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Extended Foster Care: Self-Sufficiency Needs in the Perspective of the Youth

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A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

_____

by

Miranda R Rubio

Carmen Covarrubias

June 2020

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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research project was to analyze current and former foster youths' experiences in the Extended Foster Care (EFC) program. The program was created to better support youths' self-sufficiency needs for recipients ages eighteen to twenty-one. This vulnerable population continues to grow in the public child welfare system and research is limited on how recipients far after leaving EFC. Previous literature illustrates foster youth who exited the program struggled to transition into adulthood. Many youth faced challenges such as homelessness, unstable employment, and involvement with the criminal justice system.

The researchers conducted a qualitative study of seven participants' experiences through face-to-face and telephone interviews. All participants were enrolled in EFC through Southern California public child welfare agencies. Participants described positive experiences in EFC programs but emphasized the need for additional guidance and to reach self-sufficiency. The study's findings suggest that participants experienced limited access to EFC services as evidenced by participants barriers and lack of involvement in services. Participants from the study expressed a need for more social interaction with peers, social workers, and mentors. The researchers also found the need for improved support networks among EFC youth. Participants provided detailed suggestions for improving EFC programs.

The research findings inform social work practice and research with youth in EFC. The researchers recommend further support for research on EFC youth as data is limited and this population is difficult to recruit. On the practice level, social workers must be trained to better meet this populations needs. On the policy level a mentorship program is proposed to be implemented for the support of EFC youth. Study limitations included difficulty recruiting participants due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of a diverse sample. Researchers assume the needs of this population are even greater due to the limited participation in the study.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my husband, Jesus Gama, who's constant love and support has helped me complete my master's studies. Thank you for being my rock and pushing me through the sleepless nights, emotional moments, and countless midnight coffee runs. Your constant support has helped mold and form this paper. As well as my supportive family, their encouragement strengthened me along the way. I would also like to dedicate my research to the California State University, San Bernardino School of Social Work. Thank you to all my professors who played a vital role in helping me complete this study, without your empathy and dedication I would not have made it.

Miranda Rubio

This piece of art is dedicated to numerous special people in my life. First and foremost, I want to dedicate this research project to my amazing family! Without your help, who knows where I would be! To my parents, sibling's, grandmother, and little cousin, thank you for your patience and love throughout this journey. Thank you all for encouraging me to not give up as I had my emotional breakdowns. Ma, Pa, Noe, Leslie, Nana, and Cas, thank you for believing in me when I doubted myself. Thank you for simply being there when I needed you all the most. I hope I have made you all proud.

Additionally, I would like to dedicate this research project to my one and only rad dream team! Wendy, Ash, Tina, Miranda, Mellissa, and Ashley, thank you for all

the wonderful memories and immense emotional support throughout these years! Every single one of you ladies holds a very special place in my heart. DREAM TEAM FOREVER!

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Carmen Covarrubias

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Formulation

Despite significant reform efforts, children who grow up in foster care struggle to successfully transition into independent adulthood (Collins, 2015). Assembly Bill 12, The California Fostering Connections to Success Act was signed into law to address this ongoing issue (CDSS: Department of Social Services, 2016). This Act and subsequent legislation permitted eