told her that she wanted a house like one of the houses where Emily works caring for the children Emily stated that she told her, “You want it, you got it. If you work, if you got a good profession you can do it. Nothing is impossible in this life!”

Emily encourages her daughter, nieces, and nephews to set high goals for themselves. When her daughter told her she wanted to be a doctor she responded, “You can do it. Try. Try. You don’t lose nothing if you try.” Emily stated that her daughter, nieces, and nephews have a better future here than in Peru because they have many opportunities. Emily

commented that if the children work hard they would have “everything.” Emily added, “Nothing is impossible in this life. If you want to work, you do it. You get it.”

Emily’s optimistic attitude was reflected when speaking of difficult times. For example, Emily stated at times when she had no job with her faith she told herself, “I find something better!” She added, “There’s something better waiting for me.” When speaking about her past relationship with an abusive spouse and her subsequent divorce Emily stated, “In the time you feel like you die, depressed, the war is coming.” She then laughingly commented, “Now I said I thank God he leave me young!” When asked if she was happy with her life Emily replied, “ I’m very, very happy with my life!”

Tomas viewed all of his life experiences, no matter how challenging, as learning experiences. He expressed this by saying, “Every little thing helped me to learn, to learn life.” Recurring statements within Tomas’ interview were related to his or his family’s being “blessed” or “hope, hopeful, hoping.” These terms or variations of the terms were coded four times and eight times respectively in the transcript of Tomas’ interview. Examples of Tomas’ use of these statements are:

- “As a family we’ve been blessed. We’ve been working hard like everybody else to survive.”
- “I consider myself blessed because I still have my mom. Thank God I still have my wife, my kids. I’m healthy, wife’s healthy, kids healthy and I’m working which is great to me.”
- “A lot of people don’t have what I have. That’s why I consider myself blessed.”
- “As everybody else we have to keep working, so I’m hoping that one day my kids grow up and they do better than myself.”

Tomas speaks with optimism about his life circumstances. He expressed that optimism in this statement, “I can’t describe what it’s been, we’ve been through. But you know, it’s all good.” When speaking about a coworker who Tomas said calls him “third grader” because of his lack of schooling Tomas said, “I think the way they grow, the way their lives have been, their mind is not big enough to see what it is, who I am.”

In contrast to his optimism discussed above, Tomas expressed worry that he would die when his children are young. He prays each morning that he will return home to his family to eat dinner. Tomas stated that he tries to live a “good life,” be with “good people” so good things happen to him. Tomas stated, “I’m going to try to do my best, who knows what is going to happen tomorrow.” Tomas stated that he tries to live his life every day like it’s the last day of his life.

Tomas discussed his life here in the United States. In regards to his life Tomas said, “It’s all been happiness.” Tomas is happy with his job and what he has in his life. He stated, “I want to have more like everybody, but so far it is fair enough to have what I have. I’m hoping to make more every year.” In his future Tomas would like to have his own business like his boss.

Tomas met his wife here in the United States. They have been together for 16 years. Tomas explained that she also lost her father at a young age. Tomas expressed his love for his wife during his interview. When speaking of his wife Tomas said, “She’s a good writer, good reader, I’m a good talker. She doesn’t talk much. We make, you know, one person.” Tomas added:

We try to make our life easy. There is always going to be, we call it rocks on your way. They are always going to be there. But if you jump every day, and you have to,

you going to do (sic) the next step. You're going to make it to the next step and up. Pretty much that's what it's been. I can't ask for more.

Throughout Javier's interview he expressed gratitude for many things in his life, most especially for his mother and the values she taught him. Javier said, "I am the person I am because she helped me morally, she taught me the good ideas in me." Javier recalled his mother always telling him, "With perseverance my mom used to say, even if you have to cry, you have to keep going forward. If you fall once, twice, three times, stand up and continue. Hope, faith, we must never lose."

It is with this attitude that Javier has met many challenges in his life from childhood through adulthood. Javier explained that when he completed Grade 6 he moved to the coastal area with his mother to work. At that time they could not afford for him to continue on to high school. At 16 he went back to school. Javier recalled working all day and going to school from six until eleven in the evening. He shared that this was the way he could continue to help his mother and pay for the things he needed for school.

After completing high school Javier went to work as a driver of cars, buses, and trucks. Javier saved his money and eventually was able to buy his own small truck and start his own service. Javier recalled that before leaving Ecuador in 2001 he was earning about five hundred dollars a month.

When Javier left Ecuador it was with the plan to provide his family there with the money to have a good life. He wanted his children to have a good education and give them "everything." When asked if he felt that he was successful in doing this Javier responded, "Yeah, they live good there, because they have everything. They go to the high school, they

have clothes, they have food. They have everything because I helped them every month, I send money there.”

When asked if he was happy with his life Javier replied, “I'm happy with the things I've experienced, what happened. I'm happy with the person I am.” For his future Javier expressed this wish:

My own future, I want to save my money that I work, to save as much as possible, and to live quiet me and my wife, and my family. That's the future that I want. I have to work maybe, but not so hard, a little slow, easier.

### **Theme Two Summary and Relation to Research Questions**

To summarize, theme two, identity emerged from the identification of data related to how the participants view themselves within the context of their own world. Theme two emerged from the following three codes: attitude towards school, self-image/self-worth, and outlook on life (Maslow, 1970; Erikson, 1963).

All participants reported liking school to varying degrees. Participants who reported incidences of corporal punishment did not express a dislike of school, though one participant voiced a strong dislike of the teachers. Seven of nine participants reported feeling successful in school. One felt it was very difficult and one participant with little school experience could not recall whether he was successful in school or not. Each participant identified school and learning as a vehicle to success, particularly for his or her children. This will be explored further in themes three and four.

When coding the data, the phrases “not like me” and “better than me” came up nineteen times. One participant had six occurrences. Three of those five participants were identified in the findings as having difficulty envisioning the future or identifying future

goals for themselves. The data of those participants indicated that in their interviews they remained grounded in the experiences of the past and had difficulty making future goals.

The four participants who identified strong support systems were also able to identify a greater number of sources of pride with less probing. Their identified source of pride was more closely related to personal accomplishment. A strong support system also linked to a more optimistic outlook of participants.

Like theme one, theme two, supported Research Question Two: How do the personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents influence their family experiences? How participants identified themselves and factors contributing to their sense of identity strongly influenced their lives and the lives of their children. Participants' attitudes toward school, their self-image, and outlook on life influenced their experiences as well as their expectations for their children.

Participants' personal identities linked closely to the expectations they held for their child and often were in contrast to how the participants viewed themselves. Six of nine participants stated that they wanted their child to be "better than me" or "not like me." Two of the three participants that did not use the phrases "better than me" or "not like me" attended school through Grade 12, reported liking school as well as doing well in school. Both participants shared through the interviews that they had strong support systems both in their country of origin and in the United States, and both spoke English fluently. These two participants were also able to identify plans for the future and reported being happy with their lives. One of the two participants stated that he "dreams many things" for his child who resides in, the United States with him. The second participant believes her daughter can achieve anything in life as long as you never stop trying. Both want their children to

continue their education and become professionals, they stated that they would support them financially and emotionally to achieve their goals in whatever way they needed support.

Of the remaining seven participants, three attended school for four years or less. These three participants were not able to clearly identify a level of academic expectations for their children, and when asked if they knew what the child would have to do to achieve academic goals they were not able to be specific to what they needed to do. There were, however, differences between these three participants. Two of the participants spoke of suffering in their interviews. Mariana stated, “I have had little success in my life.” She told her granddaughter that she didn’t study so her granddaughter must study. Mariana wants her granddaughter to “at least” go to school longer than her children did. The second, Sofia, told her children often of how she had suffered and continues to suffer. She stated that she tells them this so they understand that they need to go to school so as not to suffer as she does. Sofia’s husband Miguel did attend school through Grade 6, but shared that he tells his daughters that they must continue school so they do not suffer like he suffers. Miguel shared that he tells his children that he could have been somebody if he had studied so they need to study. Miguel, however, was able to identify that the children must finish high school, go to college and have a major that will help them to have a good career.

The third participant, Tomas, stands in contrast from the other two participants stating that he feels very blessed in his life and views everything that has happened in his life as something that has helped him to learn. He shared that he had a very strong support system in both his country of origin as well as here in the United States. He has both short term and long-term goals for his and his family’s future. Tomas believes that his children have many opportunities here in the United States. Tomas was not able to articulate what his children



would need to do to become an artist or doctor, their stated choice of careers, but shared that he knew both he and his children would have to work hard to meet their future goals and he would do whatever he could to support them. He does not want his children to have to labor or work with their bodies as he has always had to, and he does not want them to do the job that he had at the time of the interview.

Camila expressed that she does everything she does and works as hard as she does to better herself and not be like her other family members, particularly her parents. She stated that she wants to be better than they were to her and she does not want to take the same path as her parents or siblings. She also declared that she wants “to go up the path,” meaning to achieve greater things. Camila’s messages to her children reflect her need for them to do things differently than she or her siblings did, have children after finishing school, get a good education so they can have a good career and stable jobs or careers, and seek help from teachers and other adults when they need it. These messages are very much related to the experiences Camila shared about her childhood. Camila stated that she works hard to be a role model for her children and wants them to look up to her and respect her in contrast to her feelings about her own parents.

The remaining two participants, Antonella and Isabella, both wanted their children to “study.” Neither could identify a clear progression of schooling that the children would need to go through to reach an academic expectation. Neither stated a more specific level of academic attainment for the children beyond, “to learn” or “to study.” During their interviews both women clearly stated that they had no opportunities in their countries of origin. Antonella shared that her family thought only of the food, working the fields, and having food to eat. Isabella shared that although she attended school until Grade 6, school

was unimportant to her mother and stepfather and the schooling she had did not give her more opportunities. Isabella tells her children that it is important for them to learn English to have better opportunities.

Participants displayed wide variations in the messages that they give their children about school and the expectations for educational attainment that they expect for their children. Their own personal life experiences and personal identity strongly influence the specificity of how they communicate their expectations as well as the positive or negative way in which those expectations are expressed to their children. Those participants with a stronger or more positive sense of self, as perceived by this researcher, expressed to their children that education is a way to open up opportunities and have a better life. Other participants expressed the view to their children that to not suffer as they do or continue to suffer, they need to study and learn. This will be further discussed in the implications of the research.

### **Theme Three: Defining Success**

The theme of defining success emerged from the identification of data related to how the participants construct the definition of success within the context of their own world. Theme three emerged from the following four codes: academic achievement, ability to provide, effort, and respect. These codes were selected because when participants were asked to describe a person that they felt was a successful person or how they would know when their children were successful these were the key characteristics identified.

Participants were asked if they could identify an individual who was successful and what characteristics made that person a success. Some participants had difficulty identifying a person they felt was a successful person but were able to identify characteristics of a person

that they admired or looked up to. Participants interchangeably described persons that they identified as “good” with persons identified as successful. Participants were also asked how they would know if their child was successful; what qualities, characteristics, or skills would they see in their child.

**Academic achievement.** The concept of academic achievement as an indicator of success emerged in seven participant interviews. However, there were differences in the perception of how academic achievement actually presented itself for each participant. For example, Antonella stated, “For somebody to be successful they have to continue reading information and learning from other people.” She added, “School helps you to develop more vocabulary you need to communicate.” Mariana stated, “Mainly studying takes you to success.” Emily shared that the future is better for those that go to school. Isabella shared that school is important to success because it is there people “learn to read.” The comments shared here indicated that participants felt education is important to success and, as will be explored further in theme four, want an education for their children. The participant’s comments also indicate a vagueness regarding academic achievement.

In contrast, Miguel stated that those he identifies as successful had a “major,” finished school, and had careers like lawyers. He added, “Everything comes through education.” Camila shared that if someone wants a good job they “have to go through college.” When speaking of college for her children, Camila stated that she wants them to get “bachelors [degrees], have good diplomas and all that stuff.”

**Ability to provide.** Participants were asked if money or wealth made a person successful. Responses varied among the participants. Only one of the participants stated that

money or material possessions indicated success while four participants identified the ability to provide for the family as an indicator.

Mariana and Tomas had adverse reactions when asked if money was important to success. When Mariana was asked if she thought having a lot of money indicated success she stated, “No. I don’t think having a lot of money is being successful. I think success, one goes up by yourself, and studying takes you to success.” Tomas, who identified himself as a successful person, stated that it is important to be able to have enough money to bring home to his family and have his children provided for and happy. Tomas added that he likes his life the way it is and stated, “I don’t want to be rich, because probably one day if I won a lotto I don’t know who I am going to turn into.” Miguel shared that money is important, but was not a primary reason for being a successful person. His primary concern with money is earning enough to provide for his family.

Antonella shared that it is important to earn money for the family so the family “doesn’t miss anything.” She added, “Through money the family is supported better sometimes. Better life.” Isabella shared that she would say that her children were successful when “they know how to do a job, to save, to have something in life for themselves. For example to buy a house.”

**Effort.** When Antonella spoke of the person she thought was successful she spoke of someone who had made “a lot” of money but emphasized that it had been through his hard work. She shared that although this person had been rejected time and time again, he did not let that discourage him. Antonella stated that the person she identified as a success, “falls but anyway gets back up, up, up.”

Effort as an indicator of success was identified by seven of the nine participants. Mariana identified her granddaughter who was in college as a successful person. When asked why she thought her granddaughter was successful Mariana stated, “She hasn’t left [college]. The oldest left school, she didn’t. Sometimes she stays until dawn with her books and the older sister left school.” Emily identified her brother as a successful person. When her brother came to the United States he worked “very hard for many hours.” Emily shared that her brother went to school at night to learn English and continued to study from then on. Her brother became a certified nursing assistant (CNA) and eventually a nurse, working at a city hospital. Emily was very proud of her brother’s perseverance. Emily stated, “He can do it! He not have (sic) to be afraid. He no feel (sic) less than another person. He say (sic), I can do it and he do it.”

Camila identified herself as a successful person. When asked to explain, she shared that she is accomplishing the things she wanted. Camila is determined to work hard and accomplish the things she wants for her future and the future of her children.

When asked what would make her feel her children were successful Sofia replied, “They would become successful by their own efforts and feel proud of themselves for their efforts.” I asked Sofia how she helps them to develop the skills they need to be successful. She stated, “We tell them if they don’t try hard they will never be what they want to be.”

**Respect.** The concept of respect emerged in six of the nine participant interviews. Some of the participants identified respect as a quality of a successful person, however, the majority of participants stated that they teach their children that respect is important to be a good person in life. When asked if respect from others makes a person successful Mariana responded, “In part, yes. I always respect my coworkers and I never have any problems at

work.” Miguel was asked the same question and replied, “To me respect is important. Public persons are everywhere, they always talk about that person is good.” Antonella linked learning and respect when she stated, “College gives you more vocabulary, you learn better information, and you are more respected.”

Emily reports that respect is very important to her. She stated that she tells her daughter, “You respect. The only thing is respect. You respect everybody, everybody respects you, and that’s it.” Both Tomas and Javier expressed similar thoughts. When speaking of coworkers whom he described as being very good to him Javier stated, “They are respectful of me and I am respectful.” Tomas shared this thought, “If you respect yourself and everybody around you, people are going to be there for you when you need it.”

Participants expressed many different thoughts regarding what they will see in their children that will inform the participant that the child is successful. In some cases the participants described values that they teach their children. Although the qualities described were unique to each participant I felt that there was value in presenting them here to give the reader deeper insight into the participants’ thinking.

- Tomas stated, “I teach them not to be selfish.”
- Martha said, “They be what they want to be, that they really strive to do it.”
- Miguel shared, “I would like that they love everything, that they see with their hearts.”
- Antonella stated, “I want that they be better, successful. That they value themselves.”
- Javier shared, “He has to keep his mind focused. Be very responsible. Put love to the things he is doing.”

### **Theme Three Summary and Relation to Research Questions**

In summary, theme three, defining success, emerged from the identification of data related to Research Question Three: How do Hispanic immigrants define success? Theme three also had implications for Research Question Two regarding the ways in which personal life experiences influence parental expectations and aspirations. Theme three emerged from the following four codes: academic achievement, ability to provide, effort, and respect.

Data indicated that academic achievement was an indicator of success for participants. There were discrepancies in how participants viewed academic achievement. Some participants described academic achievement as “learning,” “studying,” or “gaining information.” Other participants were more specific in the description of academic achievement and referred to “going to college,” “getting a degree,” or “having a major.”

The ability to provide, primarily for family, was also identified through the data as an indicator of success. None of the participants verbalized a desire to have a large amount of money or indicated that wealth is an indicator of success. Participants did, however, convey a need to provide for the family financially to provide a more comfortable life.

Effort as an indicator of success was also identified in the data. Participants identified the ability to work hard as a quality present in successful people. Likewise participants identified the ability to put effort into whatever they do as a path to success. Participants identified effort, working hard and applying themselves, as something that they teach their children to support their success.

Respect emerged from the data in a number of ways. Participants identified respect as a characteristic of successful people. Respect was also identified, by six of nine participants, as a quality they wanted their children to possess and demonstrate to others.

Finally, individual comments from participants were included to illustrate the depth of participants' thinking regarding success, particularly for the future of their children. The responses were spontaneously generated by participants and were not a result of questioning or probes. These comments were indicative of an understanding of some participants that success can be measured in a multitude of ways.

This third theme, definition of success, supported Research Question Three regarding how Hispanic immigrant parents define success for their child. Participants defined academic achievement, ability to provide, effort, and respect as indicators of success. These identified characteristics are those that parents defined for people of success as well as qualities they desired to see in their children.

The influences of personal life experiences of parents were evident in the ways in which participants defined success particularly in the way in which their past experiences influence their individual feelings of self-worth. Three participants who defined themselves as successful people saw the characteristics of success they described within themselves. For example, both Javier and Tomas spoke of a relationship of mutual respect with their employers, family members, and friends. Camila spoke of wanting her children to respect and look up to her. All three spoke of working hard to better themselves and provide for their families, learning English in the case of Javier and Tomas, and going back to school to earn a college degree in the case of Camila. Javier spoke with pride of completing twelve years of school and being able to provide an education for his children in Ecuador through his hard work in the United States. Tomas spoke of thinking about continuing his education but was concentrating on his family now.



Five of the remaining participants spoke of some characteristics of success in terms of a lack of that quality in themselves. Mariana saw success as a product of “study.” She also shared that she had little success in life so she would feel successful herself when her children achieved more than she had. Isabella stated that she tells her children they must study so they can have money. Isabella shared in her interviews that her financial situation caused housing instability for her and her family. She shared in her interview that success would be earning money to provide for your family to have a home and not have to move from apartment to apartment. Antonella repeatedly stated negative self-feelings, particularly about her own education and tells her children that for them to “be somebody” they must study to be smart and “not like me.” She also expressed that to be successful you need to be able to provide for your family, something she shared that she felt she was not able to do for her children here in the United States or her children in Ecuador.

#### **Theme Four: Expectations and Aspirations**

Theme four refers to the desired expectations and aspirations held by the participants for their children. Theme four emerged from the following four codes: education, better life through study, better than me/not like me, and the participant’s message to child. The codes supporting theme four are very closely related to each other and often intertwined. To more clearly illustrate the interconnectedness of the codes I chose to profile each participant and their responses related to the codes rather than explain the findings of each code independent of the others.

**Tomas.** Tomas stated that he knows how he was raised and he knows how he raises his children, and because of this he expects the best from them. Tomas said, “I’m hoping one

day that my kids grow up and they do better than myself.” This is a recurring statement made throughout Tomas’s interview.

In the interview Tomas spoke about his desire for his children to continue their education. Like many of the participants Tomas does not identify what level of education he would like his children to attain. When asked what he tells his children about school, Tomas replied, “I just tell them not to stop school, never stop school.” Tomas believes the lives of his children will be better if they do well in school. He said, “If they do good in school their lives is (sic) going to be much better. They’re not going to have a hard time like me.”

Tomas has worked at the same job for the last 12 years. His job is labor intensive. Tomas would like his children to have a career or profession that does not involve physical labor. He stated that he does not want the boys to do the job he does, saying, “I want them to be something else.” Tomas explains, “A teacher, a doctor, that’s what I want for them. Whatever you do it’s work, but less they work with their bodies, it’s going to be better for them.” Tomas shared that his older son wants to be a doctor, the middle son an artist. Tomas shared proudly, “My son wants to be an artist. At his age, the way his mind is drawing pictures, it’s incredible.” He has told his children that he is going to do his best to get them what they need to accomplish what they want. Tomas said, “I know it’s going to be hard, but they’re going to work and I’m hoping that one day they get there.” When asked what he wants for the future of his children Tomas replied, “What I believe I want for my family, I want my boys, my kids, to be better than me.”

**Antonella.** Antonella is the mother of six children. Her three children, ages 19, 22, and 30 live in Ecuador. Three more children, ages 6, 9, and 12, live in the United States with Antonella. When asked what she wished for her children she replied, “That they are

respected, to go to school so they learn. They study in college and continue studying so they earn money.” Antonella stated that she worries about the “studying.” She shared that she believes studying is the only “inheritance that is for them.”

Antonella’s three children in Ecuador attended school. Two children attended until completing Grade 6. Antonella shared that her youngest daughter living in Ecuador had repeated a grade two or three times; she was unsure. She also stated that her son had not done well in school. Although she wanted him to continue to try, he was living with his paternal grandparents at the time and they wanted him to go to work. The oldest daughter was attending a university in Ecuador. Antonella thought she was studying “something with computers.” Antonella spoke little of her children living with her here in the United States. During our third and final interview I asked her probing questions about the children living here. Antonella had attended parent teacher conferences for her two younger children. When asked what her son’s reading level was she stated, “I didn’t pay attention to that.” Antonella thought he was doing better than he had been. When asked what she would like for the future of her 12-year-old daughter, Antonella shared that she would like her to join the Police Explorers, a civic group at the high school in the community.

Antonella shared that she believes schooling is important for her children. She stated, “School is important to find a better job, have better information to share with friends, with other people, to be able to talk. It will be a better future for you.” Antonella tells her children, “I am in my [first] place. I don’t have the requirements. I cannot look for a job because I don’t have high school, because of that I don’t want you to fail like me.” Antonella wants her children to “have the best information” and to “study, study, study”. She stated, “It’s important for their lives.” Antonella spoke of the time when her daughter returned to

Ecuador after attempting to come to the United States, “Once she was there I wanted her to finish studying because she was going to have more opportunity.” Antonella told her daughter, “You are going to be well versed, you’re going to be smart, and not like me. It’s going to be different.”

Antonella tells her children, “Study is best for you. Follow a career that is good to choose, but you have to work hard.” When asked what she would like her daughter to do after finishing school Antonella replied, “Continue something better, something that is better for her.” I asked Antonella what “something better” would mean for her. She replied, “She becomes a doctor, a dentist.” I probed further and asked about her oldest son living in Ecuador. Antonella responded, “I want him to be something with computers, or a dentist too. Something that goes on.” I asked Antonella if she thought this was realistic for her son at thirty years old, having completed Grade 6, to become a dentist. She stated that it was possible for him because he could attend school for adults. In response to her expectations of her children for the future, Isabella shared that she would like all of her children to become dentists or doctors, or do something with computers. These are careers that she believes will have a good future. When asked if she knew how the children might go on to have a career in those areas either in the United States or in Ecuador, Antonella stated, “Study, keep studying. Go to the city. Go to college I think, stay in college. I’m blind about all that, because I don’t know how to support my children.”

Antonella expressed that Ecuador is different from the United States. When asked how she felt about what her son was doing for work in Ecuador she stated:

I don’t feel well, because what I wanted for them is that they become something better, but they are like they are there. Seems like they take a different way to live.

As long as they have enough for the day, but I tell them it is not like that. They have to push a little, push a little to study.

When asked if she wants something different for the future of her children in the United States than she does for her children in Ecuador Antonella stated, “No! I want that they all learn.”

**Camila.** Camila attended school both in the United States and Puerto Rico. Camila states that school is very important to her children. She worries that if they don’t keep going to school they will “go from job to job.” Camila said she uses the example of her sisters when she talks to her children about school. Her sisters did not graduate from high school and have had difficulty maintaining jobs.

Camila expects her children to get good grades in school and pay attention to the teacher. She stated that she knows her children are all different from each other but when her younger son came home with grades that were lower than the oldest child’s grade she was unhappy. She told her son he needs to be paying attention more.

In discussion of the level of education she wanted her children to achieve Camila stated, “I want them to get bachelors [degree], you know like have diplomas and all that stuff.” Camila said that both she and her husband tell the children that they can do good things if they graduate.

Camila shared, “I want them [children] to be better than me.” When asked if she could elaborate on what the statement, “better than me” meant, Camila replied, “I don’t want them to drop off and then go back. I just want them to not drop off. I want them just to go directly to whatever they want, like the career they choose.” Camila tells her children, “If

you want a job, a good job then you have to stay in it [school]. You have to go through college and all this stuff.”

Camila shared that her children say they would like to be a doctor, a lawyer, and a police officer. They also say they want to be a model, actor, or dancer. When asked what she wanted for her children’s future Camila stated, “A good job, a good career, have everything I didn’t have; not go through what I have.”

**Emily.** Emily attended school for twelve years in Peru. Her father made sure all of his children attended a vocational school so they could “learn something you have in the future.” Emily shares this idea with her daughter, but her thinking goes beyond having a trade for the future. Emily tells her daughter that she needs to go to school to have a better future. Emily wants her daughter to have her own money, her own car, and the ability to provide for herself so she does not have to “depend on anybody.”

It is very important to Emily that her daughter stays in school. She wants her to go all the way through college. Emily tells her daughter that she will support her to go as far as she wants in school. Emily stated that the message she gives her daughter is, “You are nothing in this country if you do not have school.” Emily’s expectation is that her daughter not only has to attend school, but she has to maintain good grades as well. Emily stated that her daughter gets “very good report cards.”

Emily shared that her daughter has told her she would like to be a doctor. When asked if she knew what it would take for her daughter to become a doctor, Emily replied that she needs to study and get good grades so she can take the right classes in high school then go to college. Emily’s brother tells her daughter to go to school to become a CNA and “see if she likes it” before going on to school to become a doctor. Emily also has an older brother

that attended a university and received a degree in business administration. Emily describes him as being successful in his life. Emily shared that her brother talks with her daughter about higher education.

When Emily was asked what she would like to see in her daughter's future she replied, "Doctor, nurse, business, do nails. If you like it do it!" Emily shared that she wants her daughter to be happy, be able to provide for herself, and not have to depend on anyone. Emily would prefer her daughter to have a profession first, then marry and have children. Emily shared a story of a time her daughter saw a large, beautiful home and her daughter told Emily she wanted a house like that for herself. Emily responded, "If you are working and have a good profession you can have it. Nothing is impossible in this life."

**Javier.** Javier stated that his mother always taught him that school was important. She told him his whole life that it was necessary for him to go to school to learn. Javier shared that he tells his son, who lives with him, every day the same thing he was told by his mother. He tells him, "He has to come to school everyday. He has to be responsible in doing the homework, to put attention in the school with the teacher, everything!"

Javier came to the United States from Ecuador to provide a better life for his family. It was important to him to be able to provide financial support to his children in Ecuador that would enable them to attend school through what would be the Ecuadorian equivalent of high school in the United States. By working here in the United States and sending financial aid to Ecuador he was able to keep his two older children in Ecuador in school. At the time of the interview both children were in the last year of school.

When Javier was asked what he wants his sons' lives to be like Javier shared that he "dreams" many things for his youngest son, age 7. He replied, "I dream many things for

him, but we have to go slow and looking (sic) at him. I have to respect him, his ideas, what he wants to be. I dream many things for him.” He added, “to be a doctor, an architect, or an engineer.” When asked what he thinks his son would have to do to have any of those professions Javier said he did not know.

When asked if his wishes were different for his children in Ecuador Javier replied, “Maybe yes because the education here in this country is more advanced. He has more opportunities in this country.” Javier explained if his boys were to come to the United States from Ecuador they would probably come only to work. He said he was unsure if their schooling in Ecuador would be accepted for college or if they would need to repeat grades. Javier shared that his 18-year-old son and 16-year-old son were both in the last year of school. The older child had repeated two years of school because of his grades.

Javier tells his children that he will support them as long as they are in school. His 16-year-old son wanted to continue on in school and study architecture. Javier stated that his son will go on to the university and he will support him. He will pay for the university and anything he needs. Javier’s oldest son will finish school. Javier believed that his son wants to become a driver, the same job that Javier had when living in Ecuador. Javier stated that he would financially support his youngest son in whatever level he decides to achieve in school. When asked if he would support a decision to leave school before completing high school Javier emphatically replied, “No. He has to finish high school.” Javier added, “I’m pretty sure that’s not going to happen. I see he loves to study, he loves to read, and he is very curious about everything. He asks questions about everything. I’m sure of that. I’m 100%.”

**Sofia.** Sofia attended school for three years and felt she never had any opportunities to choose what she wanted for her life. She believes that school is very important for her



daughters. When asked why she thought it was important for the girls to go to school, Sofia stated, “To be prepared, to exceed...so they don’t suffer like we are, we have to work.”

When asked to explain what she meant by “suffer” Sofia shared, “I don’t know if we had studied we would have had the support that we would have been different, we wouldn’t have to work so much. We would have more time to be with them.” Sofia stated this idea that she and her husband would not “suffer” as much if they had an education multiple times throughout her interviews.

When Sofia was asked what level of education she would like her daughters to attain she said, “Wherever they want to get. They should get to where they want to be.” Sofia shared that her daughters tell her they would like to become an architect and a veterinarian. She tells them that if they want to be those things they have to study and get good grades. Sofia said she tells them, “You have to do an effort, to study hard to do what you want to do.”

I asked Sofia what the most important thing for her daughters to learn from school was. Sofia responded, “To exceed, to be successful people. To do what they want, to choose the career they want, to choose something that they like. To have good success.” When asked if there was a career she would like them to have Sofia replied, “I have this idea to let them pursue what they like, because if I impose on them something I like, they’re not going to be interested.”

Sofia shared that she tells her daughters, “Take advantage [of school], don’t lose out, because we would wish to have what you have now.” When asked what she wants for the future of her daughters Sofia shared that she would like them to “pursue a career they like

and thrive.” She added, “The best I can give them and they can get by their own effort studying.”

**Miguel.** Miguel shared that he believes, “Everything comes through education.” Miguel commented that if he had finished school in Ecuador he probably would have gotten “a professional title” and would have not had to come to the United States. Miguel shared that he believed he had suffered for not having stayed in school and tells his daughters to, “take advantage if they want a better job than working in the countryside.” Miguel added that he shows them his injured hands and tells them, “Look, that happens because I didn’t finish school and I have to work hard.”

When Miguel was asked if he wanted his daughters to go to college he exclaimed, “Of course!” When asked what he thought the most important things that his daughters needed to learn from school Miguel shared, “To exceed. Do everyday a little bit to get more educated.” Miguel added that he wanted his daughters to become “important people and take advantage of their studies”. Miguel wants his children to “study.” He shared:

If it was for me (sic) they don’t work after high school or go to work at McDonald’s. I don’t want that for them. I want them to go straight on. I don’t want her to think about boyfriends. It can be that they divert for that.

When discussing what career he would like his daughters to have when they are adults Miguel said, “Any profession that they have is their decision and they should take advantage of that.” It was important to Miguel that his children have careers that they want and like. Whatever career they choose Miguel wants for them to constantly study and, “with time grow in their careers.” Miguel shared that he doesn’t know what they will become but stated he would like “that they love everything, that they see with their hearts.”

**Isabella.** Isabella believes that school is important for her children. She stated that her children needed to go to school, “So they learn more, learn how to read and write. Here there are possibilities that they learn English so they can get a job anywhere and be something else.”

Isabella shared that she tells her children to listen to the teachers, pay attention, and learn. She said that she told them that the teachers were very mean to the children in her school so, “they should take advantage and learn here because the teachers are nice, nicer.” Isabella stated that she communicated to her children, “Here it is better. You can learn to read and learn more than that to be successful, a career, or something that they can do.”

Isabella commented that one daughter has told her that she would like to be a teacher. Isabella would like for her to be a teacher. Isabella stated that she wants her daughter to study, “to do good in life” and graduate with “something for a job or something.” Her son told her that he would like to be a police officer or drive a train. Isabella shared that she worries about her oldest daughter because she is “very behind.” Isabella stated that she tells her daughter that she has to learn and helps her with what she is able to help her with. Isabella’s youngest son has been diagnosed with mental retardation and receives multiple services through special education at his school. Isabella said, “I help them [the children], but what I wish more, what I think is, that they know well, to do well in life, that they study more.”

When asked about her children attending college or graduating Isabella said, “All four, I would like that they do something.” She added, “But my little one is special. I don’t know. I haven’t thought about him yet.” I asked Isabella what she would like in each child’s

future she stated, “On one side, I want them to have a career, that they do good in life. I want that, but whatever they decide. Learn.”

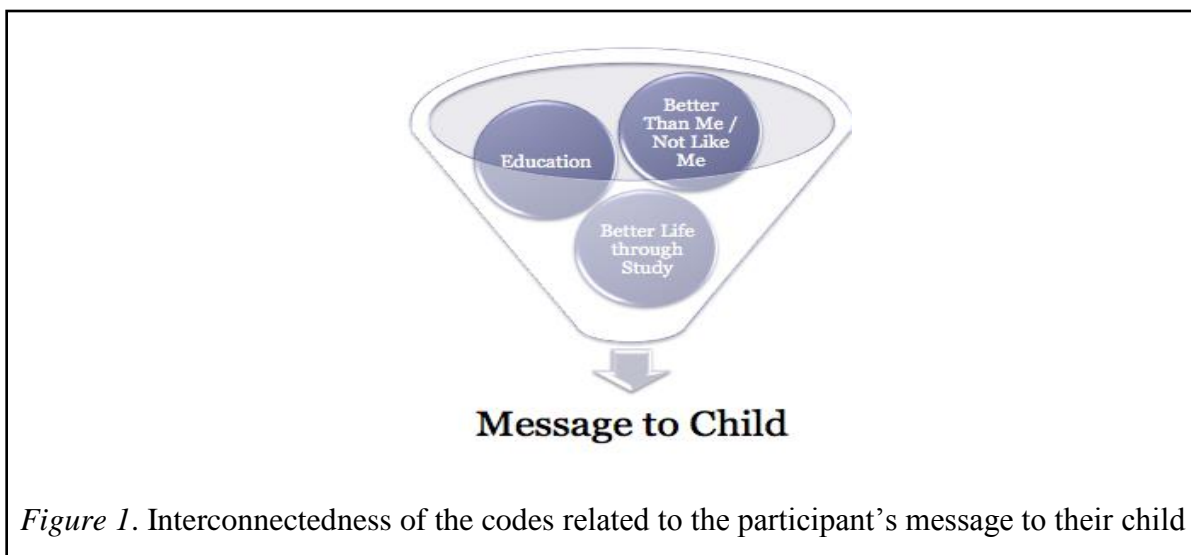
**Mariana.** Mariana is raising her 9-year-old granddaughter and she stated that as any mother she wants to see her children and grandchildren fulfilled in life. Mariana did not have the opportunity to attend school for more than a brief period of time. Her adult children attended school for short periods of time as well. Mariana shared that it is important to her for her grandchild to attend school. School registration was the first thing Mariana attempted to put into place when her granddaughter unexpectedly came to live with her.

When speaking of her adult children Mariana commented, “They would have a better life if even they didn’t study much, but a little. They wouldn’t have to work so hard.” Mariana shared that she tells her granddaughter, “If you don’t study you will have to do the work that I do, bathing people and cleaning up after them.” Mariana shared that she always told her children, “I didn’t study, but you do.” When Mariana was asked what she told her children about school she replied that she told them, “Look how I am now! Look how I work so hard! Try to be somebody in life so you don’t work like me!”

Mariana would like her granddaughter to “study well (sic)” so she is able to have a career. She shared that her adult children have to work harder because they did not have much schooling so Mariana would like for her granddaughter to advance beyond what her adult children completed. When asked about the future for her granddaughter Mariana said she wants for her to “at least go higher than the others.” When asked to explain further she added, “Have a career. At least finish high school and if she can, continue.” Mariana stated it is important, “That she studies and then she can live from what she has studied. Have a profession, a career.”

## Theme Four Summary and Relation to Research Questions

In summary, theme four referred to the desired expectations and aspirations held by the participants for their children. Theme four emerged from the following four codes: education, better life through study, better than me/not like me, and participant's message to child. The codes supporting theme four are interrelated and influence each other. In profiling each participant in relation to the codes the interconnectedness of the codes were made more visible (see Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* Interconnectedness of the codes related to the participant's message to their child

The importance of education for their children was evident in the data from each of the participants. As mentioned in the discussion of theme three, there were discrepancies in the way the participants described the level of educational attainment desired for their children. The majority of participants use the term “study” when speaking of education. When asked what a child will have to do to accomplish goals again the response frequently was “study.” Four participants, Emily, Miguel, Javier, and Camila, were able to more closely identify a process that their children would need to go through. For example, Emily describes that to become a doctor her daughter would need to get good grades in order to take the right classes in high school and get into college to study. Camila was specific about her

children attaining a bachelor's degree. The remaining participants seemed to be unclear as to what a child would need to do to attain a degree beyond high school. The remaining five of the nine participants used the word "study" most frequently in describing what a child would need to do to meet academic or career goals.

All nine participants discussed the idea of career or profession as a desire for their children. Only one participant spoke repeatedly of a "job." One participant specifically mentioned that if his children did "less work with their bodies" they would be better off. Data supported participants' identification that a career, as opposed to a job of manual labor would be what they aspire for their children.

Seven of nine participants identified that they would have had a better life if they had gone to school or stayed in school and/or their children will have a better life through "study." This strongly related to participants' own perspectives of their lives. Three participants discussed the suffering in their lives that may have been lessened had they studied. When participants discussed what they told their children about school, suffering was relayed in their message. For example, Miguel, Sofia, Antonella, Mariana each discussed their suffering when speaking with their children about the importance of school.

There was also a link between the message participants gave to their child about school and the code, not like me/better than me. Six of nine participants explicitly stated they wanted their children's achievement to be "better than me" or "not like me." A seventh participant did not use the specific phrase but implied through his use of other words that he tells his children that in terms of schooling they should not be like him. The phrases "better than me" or "not like me" were coded in six of the nine participants with the phrases occurring nineteen times among cases. In cases in which participants used "better than me"

or “not like me” their messages to their children about school directly included the statement or included indirect messages to the child. For example, Camila does not tell her children to be better than she is or not to be like her, but stated in her interview that she wants them “to be better than” she feels she is. What she tells her children is to go straight through school, graduate from high school, and go on to get a degree which related directly back to her statement of “better than me.”

Theme four, expectations and aspirations, addressed Research Question One regarding the expectations and aspirations Hispanic immigrant parents have for their children. Analysis of the data revealed that all participants share an understanding that education will support a better life for their children. All participants identified educational attainment as an expectation for their children although the level of attainment was unclear.

Participants, when referring to the education of their children, used the term “study” repeatedly. Only two participants were able to clearly identify a progression of education through the years that is typical of the U.S. educational system. For example, Camile stated that she wants her children to finish high school, get a bachelor’s degree, and have a good career or job. Miguel stated that he wanted his daughters to have a major, graduate, and have a career that they love. He also stated that he does not want his daughters to have to work after high school, but continue straight on to school. Emily stated that her brother talks to her daughter about what she needs to do in school to succeed and advance to a good career. However, some of the information that Emily shared is unclear and may be interpreted as inaccurate or perhaps inefficient. For example, Emily stated that her brother tells her daughter that if she wants to be a doctor she needs to be sure to get good grades so she can take the right courses in high school that she will need for college. He also tells her to go to

community college and get her CNA certification then, if she likes the work, become a nurse and then go to medical school. Emily stated that she tells her daughter to go all the way through college and get good grades. She also tells her to be anything she wants to be, just be happy.

One participant had a more vague interpretation of what children need to accomplish in school to reach academic expectations. Javier was able to articulate the Ecuadorian school structure but was not able to articulate how the U.S. educational systems are structured. His children in the United States are young so he felt that he had some time.

The remaining participants use the term “study” when speaking of what they expected for their children. This could indicate that participants are not able to identify clearly to their child what level of education they expect them to attain. Five of nine participants attended school for six years or less in their country of origin. Lack of familiarity with school structures, particularly school structures that are very different from their experiences, may not be present for those participants adding to the difficulty of identifying educational standards or expectations that they desire their children to attain.

A majority, six of nine, participants identified a need for their children to attain a level of achievement perceived by the participant to be “better than” themselves. For those participants that have low levels of school experience their children may have attained a higher level of education than they have. Of concern would be that parents setting the academic or career standard as “better than” them could inadvertently set an expectation that is below the level that a child may be capable of attaining.



## **Theme Five: Be Somebody**

The statement, “be somebody/someone,” was a recurring response by participants when asked several different questions related to what participants wanted for the future of their children. Although this term lacks a concrete definition, the pervasive nature of this response within and among seven of the nine interviews led to the emergence of the term as a theme. Six of the nine participants explicitly used the phrase “be somebody/someone” in discussions, with the phrase occurring twenty times among the six participants.

Closer analysis of the data indicated that in seven of the events of occurrence the statement is embedded with “study.” The following are examples of the statements:

- “I tell her you have to study so tomorrow you become somebody.”
- “I want that they are somebody in life. I want them to study. That they go to school.”
- “I tell them they have to take advantage now. They have to study now so they can be somebody in life.”
- “We tell them that they have to study, that they have to get good grades so that they can be somebody in life. To do what they want to do.”
- “I tell them that they should study so that they don’t suffer what I have suffered and continue to suffer for not having studied. I tell them to study so that they become somebody in life.”
- “I teach them all they have now, everything I didn’t have. I mean, it is easier for them, I mean, to study, to be somebody in life.”

Five statements were related to “being somebody” relative to the child not being like the participant in some way, similar to the statement in the previous theme, “not like me/better than me.” The following are examples:

- “Be prepared, to exceed, to be someone in life, so they don’t suffer like we are, we have to work.”
- “That they be somebody, as they say, that they do better than us.”
- “I want them to be, to be somebody in life, that they don’t do like me, it is always hard.
- “Look how I am now. Look how I work so hard! Try to be somebody in life so you don’t work like me.”
- “All my childhood experiences of how hard it was for me, perhaps all those difficult experiences stayed in my head and I try to make sure my children learn from this and the reason they are not suffering, they are not going through what I went through, but they have to understand they have to be someone in life.”

When Mariana was asked if she could explain what she meant when she said she wanted her children to “be somebody” she explained, “I always told them they need to study so they won’t do the same work as me, clean bathrooms, with all the people, cleaning them. So they will have better jobs, so they won't do the things I do.” I then asked Mariana if she meant they would have a different job, she replied, “Better, a better job.”

The following two statements, made by two different participants, were also were noted in the transcripts:

- “I want him to be somebody in life, but he says mommy I am old. But my son, I need you to study something, because you are nothing.”

- “It’s very important to go to the school because you not have school you are nothing in this country.”

These two phrases imply that with study or schooling the children can be something or somebody as opposed to being nothing.

One participant, when asked how he helps his daughter to be successful, made this statement that differed from the others, “We give good examples to our kids and they will go like that. If you are valuable to them they will always be thinking that they can be somebody.” Interestingly this was the same participant who stated he wanted his daughters to, “see with their hearts.” His statement would indicate that he views “being somebody” as more than just achievement based and also identifies intrinsic qualities as important in the construction of self.

### **Theme Five Summary and Relation to Research Questions**

To summarize, theme five indicated a need of the majority of participants to have their child grow up to “be somebody.” The term “be somebody” is enigmatic at best, perhaps better dealt within the philosophical domain. The statements shown above would indicate that participants most closely relate being “somebody” with education and with having life experiences different than their own. As with other themes participants closely relate their perspective on “being somebody” with their own life experiences and framed their vision of “being somebody” from those experiences.

Theme five encompassed Research Questions One, Two, and Three. The idea of “being somebody” is reflective of the aspirations that participants hold for their children, although hard to define as a term. This theme also addressed the ways in which parents support their construction of the term “be somebody” through their own personal

experiences. Additionally, although parents did not specifically state that “being somebody” is a measure of success (Question Three), seven of nine parents stated that they wanted their children, “to be somebody.” In relation to Research Question One: What expectations and aspirations do Hispanic immigrants have for their child’s educational attainment? Participants were very specific in some regards when asked what they wanted for their child’s academic attainment: go to college and have a major. In contrast they were very vague in seeing education as a means “to be somebody.” Question Two was likewise encompassed in this theme: In what ways do the personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents influence their families experiences? Many participants identified their child being somebody in terms of their own personal identity. They hoped for their child to be somebody in contrast to how they view themselves. The statement “be somebody” coupled with the phrase, “not like me” was evidence of this. Research Question Three: How do Hispanic immigrant families define success for their child? As stated previously participants did not state specifically that to be a success the child had to “be somebody,” however, six of nine participants used the phrase “to be somebody” when asked what they wanted for their child’s future.

### **Emergent Theory**

Participants’ personal life experiences and self image or self worth had significant influence on the ways in which expectations and aspirations were defined for their children. Participants framed their expectations and aspirations for their children around qualities they identified as possessing themselves or missing in their lives. Participants’ own life experiences and the influence of those experiences on participants’ personal identity or self image were likewise reflected in the ways in which success was defined in relation to

successful individuals as well as characteristics or qualities that their children would demonstrate if they were successful. Qualities of successful people, defined by participants, again mirrored qualities that participants identified as possessing or lacking themselves. Participants who identified themselves as successful people reported having strong support systems in their countries of origin as well as in the United States, they spoke English fluently, demonstrated positive outlooks on life, and were more clearly able to state long and short term goals for themselves and their children.

Each of the participants, including the participant born in the United States, clearly identified that living in conditions of poverty limited the opportunities available to them in their home countries. Data from interviews supported that participants believed there were no options for them to choose to work outside of manual labor jobs or work in the fields. Research on identity (Erikson, 1963) identifies this exploration of opportunities, particularly in the stage of adolescence, as crucial to the development of a healthy ego identity. Participants were unable to try new experiences and seek out opportunities in which they may have found success limiting their own view of themselves as successful individuals. This was reflected in participants' stated desire for their children to be "better than" how they viewed themselves to be.

The need to work to add to the family income was a primary reason stated by participants for not continuing their education. Participants shared that they believed they would have had better and less difficult lives if they had continued their educations. Participants' messages to their children about school and educational attainment again reflected the participant's own sense of identity and self image and were defined in relation to the level of education attained by the participant. All participants identified the desire for

their children to obtain an education equating an education with “becoming somebody” or “being better” or “more than” how participants viewed themselves as being. Participants shared that they wanted better lives for their children than they had themselves and worked hard to ensure this for their children.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to explore the development of Hispanic immigrant parents’ expectations and aspirations for their children, and the influence of the parents’ own experiences, particularly their own education and personal experiences, on those expectations and aspirations. Through personal interviews this study further explored the meaning of “success” through the lens of the Hispanic immigrant parent and how their definition transfers to the children of the parents in this study. Additionally, the structure of the participant families and the influence of those structures on the expectations and aspirations of Hispanic immigrant families were explored.

The chapter began with an overview of the participants. In-depth individual profiles of each of the nine participants were then given to support the readers’ understanding of the participants. The processes of coding, analysis, and the development of themes were described. The processes of coding and analysis resulted in the following five themes: (a) poverty, (b) identity, (c) defining success, (d) expectations and aspirations, and (e) “be somebody.” The emergent theory resulting from the research was discussed. The implications of the findings in relation to the research questions will be presented in Chapter Five.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

Chapter Five provides a summary and discussion of the findings related to the research. The implications for the field of education and social service fields are provided. This chapter concludes with the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

### **Summary of the Research**

Most of the research related to identity has been conducted in the context of Western cultures, particularly within the United States. This research failed to take into account the cultural context of crises occurring within the psychosocial stages of development for individuals living in cultures other than Western cultures, particularly those in underdeveloped nations. According to a 2011 report issued by the U.S. Census Bureau, 40 million foreign-born people were living in the United States. Citizens from Latin America and the Caribbean represented the highest percentage, 53%, of foreign-born individuals living in the United States. This information can be difficult to determine due to reluctance of those who may be undocumented residents to report to the census bureau. As our community becomes a greater global community there is an increased need for research on the development of identity in cultures other than Western culture to support the understanding of the diverse needs of individuals.

Later research explored social identity, ethnic identity, and cultural identity. These theories relate primarily to an individual's sense of belonging to a social or ethnic group or culture, not the individual's development of personal identity. Although an individual's sense of belonging or ability to identify with a group is important, the formation of personal identity or ego-identity (Erikson, 1980) is the foundation from which an individual forms a sense of purpose in life.

Healthy resolution of crises in the developmental stages supports the ability of individuals to make life choices, form healthy relationships, and make meaningful contributions to their world (Erikson, 1980). Without an understanding of how crises present themselves in various cultures and an understanding of the norms of the country of origin of individuals, there is absent information on the ability of immigrants to manage successfully in a new country. This may lead to presuppositions of the majority, based on their personally held belief systems, to identify an individual as successful or otherwise.

This qualitative study was designed to gain insight from Hispanic immigrant parents. The focus of the study was to identify the influence of personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents on their expectations and aspirations for their children. The study further sought to identify how Hispanic immigrant parents view success. Using grounded theory methodology, this research addressed the following questions:

1. What expectations and aspirations do Hispanic immigrant parents have for their child's educational attainment?
2. In what ways do the personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents influence their families' experiences?
3. How do Hispanic immigrant parents define "success" for their child?
4. How do the family structures of Hispanic immigrants support the expectations and aspirations that parents have for their children?

### **Review of Findings Related to the Research Questions**

Case study using grounded theory methodology was conducted with a total of nine cases. Each participant represented one case. Participants were recruited through a



voluntary parent program offered in the school district in which the research took place. A total of 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted with the nine participants.

Through one-on-one interviews, parents shared their cultural and personal historical experiences as children in their countries of origin. These interviews gave voice to a frequently misunderstood group of parents and supported the understanding of the source of parents' expectations and aspirations for their children in the United States. Through the interviews and subsequent coding five themes emerged.

1. Poverty
2. Identity
3. Defining Success
4. Expectations and Aspirations
5. Be Somebody

Each of the five emerging themes and their supporting codes added to the understanding of each of the research questions in relation to the participants, with the exception of Research Question Four.

Theme one, poverty, as a theme had a pervasive effect as it strongly influenced the identity development of each participant, which in turn had influence on each of the remaining themes. As stated previously, research indicates that families living in chronic poverty face multiple stressors that impact decision-making, management of emotions, and the ability to plan beyond the immediate needs of the family. These stressors can lead to issues with health, substance abuse within families, and domestic violence. Additional environmental factors like the quality of available education, violence within the community,

availability of health care, and lack of employment opportunities may also contribute to family tensions experienced living in chronic poverty (Dyk, 2004; Seccombe, 2002).

Poverty was reported by participants to have a significant influence on the childhood experiences of all participants. Financial instability was a primary factor for the inability to attend school of each of the participants who had six years or less of schooling. Participants related that within their childhood families, meeting daily needs was often a concern. Sofia related this concern when telling that her mother would have to go out begging for things for her children. Likewise, Antonella shared that she had no dreams because they lived only to get their food.

Theme two, identity, was central to how success was defined, the expectations and aspirations that participants held for their children both academically and in life, as well as the desire for their children “to be somebody.” When identifying characteristics of successful people, some participants identified characteristics that they saw in themselves, such as effort in the cases of Tomas, Javier, Emily, and Camile. Other participants identified traits that they saw as missing in their own lives, such as Antonella singling out the ability to provide for her family when she stated she felt unable to do so. Miguel and Sofia identified education as an indicator of success after discussing in their interviews how they “suffer” because they do not have educations themselves. This supports the concept of identity being linked to the identification of success in the participant.

When discussing the expectations and aspirations for their children again, participants framed their ideas around the qualities that they identified as possessing themselves, or identified as lacking in themselves. Seven of nine participants shared their expectations for their children in relation to their own personal experiences. For example, Camila wants her

children to complete their education before starting families, and to continue straight through high school to college to complete their degrees. This is in contrast to Camila's own experience of leaving school to have her first child, then later in her life returning to complete high school through an alternate route before continuing on to take online college courses. Tomas expressed that he wanted his children to get a good education and have careers that would not require them to work with their bodies. Tomas is a laborer and works very long days. His family's financial hardships caused him to leave school at age 8 and work to help support his mother and siblings. In contrast Javier was able to attend school for 12 years. He did have to go to work after completing Grade 6, but returned to school later, while working full time, to complete his 12 years. Javier believes his determination to get his education helped him and he wants his children to complete their high school education as he did and go on to college.

Six of nine participants stated that they wanted their children to be "better than me" or "not like me." This may suggest that participants using the terms, "better than me" or "not like me," identify themselves as "less than" a standard that they envision as being acceptable or culturally valued. This is important to this research in relation to the work of Kaplan et al. (2001), discussed in the review of the literature, in which parent self-feelings were a strong positive moderating variable on a child's perception of parental expectations of academic achievement. This will be discussed further in the implications section of this research.

Participant identity also influenced the use of the term "be somebody." As stated in the findings, seven of nine participants used the term "be somebody" in expressing what they wished for the future of their child. This phrase appeared 20 times across the eight participant interviews. In seven of the occurrences of the phrase it was used in connection

with study, as in “study to be somebody in life.” Five of the statements included the term “be somebody,” relating to the child not being like the parent, as in “be somebody so you don’t suffer as we suffer.”

As illustrated in the discussion of the theme of identity, the previous themes of poverty and identity had significant influence on the remaining three themes of success, expectations and aspirations, and the theme “be somebody.” The themes are closely tied to each other and are interwoven throughout all of the participant interviews. This would indicate that poverty has a strong effect over an individual’s formation of personal identity and could suggest that the way in which an individual perceives him- or herself in relation to their own world (Erikson, 1963) supports the formation of the individual’s view of success and the expectations that individuals hold for their children.

### **Research Question One**

Research Question One examined the expectations and aspirations held by Hispanic immigrants for their child’s educational attainment. The original intention of questioning during the interview was to identify the level of education participants wanted their children to attain. Through the interview process, participant responses extended to general life expectations for their children as well.

All participants identified education as a means to a better life, sharing that they would have a better life if they had stayed in school. This showed a strong connection to participants’ perspectives of their own identity and sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987) in their lives. The participants’ messages to their children about school also reflected their own sense of self. For example, one participant often told her child, “I didn’t study, but you do. If

you do not study you will have to do the work that I do.” Six of nine participants responded that they wanted whatever their children achieved to be “better than me” or “not like me.”

Although educational attainment was identified as an expectation for the children of all participants, the level of education was nebulous. Some participants were very specific regarding what level of education they wanted their children to complete, such as obtaining a master’s degree. Data supported the idea that participants identified more education or more study as a way for children to achieve a career or profession versus a job. This was important to participants. One parent specifically stated that he wanted his children to have careers that would require less work with their bodies as that would be better for them. Five of the nine participants used the term “study” most frequently when describing what the child would need to do to meet academic or career goals. This will be further discussed in the implications of the research.

### **Research Question Two**

Research Question Two explored the ways in which the personal life experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents influence their families’ experiences. The data overwhelmingly supported the fact that participants’ past experiences influenced the participants’ families’ current life experiences. Participants’ perceptions of themselves and how they perceived their own personal value influenced their expectations for their children as well as how they viewed success.

Many of the participants shared that they did not want their children to have lives like their own lives and because of this worked hard to ensure a different life for their children. This also was reflected in the messages that participants gave to their children about school. For example, one participant told the children, “Take advantage, don’t lose out. We would

have wished to have what you have now.” Lack of opportunities in the country of origin of participants also influenced the lives of their families in the United States. Seven of nine participants held manual labor jobs in their countries of origin. By coming to the United States with low levels of education and manual labor skill sets, their opportunities are limited to low paying manual labor positions in the United States. This continues to limit opportunities for immigrants and their families. Participants expressed that they had little or no opportunities in their home countries and want their children to have many opportunities in their lives.

Participants identify schooling as a way to success and greater opportunities. This was expressed often in the data. Participants reported telling their children that they must study to be successful and to “be somebody.” All of the participants reported that they liked school, even those who experienced corporal punishment in school. These participants stated that they tell their children that schools here in the United States are better because they treat the children well. One participant expressed that schools in the United States are better than schools in Ecuador. According to this participant, “Teachers in the United States are good with the children; they look for ways to help them.”

Participants’ personal experiences also were evidenced in statements made regarding things that they worry about for their children. In many of the participants’ statements, their worries paralleled events in their lives. For example, one participant whose father died when he was a young boy, worried that he would die when his children were young. Another participant stated that she worried about her daughters being won over by men who would give them hope and abandon them, mirroring her own experience. Another participant who

talked about herself as being “nothing” worried that her children will not be better than her and will not value themselves.

Participants’ past experiences supported their identity development and strongly supported the development of self-image. When coding the data, the phrases “not like me” and “better than me” came up 19 times across the interviews of six of the nine participants. This may indicate that participants are unhappy or dissatisfied with past experiences in their lives and would like their child to have different experiences.

### **Research Question Three**

Research Question Three examined the way in which Hispanic immigrant parents defined success for their child. Participants were asked to identify individuals that they felt were successful. Participants also were asked to identify the qualities, characteristics, or skills they would see in their child if their child were successful. Data revealed that participants identified success with four factors. These factors were: academic achievement, the ability to provide for themselves or their family, effort, and respect.

**Academic achievement.** Academic achievement emerged in seven of nine participant interviews. As discussed in Research Question One, there were differences in the perception of academic achievement. Again the term study was used, for example, “Mainly studying takes you to success.” Two participants were specific in describing that they wanted their children to finish college, get degrees and have good careers.

**Ability to provide.** Participants did not view success and wealth as the same. None of the participants identified wealth as a measure of success but did identify the ability to provide for the family as an indicator. For example one participant stated that it was

important for him to be able to have enough money to bring home to his family and provide for his children.

**Effort.** Six of nine participants identified effort as an indicator of success. One participant, who identified herself as successful, stated that she was successful because she kept trying and never gave up. Participants tell their children that they must work hard to be what they want to be so they can be proud of what they accomplish because of their efforts.

**Respect.** Six of nine participants identified respect as a measure of success. The majority of participants stated that they taught their children that respect is important to being a good person in life.

#### **Research Question Four**

Research Question Four related to the family structures of Hispanic immigrants in the United States and the way in which the family structures supported the expectations and aspirations for their children. With one exception, participants did not share information relevant to supporting this question. One participant did tell of her brother speaking with her daughter about what she would need to accomplish academically to go to college and have a career.

Only one of the participants lived with extended family members. Although some participants spoke of close relationships with family also living in the United States, the relationships were primarily social in nature and not necessarily supportive of what participants identified as academic expectations or aspirations for their children. Five participants relied on the school their children attend for support with academic, behavioral, and health related issues.



It is important to note that four of the participants spoke of strong social supports in the United States. These support systems included family, friends, work relationships, and mentor-type relationships. This is explored further in the discussion of the literature.

### **Discussion of the Literature**

The literature reviewed in chapter two and discussed here supports the emergent theory of this research. Participant identity and self image in relation to the influence of past personal experiences was an influencing factor on the stated expectations and aspirations for their children. Likewise personal life experiences of participants framed the way in which success was viewed in general as well how participants identified qualities that their own children would demonstrate when they were successful individuals.

Even though Eriksonian theory (1963) is grounded in Western culture, there are numerous connections that can be made to the participants in this study, thus validating this research. According to Erikson (1980) all of the stages of development present opportunities for individuals to encounter and successfully resolve crises throughout all stages of their lives. Although there are identified stages based on chronological age, crises normally encountered during one stage may be confronted at earlier or later stages to be dealt with at differing levels of maturity. Unsuccessful resolution does not mean that an individual does not progress or is frozen in a particular stage, but may lack the necessary skills to resolve future crises in a healthy manner or may later successfully resolve the crises at another stage when possessing greater maturity or resources.

Erikson (1980) referred to school age, stage four, as a “most socially decisive stage” (p. 93). It is during this stage that a child begins to develop social worth. The child begins to identify the desire to work hard for opportunities as a catalyst for his or her personal identity

rather than family history or material possessions. Erikson's stage of adolescence likewise reflects the potential for unresolved crises among participants. At the stage of adolescence young people reflect upon what their lives may become, what jobs they may hold.

Resolution of crises at this stage comes through the individual's exploration of opportunities available. Personal identity begins to form at this stage based on success or failures in those explorations.

For the majority of the participants in this research, schooling was not a vehicle to advance their opportunities. Eight of the nine participants stated that they felt they had no opportunities in their country of origin. Seven of these participants stated that the lack of opportunity was the primary reason for leaving their home country. This is consistent with the data from a survey administered by the Pew Hispanic Center (Fry & Lopez, 2012) in which 55% of Hispanic immigrant respondents stated their reason for coming to the United States was for better economic opportunities. In the same survey 87% of respondents stated a belief that the opportunity to get ahead was better in the United States than in their country of origin.

Arnett (2000) identified the gap in the research between developed and underdeveloped countries as an area of weakness in the research related to identity in non-Western culture. Arnett noted the cultural divide between urban and rural areas, particularly in developing countries, positing that adolescents in rural areas of developing countries have fewer educational opportunities and have fewer occupational choices besides agricultural work. This was evidenced in the statements made by participants when discussing opportunities in their country of origin. To exemplify, one participant stated, "We had no opportunities to choose. The truth is I didn't expect to do anything, or rather nothing because

my parents didn't have anything. All we ever had was work to do." Another participant shared, "I never thought about what I would be when I grew up. I only knew that I would work." Both participants were referring to working in the fields with other family members. Phillips and Pittman's (2003) research on poverty and identity development stated that opportunity structures are key to the development of adolescents and young adults adding to the importance of opportunities for exploration on the development of identity. Arnett (2000) added that psychosocial experiences in underdeveloped countries, such as work and envisioning possibilities for the future, might be related to an individual's ability to successfully resolve crises in emerging adulthood and adulthood.

As noted in the literature review, if an individual is unable to successfully resolve the crisis within the stage presented, each successive stage will challenge the individual further. The unsuccessful resolution of these challenges decreases the likelihood of achieving positive ego quality at each stage (Jenkins et al., 2005). Based on chronological age most participants in this research were either in or very close to Erikson's (1980) stage of generativity versus stagnation. It is during this stage that individuals seek opportunities to create and/or nurture things that will outlast them. Guiding and nurturing their children is a part of this stage. The participants in this study were striving to achieve this. All of the participants stated in numerous ways that they wanted their children to have good lives, "better lives" than they had or have. One participant stated that parents feel fulfilled when "seeing your child achieve higher than you." Of importance to explore is the level where participants were able to successfully resolve crises at previous stages of their lives, particularly in the stage of exploration of opportunities, and develop a healthy ego-identity themselves. Additionally, the level of competence felt by participants in supporting their

child through the stage of exploration is key in helping families to negotiate this time in their child's life. This will be addressed further in the suggestions for further research sections of this study.

As discussed in the literature review, expectations and aspirations can be strongly influenced by healthy formation of identity, socio-economic status, and cultural beliefs and values. According to Kaplan et al. (2001), "Among the family process variables that seem to be most important to children's academic performance is parents' educational expectations for their children, which consistently has been a strong predictor of student achievement at all levels" (p. 360). The study by Kaplan et al. (2001) examined the relationship between the level of education attained by the parent and the level of academic expectations held for the child (as perceived by the child), and the degree to which negative parent self-feelings affect that relationship. The research indicated that parents having healthy levels of self-esteem are more likely to provide their children with greater opportunities to develop their own interests and explore opportunities. Children of parents with positive self-feelings perceived higher parental expectations of academic achievement regardless of the level of academic attainment by the parent. This is an important factor for this research. Eight of nine participants reported the expected grade of completion in their country of origin was Grade 6. Two of the eight participants reported completion of the United States equivalent of high school; three attended school for less than four years; three completed six years; one received her high school diploma through an alternative program. Only three of the nine participants identified themselves as successful individuals. Kaplan et al. posited that children of parents with lower levels of educational attainment and positive levels of self-feeling have perceived higher parental expectations of academic achievement for the child. Kaplan et al. (2001)

explained this in terms of motivation for the child; children will be more likely to listen to or model themselves after adults who display positive feelings about themselves.

Zuniga's (2002) article related to the protective factors of importance to immigrants. The protective factors of salience identified by Zuniga are social support, psychosocial competence, and cognitive factors. Individual's perceptions of available support led to feelings of being cared for and increased resilience. Social support from parents was considered to be a critical coping factor for children, leading to more positive psychological outcomes. The second protective factor, psychosocial competence refers to the belief of individuals that they have control over the outcome of their lives and have a sense of agency. Individuals with psychosocial competence are able to trust people in the world around them and demonstrate active coping styles. The third protective factor was cognitive ability, which falls beyond the scope of this research.

The protective factors discussed are of importance to this research. Four of the participants demonstrated an optimistic outlook on their lives. These participants were able to identify achievements they were proud of; three of the four identified themselves as successful people. These participants stated that they were happy or contented with their lives and could articulate goals for themselves and/or their families. These same participants spoke of extensive support systems here in the United States. Support systems included family, friends, work relationships, and in some cases mentor-type relationships. Three of these participants also spoke of strong family support in their country of origin. They expressed feeling loved and encouraged by a parent and talked of close relationships with siblings. Zuniga (2002) noted that individuals with lower psychosocial competence scores that were unable to access or had weak social supports in their country of origin had greater

difficulty accessing and establishing social supports in the United States. Four of the participants in this study relied on school for support services for their children and in some cases, support for family issues. The participant with health issues reported that her child's school helped her family during the time of her illness. Cognitive ability could not be accounted for within the parameters of this research.

In their research Suarez-Orozco (1987) and Crivello (2011) identified that “becoming somebody” was of importance to participants. Crivello asserted that her research validates “that young people and their parents connect migration with the process of ‘becoming somebody in life’ and their high educational aspirations” (p. 395). Participants in Suarez-Orozco’s research were recent immigrants to the United States from Central American countries. Participants in the research used by Crivello were from Peru and were rural to urban emigrants. In both cases the moves to another location within or outside of the country of origin were to seek better lives for their families and participants viewed the path to a better life through education. It is interesting to note that although these two studies were nearly twenty five years apart, the profiles of participants changed little, with the exception of less civil unrest in the home country, and were very consistent with the participants in this study as well.

Participants in the research of Suarez-Orozco (1987) and Crivello (2011), like participants in this current research, consistently state that they want their children to “be somebody.” Both researchers also note participants’ made statements that their children must “be somebody, not like me” as did the participants in this research. Suarez-Orozco stated in her research that the immigrant children were aware that they needed to become somebody to fulfill the needs of their parents.

Crivello (2011) shared in her research that children identified parents would give them the same message as participants in the current research study. This was exemplified by the statement a child made when asked what a parent would say to a child about to go to secondary school. The child stated, “He should keep studying so he’s not like him [the father]” (p. 402). Crivello’s (2011) research also identified other comments that were parallel to the participants in the current research study. The adult and child participants in the Crivello (2011) study shared a belief that education would ensure a “better” and “different” life for the children than that of their parents. Crivello asserted in her research that universally rural parents stated that they wanted lives that were different from their own personal histories for their children. Adult participants from rural areas spoke of not wanting their children to suffer as they suffered by working so hard in the fields. Like participants in the current study they viewed education as the way to free their children from manual labor.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

Lincoln and Guba (2006) have identified four criteria that should be present to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Krefling (1991) suggests that multiple strategies be used to establish trustworthiness and ensure the quality of the research. Multiple strategies were implemented during the course of the study to reduce any threats to validity and ensure the trustworthiness of the research.

To increase credibility, also known as truth-value, it was imperative to establish mutual trust, referred to as *confianza* among the group of parents participating in the research. To do this, I spent prolonged periods of time with the parents during the school programs including sharing meals before each session and attending field trips with the

group. Periodic member checking was used to verify truth-value, and keep researcher bias in check.

Multiple methods were used to support the dependability and confirmability of the research. The reflexive journal helped to ensure that my personal background and experiences as a school administrator did not bias the research. The journal contained notes related to observations, thoughts, feelings, and frustrations related to the research process. Member checking was used as appropriate. The reflexive notebook also served as a vehicle to conduct an audit trail. A peer reviewer was used to objectively review research procedures and research findings. Triangulation of data sources was also used as feasible.

To support transferability of the research, rich descriptions of the participants, context, and setting of the research are given. This thorough description will allow future researchers to determine if the findings are transferable to their own context. I did attempt to include a representative sample of the population being studied in the research relative to socioeconomic status, educational level, and country of origin. However, because the participants were drawn from a volunteer population this is a limitation of the study.

A confirmability audit was conducted to validate the findings of this researcher and ensure the absence of researcher bias, as this was a potential issue. An auditor with previous experience in research and conducting audits of qualitative research was selected. The auditor reviewed all procedures, notes, and the reflexive journal kept over the course of the study. Tables of initial and focused codes generated from the interview transcripts were submitted and examined by the auditor. Portions of the transcripts were also provided to the auditor for coding agreement. The auditor randomly selected five instances of data to code. The auditor was in complete agreement with how the data had been coded (see Appendix K).



## **Implications of the Research**

A great deal of research has been done on the relationship of immigrant families and schools, parent involvement, student achievement, and creating multicultural learning communities (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Epstein, 2001; Olivos et al., 2011; Valdes, 1996). Most of this research, however, comes from the perspective of the school. This perspective too often, though inadvertently, looks at Hispanic immigrant parents and Hispanic students through the lens of deficiency, making an assumption that the parent doesn't care about education or the child's achievement. According to Epstein (2001) many of today's educators enter schools with an inadequate understanding of the diverse backgrounds, cultures, languages, and social structures of the students and families with whom they work. Without this knowledge they cannot fully understand parents' expectations for their child. Without an understanding of the expectations parents have for their children, teachers cannot be responsive to those expectations.

Data from this research overwhelmingly indicate that participants value education and view education as a pathway to achievement in life regardless of the level of education the participant personally attained. Although participants identify educational attainment as important for their children, there were discrepancies in how educational achievement was defined. This may be due to the significant differences in educational systems between schools in Latin America and Caribbean countries and the United States. It is also important to note here that this may also be related to the conditions of poverty in which participants grew up. This may suggest that the implications of this research could also be of value when working with non-immigrant families from conditions of chronic poverty, particularly those with low levels of parental educational attainment.

Two participants were able to specifically state that they wanted their children to attend college, earn degrees, and have careers. The remaining participants used the term study when discussing academic achievement. Some participants specifically stated that they wanted to have careers such as: doctor, dentist, police officer, or in business. When asked if the participant knew what the child would need to do to have the career discussed, very often the response was, “study.” “Study,” as well as the messages that parents give their children to “be somebody,” is a nebulous term. Children need more clarity when parents share expectations with them. Educators can help parents with clarifying the messages to their children and supporting the message given as well.

I always wanted to be somebody. Now I realize I should have been more specific.

—Lily Tomlin, Comedienne

As discussed in Chapter Four, the phrase “be somebody” or a variation of the phrase appeared eighteen times in the interviews. When transcripts were examined further, the phrase was embedded with the term “study” as in “study to be somebody in life.” Five appearances of the phrase were related to being somebody in contrast to what the participants perceived themselves to be. Two occurrences were related to “being nothing” without study or school. This would indicate that participants had a desire for their children to achieve and achieve what they perceived to be better than what they personally have attained, but does not support the understanding of the child as to what the standard of expectation is for them. If a parent completed Grade 6 for example, and the child is in high school, the child has, in theory, achieved a status of “more than” the parent. The parent standard of expectation must be made more clearly in order for children to visualize a target. Without specificity of what it means to be “somebody” an individual cannot direct his or her actions or make

independent choices to advance towards goals. School structures need to be in place beginning at lower levels to support children's understanding of the options available to them for their future. Guidance supports implemented at the high school level are not early or adequate enough support for children and families who may struggle to identify opportunities, pathways to opportunities, and resources to access in support of identified goals. This is of particular importance for students of color or students in poverty who have previously been placed in non-college tracked programs during earlier years of schooling.

Part of the process of supporting a child through adolescence is providing resources and support through what Erikson (1963) identifies as the period of identity versus role confusion. This period is a time for adolescents to explore opportunities, try out areas of interest and find those things with which they can be successful. It is important for educators to understand the identity development of immigrant parents. Based on Erikson's (1980) work in the area of psychosocial stages of development, the exploratory period of adolescence during which identity is formed does not occur universally across cultures. Opportunities to explore strengths and try new things, independent of the parent, are typical in Western cultures. It is not typical in all cultures, and it is often not an option or a cultural norm for individuals in other countries, particularly in rural areas of underdeveloped countries. Educators must understand this when working with immigrant parents.

In relation to Erikson's (1963) theory of identity, eight of nine participants stated that they felt they had no opportunities in their home countries, leading in all but one case to immigration to the United States. Erikson's theory asserts that the ability to explore opportunities is needed to develop a sense of self and personal identity. Success in these opportunities leads to identification of self as a success. Erikson also asserts that if a healthy

resolution to conflict is not obtained during a particular stage, there are opportunities for individuals to resolve conflict at later stages, perhaps with more maturity. Akhtar (1995) posits that the conditions of immigration, the sudden change from an average and predictable environment to a new, unfamiliar, and unpredictable environment, are similar to a new “individuation process of adolescence” (p. 1052). With this in mind, there can be an opportunity for immigrant parents to explore opportunities not available to them previously in their countries of origin. Seccombe’s (2002) work on poverty is applicable here. Seccombe asserts community institutions are integral in supporting positive self-concepts of individuals, particularly those living in poverty. I also believe community institutions, especially schools, are integral in supporting the development of the self-concepts of many individuals, particularly immigrants, who may be trying to establish themselves in a new community or struggling with a sense of belonging. Seccombe (2002) posits that community institutions can provide opportunities for individuals to learn new skills, access supports, and connect with other adults going through similar experiences. Schools can provide these types of opportunities for Hispanic immigrant families as well as those living in chronic poverty. Opportunities can also be provided that will broaden experiences for families together. The program, *Lee y Serás*, which the participants attended prior to the start of this research, accomplished this to a limited extent. In the program, family field trips are subsidized through grant funding and arranged by the facilitator of the program with input from the parents. This provides opportunities for families that they may not be able to experience with limited disposable income.

The research of Kaplan et al. (2001) examined the effects of parent self-feelings and their own educational attainment on parental expectations for their child and indicated that

positive self-feelings of parents had a positive moderating effect on low levels of academic achievement of parents. With this information in mind, along with Erikson's (1963) work on the psychosocial stages of development, it becomes evident that parents who have had lower levels of academic attainment and/or academic success and may or may not have successfully negotiated resolutions to crisis in developmental stages may need opportunities to gain success through school or community-based activities of their choosing. It is imperative that immigrant parents are given a voice in the type of opportunities offered to them to provide support in the highest degrees. Opportunities cannot be offered based on what the dominant culture or structures deem to be the need.

Bringing immigrant adults together to learn, particularly skills related to the success of their children, supports the building of community, personal pride, and leadership, further fostering the development of self-esteem and self-efficacy. The development of agency in an individual plays an important role in the development of identity. Agency supports the individual's view of self as in control of guiding his or her own life, not merely as a receiver of what life puts upon them (Erikson, 1963).

The participants in this study reported they did not have opportunities for exploration of future opportunities in their adolescent stages of development because of the environments, both cultural and socio-economic, in which they resided during their adolescent stages. The exploration stage for their children may be a difficult concept for parents who have not navigated through this themselves. This may also be in contrast to cultural beliefs that parents hold true to themselves. It is of importance for schools and social service agencies to understand and respect this and not simply impose a cultural standard.

Understanding and respecting cultures is crucial to developing trusting relationships with parents to provide supported opportunities for children.

It is imperative for educators to support all parents' and students' understanding of the structures of schools as well as the understanding of how successful navigation of these systems take place beginning at the primary levels. This is especially crucial for the immigrant parent who may have had experience in very different school structures or may have had very little experience with school themselves. Supporting a child's future begins in the earliest stages of school when attendance patterns and study habits are developed. Expectations of the parent for the child's academic achievement must be communicated right from the start of a child's educational career. This may be challenging for parents who did not have a consistent or long-term school experience or did not see their schooling as a vehicle to greater opportunities. Participants who reported their parents telling them how important school was for them shared that they tell their children the same things that they were told. Their messages were also fairly specific. For example, Javier shared that his mother told him every day to go to school and listen to what the teacher taught them. He shared that his mother told him everything he learned today would be helpful for him in the future. Javier reported that he tells his son the same thing every day as well. Consistent, positive messages about school are important to the academic well being of children as well as to academic achievement. Parents who are not able to relate to their child's school experiences because they have limited school experiences themselves may need support in understanding what educational expectations are in place at each grade level and how they can support their children in meeting educational expectations, how schools function daily, as well as what policies and procedures are in place and why they are in place.

The participants in this research expressed an overwhelming desire to support their children and provide a better life for them than they themselves experienced. Many participants expressed concerns that they may not be able to help their children with their academic work, but seek out supports through school to do so. An example of this would be attending the program from which participants in this research were recruited. Language skills and the participants own educational attainment can impede the ability of the parent to provide academic support for their child. It is imperative that educators do not confuse the ability to help with the motivation to help. As evidenced by the voluntary participation in the Lee y Serás program, these Hispanic immigrant parents value education, want the best life for their children, and are motivated to support them in reaching their potential.

### **Recommendations For Future Research**

This final section explores recommendations for future research. This section builds from questions that were raised during the course of this study. These recommendations may encourage the continuation of the investigation of topics related to Hispanic immigrant parents with children in United States school systems.

Limited qualitative research has been done on the development of identity in non-Western, underdeveloped countries. As our world becomes more globally diverse, the understanding of how the sense of self is developed within various economically diverse cultural contexts becomes crucial, particularly given the current immigration rates.

Sanchez (2009-2010) noted in her research that she was searching for a Latino identity that included many national groups. What she found was that each national as well as regional group sees themselves as similar and different from each other in the values and ideals that they hold. A study replicating the format and structure used for this research, but

expanding the number of participants and increasing the numbers of countries of origin would support a greater understanding of diversity of identity development within the Hispanic culture. Additionally, including participants from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds would bring a broader perspective to a foundation of research.

Another suggestion for further research would include following participants for an extended period of time, over the course of a school year or longer. This would allow the researcher to gain a greater understanding of how Hispanic immigrant parents interact with school staff and how they advocate for themselves and their child. Including the school academic records of the participant's child would provide the school's perspective on the academic and social achievement of the child and would allow the researcher to see if the parents' perception accurately represents the actual achievement of the child.

During the course of the research, the participants who were married and living as a couple, reunited with their two children that had been residing in their country of origin with extended family. The two children, ages 14 and 22, came to live with the parents in the United States after a separation of 13 years. The parents spoke of the challenges this presented for the entire family but especially for the 14 year old child. She had never met her father who left Ecuador when she was in utero. She had also never met her two siblings born here in the United States. In Ecuador she had completed the compulsory six years of schooling and had been working at a factory for a year before coming to the United States. Once here she was enrolled in the high school. The parents reported that this was a difficult transition for her. Further research in the area of adjustment of children, particularly adolescents, who remained in native countries when parents immigrated to the United States, and have reunited with their families, could have far reaching implications for educators.



## **Summary**

This qualitative research study was undertaken to identify, through the personal experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents, the influence of cultural and personal experiences in their native countries on the definition of success they hold, and the way in which they define their aspirations and educational expectations for their children. Without an understanding of the cultural values and beliefs of Hispanic immigrant parents on their expectations for their children as well as their definition of success for their children, educators are left to merely presume that they know what the parental expectations are based on the cultural norms in place at the time within the school structure. This lack of understanding leads to the presumption that there is one acceptable definition of success as well as one acceptable level of educational attainment.

Through semi-structured interviews, participants were able to give voice to the cultural and personal influences in their lives that influence the expectations and aspirations of Hispanic immigrant parents, their definition of success, and the family structures supporting those expectations and aspirations. Qualitative analysis revealed the following five themes consistent within and across case studies: poverty, identity, defining success, expectations and aspirations, and be somebody. The resulting implications of the research for educators were offered, as were suggestions for further research.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this dissertation is presented to give voice to the Hispanic immigrant parent whose contribution to the education of their children is often undervalued. It is my desire that this research will support educators in understanding the complexity of the personal life experiences that Hispanic immigrants bring to the education of their child. A

need for greater understanding of the U.S. educational system does not equate with a lack of motivation on the part of the parent to support the social and academic growth and well-being of their child. To form trusting and lasting relationships between educators and Hispanic immigrant parents, educators must be knowledgeable of cultural and personal influences on their expectations and aspirations for their child to ensure successful school experiences for everyone.

**“It takes humility to learn to see the world through the eyes of others, ...but it's also wondrous.”**

—Author Lisa Delpit, Keynote Address,  
Teaching Tolerance Culturally Responsive Teaching Awards

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**APPENDIX A:**  
**Demographic Survey (English)**

**PARENT SURVEY**

Instructions: Please complete the following questions as completely as possible. If you need help in completing the survey the translator will be happy to help you. If you are not comfortable answering a question you may leave it blank.

- 1. Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Country where you were born: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. In what country did you attend school? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Highest grade level of schooling completed: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Names and ages of children: If you need more space please write on the back.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

- 6. Do all of your children live in the United States?      \_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_ No
- 7. Does your child receive free or reduced lunch at school?      \_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_ No
- 8. Do you have other family members living in your home with you? If yes, what is their relationship (for example: grandparent of child)?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B:**  
**Demographic Survey (Spanish)**

## ENCUESTA Y DE PADRES

Instrucciones: Por favor, complete las siguientes preguntas tan completamente como sea posible. Si necesita ayuda para completar la encuesta el traductor estarán encantado de ayudarle. Si no estás cómodo respondiendo a una pregunta puede dejarla en blanco.

1. Nombre del padre: \_\_\_\_\_

2. País en el que nació: \_\_\_\_\_

3. ¿En qué país asistió a la escuela? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Nivel más alto de escuela que terminó: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Nombres y edades de los niños: Si necesita más espacio, por favor escriba en la parte posterior.

nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ edad: \_\_\_\_\_

nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ edad: \_\_\_\_\_

nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ edad: \_\_\_\_\_

nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ edad: \_\_\_\_\_

nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ edad: \_\_\_\_\_

6. ¿Todos los niños viven en los Estados Unidos? \_\_\_\_\_ sí \_\_\_\_\_ no

7. ¿Su hijo recibe almuerzo gratis o reducido en la escuela? \_\_\_\_\_ sí \_\_\_\_\_ no

8. ¿Tiene otros familiares que viven en su hogar con usted? En caso afirmativo, ¿cuál es su relación (por ejemplo: los abuelos del niño)?

nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ relación: \_\_\_\_\_

nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ relación: \_\_\_\_\_

nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ relación: \_\_\_\_\_

nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ relación: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C:**  
**Parental Consent Form (English)**



*Anna M. Rocco*  
*Department of Education and Educational Psychology*  
*181 White Street*  
*Danbury, CT 06810*  
*rocco002@connect.wcsu.edu*

February 2013

Dear (Parent/Guardian):

I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program for Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University. This program requires that I design and implement a research study. The purpose of this study is to understand how Hispanic immigrant parents define success for their child and how these definitions were created from parents' own experiences.

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the WCSU Institutional Review Board. If you have questions concerning the rights of the participants involved in research studies please e-mail the WCSU Assurances Administrator at [irb@wcsu.edu](mailto:irb@wcsu.edu) and mention Protocol Number 1213-99. This study is valid until 2/28/2014. Parents/guardians of children participating in the Lee y serás program are asked to participate in the study.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and individuals may withdraw at any time, or they may select not to participate in any aspect of the study. If you choose to participate, you may be asked to provide some family background, information regarding your own school experiences, cultural and social beliefs about school, and your thoughts about expectations and aspirations for your child. If you agree to participate in the study you may be asked participate in interviews. The interviews will take place in one of the district's schools or in an alternate location specified by the parent in agreement with the researcher. The interviews will be (audio) recorded and will be sent to a service to be transcribed and translated. This information may be used to develop future programs for parents of school-aged child. Parents who participate will receive a \$10.00 gift card.

This study will be conducted in Spanish. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your consideration in participating in this study.

Sincerely,

Anna M. Rocco  
[rocco002@connect.wcsu.edu](mailto:rocco002@connect.wcsu.edu)

Gwen Olmstead, Ph.D.  
Professor, WCSU  
[olmsteadg@wcsu.edu](mailto:olmsteadg@wcsu.edu)

I \_\_\_\_\_ am over the age of eighteen and agree to  
(Print Name)  
participate in the study described in this letter.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D:**  
**Parental Consent Form (Spanish)**





Anna M. Rocco  
Department of Education and Educational Psychology  
181 White Street  
Danbury, CT 06810  
[rocco002@connect.wcsu.edu](mailto:rocco002@connect.wcsu.edu)

February, 2013

Estimado (Padre/Tutor):

Actualmente estoy inscrita en un programa doctoral para Liderazgo Educativo en Western Connecticut State University. Este programa requiere que yo diseñe e implemente un estudio de investigación de tesis. El propósito de este estudio es entender cómo los padres de inmigrantes hispanos definen el éxito para su niño y cómo se crearon estas definiciones de padres propios experiencias.

Este proyecto de investigación ha sido repasado y aprobado por el comité examinador institucional de WCSU. Si usted tiene preguntas referentes a las derechos de los temas implicados en la investigación estudia por favor el email el administrador de los aseguramientos de WCSU en [irb@wcsu.edu](mailto:irb@wcsu.edu) y el número del protocolo de la mención [ser completado después de aprobado]. Este estudio es válido hasta [complete la fecha de 1 año a partir de fecha aprobada]. Piden los padres/los guardas de los niños que atienden a jardín de la infancia y al primer grado que participan en el programa de la instrucción de Lee y serán participar en el estudio.

La participación en este estudio es totalmente voluntaria, y los individuos pueden retirarse en cualquier momento, o pueden seleccionar para no participar en cualquier aspecto del estudio. Si decide participar, se le pedirá proporcionar algunos antecedentes familiares, información sobre sus propias experiencias de la escuela, culturales y creencias sociales acerca de la escuela y sus pensamientos acerca de las expectativas y aspiraciones de su hijo. Si usted acuerda participar en el estudio puede ser preguntado participa en entrevistas tres veces durante seis semanas. Las entrevistas ocurrirán en una de las escuelas del distrito. Esta información se puede utilizar para desarrollar los programas futuros para que los padres de su niño escuela-envejecido. Los padres que participen recibirán una tarjeta de regalo de \$10.00.

Este estudio se llevará a cabo en español. Si tiene preguntas, comuníquese conmigo. Gracias por considerar participar en este estudio.

Atentamente,

Anna M. Rocco  
[rocco002@connect.wcsu.edu](mailto:rocco002@connect.wcsu.edu)

Gwen Olmstead, Ph.D  
Directora, WCSU  
[olmsteadg@wcsu.edu](mailto:olmsteadg@wcsu.edu)

Yo, \_\_\_\_\_ las est sobre la edad de dieciocho y acepto  
(Nombre)  
participar en el estudio descrito en esta carta.

Firma \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX E:**  
**Unstructured Interview Questions**

**EXPECTATIONS AND ASPIRATIONS OF HISPANIC IMMIGRANT PARENTS  
RESEARCH STUDY**

**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**Instructions to be read to each Respondent (R):**

The purpose of this interview is to discuss the expectations and aspirations you have for your child or children and the influence that your family's cultural values, beliefs, and your own school experiences have had on your aspirations and expectations. We will also discuss how you define "success" for your child in terms of social, academic, and financial success.

I will ask each question. You should take your time to answer each question completely. I will repeat and clarify any question asked.

If you are uncomfortable with any questions asked you may choose not to answer it, or you may ask to skip that questions and come back to it later in the interview if you choose.

We can take a break or end the interview at any time of your choosing.

**Prior to beginning the interview:**

Review the demographic survey to verify the information, clarify any questions, or complete any missing information.

## BACKGROUND AND SCHOOL EXPERIENCE OF PARENT

1. Please begin by telling me as much as you are able about your own schooling.

### **Probes:**

- Did you attend school in your native country?

### **If yes:**

- What was your own school experience like?
- What was the highest grade-level you completed in school?
- Did your family have to pay for you to go to school in your native country?
- Were you successful in school?
- What made you feel as if you were successful?
  - Socially, academically
- What part of school did you most like/dislike?
- Who in your family helped you with schoolwork?

### **If no:**

- What did you do each day instead of attending school?
- What reasons, that you are aware of, kept you from attending school?
  - Financial (parents could not afford school, child had to work)
  - Proximity to school
  - Respondent elaboration
- Did anyone ever tell you they wished you were able to go to school? Who?
- How did you feel about not going to school?

2. What did people in your family tell you about school?

- Did anyone tell you school was important? Who?

*Researcher Notes: I would like to have spontaneous responses here. The only probing I would like to do is to find who influenced their thinking about school.*

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Other
  - Clarify what the respondent means by other

3. What do you tell your child about the importance of school?

### **Probes:**

- Are the messages different/similar than the message that you received?
- Why do you think they are different /similar to what you were told as a child?

## SUCCESS – ASPIRATIONS – EXPECTATIONS

1. Think of a person that you who you feel is successful. What characteristics do you believe that person has that makes him/her a success?

Researcher Notes:

- *The question is meant to start to define how the parent views “success”. Does the respondent describe a person that is wealthy (by what standard?), well respected, well educated, has a career or job that the family believes defines “success”?*
- Is there a person within the Hispanic community that you feel is successful?

Probes:

- What do you believe makes someone successful?

2. What characteristics do you believe your child will need to be “successful”?

Researcher Notes:

- *How does the parent define “success” for their child? Do financial status, educational attainment, employment status, respect, family measure their definition of success?*
- *Is “success” for their male child defined differently than for their female child?(gender bias)*
- *Is “success” for their child measured differently than for other members of their community?*

Probes:

- How do you help your child to build the skills or characteristics that you believe he/she will need to be successful?
- What level of education would you like your child to achieve?
- How will know that your child is successful?

3. What do you wish for your child’s future?

Researcher Note: *For the purpose of this research what parents “wish” for is to identify aspirations, what they ideally hope their child will attain in life.*

Probes:

- Academically
- Socially (family structure)
- Financially

4. What do you worry about for your child?

Probes:

- Academically
- Socially (family structure)
- Financially

5. Do these worries change what you “wish” for your child?

- If your child struggles in school, has a health issue, not have many friends, does that change what you “wish” for their future?

## **FAMILY STRUCTURE – SUPPORT OF CHILD BY FAMILY**

1. How long have you lived in the United States (U.S.)?
2. What made you decide to come to the U.S.?
3. Do you have other “family” members that live in the U.S.?

**Probes:**

- Are there people that you call “family” that are not actually related to you?
- Does your child call them a family name (ex: aunt/uncle)?
- Who do you consider to be “family”?
- In what ways do they help you and/or help your child?
  - Do they attend school activities with you/your child?

4. Do you have children that live in your native country?

*Researcher note: Refer to initial demographic survey.*

**If no:** continue to question 4.

**If yes:**

- Does/did your child living in (native country) attend school?

**If yes:**

- Who do your children live with in (native country)?
- What was the highest level of school they completed?

**If they have completed school:**

- What do they do now that they have finished school?
- What are your hopes for that/those child(ren)?
  - *Researcher note: Are the aspirations/expectations for children living in native countries the same or different than for children living in the U.S.?*

5. What do you want to be able to help your child with?

**Probe:**

- Academic/ Social/Emotional
- Do you feel like you can help them or do you feel you need support?
  - What kind of support would most help you to help your child?
    - family and friends
    - the school community
    - other community groups

6. What kinds of things do you do as a family?

**Probe:**

- Are you involved with a church?
- Do you go to school activities as a family?
- Do you belong to a cultural organization in the community?
- What types of activities do you like to go to?

- What activity does your child like most?



**APPENDIX F:**

**Western Connecticut State University Human Subjects Research Review Form**

Human Subjects Research Review Form (HUM-1)  
**Western Connecticut State University Institutional Review Board**

Principal Investigator(s): Anna M. Rocco

If the PI is a student, Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Gwendolyn Olmstead

Department: Department of Education and Educational Psychology

Project Title: Socio-Cultural and Historical Influences on the Expectations and Aspirations of Hispanic Immigrant Parents for Their School-Aged Children

Address (for any mailed correspondence): 23 Secor Rd. Brookfield, CT. 06804

E-mail (Where the reviewed application should be sent): [rocco002@connect.wcsu.edu](mailto:rocco002@connect.wcsu.edu)

Phone number: 203 775 8755

Please check any of the following that apply to this proposal:

A. Proposal is an undergraduate student research project developed as part of research methods course.

B. Proposal is an undergraduate student independent study/thesis/honors/senior research project.

C. Proposal is a graduate student research project developed as part of a research methods course.

D. Proposal is a graduate student research project developed for a Masters or Doctoral thesis.

E. Proposal is WCSU faculty developed research.

F. Proposal is externally developed faculty research. (make sure to include WCSU "sponsor" in application materials)

Is research funded or developed with an external grant? YES      NO

If yes, name of Grant or funding agency: \_\_\_\_\_

### **I. Purpose of IRB Review**

The role of the WCSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) is to review and to approve, when in compliance, all proposed research at WCSU or by WCSU faculty, staff or students to ensure that the research meets Federal standards for the safety and protection of any human subjects involved in the research.

The WCSU IRB operates in compliance with the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Title 45 Part 46 ("Protection of Human Subjects"). WCSU's IRB is registered with the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and has an approved assurance from OHRP (Federalwide Assurance/FWA).

The IRB is responsible for determining that:

- The rights and welfare of the subjects are adequately protected
- The risks to subjects are outweighed by the potential benefits of the research
- The selection of subjects is equitable
- Informed consent will be obtained and, when appropriate, documented

To help the IRB fulfill its role, WCSU requires all researchers to submit their research protocol for review and approval. All applications must include the completed HUM-1. The human subjects **research application** you submit must describe the research activity, including a protocol, and especially the plan for ensuring the protection of human subjects (please refer to the **Research Application Guide** for complete instructions).

The WCSU IRB is unlikely to reject an application without first discussing its concerns about the research with the investigator. However, applications may be deferred for review at another meeting if substantial issues need to be resolved. Researchers are encouraged to attend the regularly scheduled IRB meetings at which their application will be considered in order to address any concerns directly. You will be informed of the IRB's decision regarding your application as expeditiously as possible. Failure to submit applications for review by the published deadlines may result in a delay in the review process.

## II. Application for IRB Review Checklist

Before submitting your research application for review by the IRB, please make sure the following steps have been completed.

1. Ensure that everyone involved in the research has completed WCSU IRB human subjects research training requirements (including researcher, student's instructor, research assistants and department chair). WCSU is part of the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program. You can sign up for and complete CITI human subjects training via the link on the WCSU IRB website <http://www.wcsu.edu/irb/>.
2. Indicate the category under which you believe your study should be reviewed. There are three choices for new proposals. (See the **WCSU IRB Guidelines for Researchers** to determine the requirements for each category.)

Is this a new research project?

YES

NO

If yes, are you applying for?

Protocol # of previously approved research

\_\_\_\_\_ Exempt Review  
previously approved research

Are there any modifications to the

X Expedited Review

YES

NO

\_\_\_\_\_ Full Review

3. Submit a **Research Application** (see the WCSU IRB **Research Application Guide**).
4. Attach to your application any survey or questionnaire instruments that will be given to subjects, or any protocols describing assessments to which they will be subjected. When an instrument must be purchased or is not yet available, you may describe the instrument in lieu of attaching a copy. **\*\*Note:** Cite sources if applicable.
5. Attach your Informed Consent Form, or an explanation of why the signed Informed Consent requirement can be waived (see the **WCSU IRB Informed Consent Guidelines**).

### III. Signatures

The **principal investigator**, any faculty supervisors, and/or any WCSU “sponsors” (for external principal investigators) must sign this form.

**Assurance of continued compliance with regulations regarding the use of human subjects.**

*I certify that the information provided in this application is accurate. If the procedures for obtaining consent of subjects change, or if the risk of physical, psychological, or social injury to the research subjects increases, or if there should arise unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others, I shall promptly report such changes to the WCSU IRB. I shall report promptly any unanticipated injury to or harm of a subject to my Department Chair and to the IRB.*

Principal Investigator/s: Anna M. Rocco *Anna M. Rocco*, 4/1/13  
 (Printed name) (Signature & Date)

**If PI is a student or external investigator,**

Faculty Supervisor or WCSU Sponsor/s: Dr. Gwendolyn Omstead  
 (Printed name)

Department of Education and Educational Psychology

(Department)

Date)

(Signature &

---

**Committee Action**

- Approved through exempt review
- Approved by full committee review
- Approved through expedited review

\_\_\_ Not approved; clarification/modification required

**IRB Chair's Approval** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX G:**

**Letter and Consent Form (Superintendent)**



*Anna M. Rocco  
Department of Education and Educational Psychology  
181 White Street  
Danbury, CT 06810  
rocco002@connect.wcsu.edu*

February 2013

Dear [REDACTED],

I am a doctoral candidate for Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University and am required to design and implement a dissertation research study. I have chosen to examine the influence of cultural, social, and historical experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents on the expectations and aspirations they hold for their children experiencing the US educational system. It is my hope that the results of this investigation will enable educators to gain insight into the sociocultural, and historical experiences that influence the expectations and aspirations Hispanic immigrant parents hold for their children experiencing the US Educational System.

As part of the study, I will be collecting demographic information in the form of a survey from parents attending district-sponsored programs for Hispanic families. I will be conducting interviews with Hispanic immigrant parents who agree to participate in this research study. Interview questions will be loosely structured, but will focus on social, cultural, and historical influences in the lives of Hispanic immigrant parents with children in a US school system in relation to their expectations and aspirations for their children

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time. Parents will be asked to sign a consent form to participate in the study. Participation in this study will not affect the ability of the parent to participate in the district programs. Privacy will be protected for all participants. All identities and interview transcripts will be maintained in a secure location to protect confidentiality of participants.

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the WCSU Institutional Review Board. If you have questions concerning the rights of the participants involved in research studies please email the WCSU Assurances Administrator at [irb@wcsu.edu](mailto:irb@wcsu.edu) and mention Protocol Number (###-###). This study is valid until (1 year from approval date). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Anna M. Rocco

I agree to allow this research study to be conducted in (name of school district)

---

**Superintendent Name (Print)**

---

**Superintendent Signature**

---

**Date**

**APPENDIX H:**

**Letter and Consent Form (Principal)**





*Anna M. Rocco*  
*Department of Education and Educational Psychology*  
*181 White Street*  
*Danbury, CT 06810*  
*rocco002@connect.wcsu.edu*

February 2013

Dear [REDACTED]:

I am a doctoral candidate for Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University and am required to design and implement a dissertation research study. I have chosen to examine the influence of sociocultural and historical experiences of Hispanic immigrant parents on the expectations and aspirations they hold for their children experiencing the US educational system. It is my hope that the results of this investigation will enable educators to gain insight into the cultural, social, and historical experiences that influence the expectations and aspirations Hispanic immigrant parents hold for their children experiencing the US Educational System.

As part of the study, I will be collecting demographic information in the form of a survey from parents attending a district-sponsored program for Hispanic families. I will be conducting interviews with Hispanic immigrant parents who agree to participate in this research study. Interview questions will be loosely structured, but will focus on social, cultural, and historical influences in the lives of Hispanic immigrant parents with children in a US school system in relation to their expectations and aspirations for their children

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time. Parents will be asked to sign a consent form to participate in the study. Participation in this study will not affect the ability of the parent to participate in the district programs. Privacy will be protected for all participants. All identities and interview transcripts will be maintained in a secure location to protect confidentiality of participants.

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the WCSU Institutional Review Board. If you have questions concerning the rights of the participants involved in research studies please email the WCSU Assurances Administrator at [irb@wcsu.edu](mailto:irb@wcsu.edu) and mention Protocol Number (###-###). This study is valid until (1 year from approval date). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Anna M. Rocco

-----  
I agree to allow this research study to be conducted in (name of school):

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Principal Name (Print)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Principal Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**APPENDIX I:**

**Initial Codes**

### Initial Codes

Ability to provide	Family separation	Pride in work
Abuse	Family Support	Profession
Access to school	Feelings towards school	Proud of self
Accomplishments	Finish school	Realistic expectations
Alcohol	Go to school	Reason for leaving country
At least more than me	Goals	Regret
Attitude toward school	God	Religion
Barriers	Graduate	Relies on God
Be good	Guilty feelings	Resilience
Be somebody	Happy with life	Respect
Be someone	Hard work	School Achievement
Be successful	Have a future	School Experience +
Be what they want to be	Help themselves	School experience -
Belief in self	Hopeful	See children fulfilled
Better life through study	I have little success in life	Self-image/self-worth
Better than me	Illness	Something good to come
Blessed	Language	“Special” child
Career	Leadership	Stay with something
Child laboring	Learn to read	Study
Childhood Responsibilities	Make money	Studying takes you to success
Contentedness	Manual Labor	Success
Comparing US schools to Country of Origin	Money	Suffering/Struggle
Corporal Punishment	Not afraid	Support
Death/Loss of loved ones	Not like me	Strong maternal figure
Dedicated to work, nothing else	Opportunity	Survive
Determination	Outlook on life- positive	Take advantage
Different here	Outlook on life- negative	Time is gold
Do good in life	Parent message about school +	Trust
Do something	Parent message about school neutral	Try, Try, Try
Don't give up	Personal challenges	US vs. COO
Dreams for Future	Personal goals	Want to succeed
Effort	Personal success	Worry
Faith	Poverty	
Fail like me	Pride in children	

**APPENDIX J:**

**Final Codes and Subcodes**

*Final Code List*

*Theme 1: Poverty, Theme 2: Identity Theme 3: Success, Theme 4: Expectations & Aspirations, Theme 5: Be Somebody*

Main code name	Sub code name	Number of times code was used	Number of sources	Related themes
Ability to Provide = Success		8	4	3
Abuse/Corporal Punishment		25	8	1, 2
Access to School		12	7	1
Attitude Toward Schooling	Successful in School	8	7	2
	Not Successful in School	2	1	2
	Liked School	13	8	2
Be somebody/someone		20	7	5
Better Life through Study		17	7	2,4
Career = Expectation		18	9	4
Career = Success		6	5	3
Child Labor		16	6	1
Childhood Responsibilities		13	8	1
Defines Self as Success		3	3	2,3
Education= Expectation		21	8	2,4,5
Education= Success		16	7	3
Effort		17	7	3
Family Separation		19	7	1
Lack of Opportunity		18	9	1,2
Loss/Death of loved ones		7	7	1
Message to Child	School for Better life	16	9	2,4
	School so not like me	10	5	2,4
	School to be somebody/something	9	5	2,4
Outlook on Life	Positive	27	4	2
	Negative or neutral	10	4	2
	Current Personal Goals	6	4	2
Participant parent did not express importance of school for child		4	4	1
Participant parent expressed importance of		6	5	1

school for child				
Pride	In self & other sources	13	4	2
	From other source only	5	5	2
Respect		8	6	3
Self-Image/Self-Worth	Better than / Not like me	19	6	2,3,4,5
	Faith/spirituality	19	8	2
	Language	14	7	2
	Suffering	10	6	1,2
	Worries	12	8	2
Support System	At present	18	6	2
	In childhood	7	4	2
	School as support	8	7	2
Study		39	6	3,4,5
Unable to Dream of Future as Child		11	6	1,2

The total number of sources was 9.

**APPENDIX K:**  
**Qualitative Audit**

## Qualitative Audit for Anna Rocco

I conducted a qualitative audit for Anna Rocco on February 12, 2014. Because I have taught qualitative research at the doctoral level and advised students during their qualitative research dissertations, I was considered a suitable candidate to conduct the audit.

Prior to the meeting with Anna, she emailed the draft of her dissertation, and I was able to read chapters three and four. Anna also forwarded one Word document and an Excel table containing coding information. The Word document contained a matrix with a list of main codes, sub-codes, the number of times the main code or sub-code was used, the number of sources (participants) to whom it was applied, and the related themes to which it applied. The Excel table contained a breakdown of the codes and sub-codes, along with a listing of which participants' transcripts contained a reference to the code or sub-code.

Anna and I met for approximately an hour. During this time, we discussed the following:

- **Overview of methodology** – To gain a better understanding of her study's methodology, I asked Anna to provide an overview of how she conducted the interviews and coded the data. Anna was able to describe how she had used a grounded theory approach, with coding strategies developed by Charmaz (2006) and influenced by Saldana (2009).
  
- **Logical sequence of coding** – In general, Anna described a very logical approach to coding. She tried to code action words first, but when this did not yield effective results, she switched to coding by incident. These became her initial codes. She collapsed into final codes (some with sub-codes) and then into themes. She used an approach such that a final codes could be collapsed into more than one theme.

One point of confusion was that it was not always clear where one code began and ended when reading Anna's transcript. This may be a style issue that is totally fine, or it may be something that needs to be discussed further.

- **Meaning of the coding terms** – I asked Anna to state, in her own words, the meaning of each of her main codes. She was able to do so. I suggested that she re-name a few of her terms to be more specific. Several of her codes were very descriptive and specific. For example, "Family Separation" is fairly easily understood. On the other hand, the term "Respect" may mean many things, such as respect for oneself, respect for others, or respect for authority. I suggested that two steps be taken:
  - Clarify the names of a few of the codes that are currently unclear;



- Develop a code dictionary in which she writes the meanings of the codes so that they are clear to the reader.
- **Coding agreement** – I randomly selected five instances of data to code. I was in complete agreement with how Anna had coded the data.
- **Analytic memos** – I was able to read some of Anna’s annotations in the form of analytic memos, which made sense.

In summary, Anna’s data and her methodologies appear sound and rigorous. I suggest the following as options to improve the study:

1. Review the list of codes and clarify any that may be misunderstood.
2. Discuss whether a code book with definitions of codes needs to be developed.
3. Discuss whether firm code boundaries on the transcripts need to be established.

Respectfully Submitted,



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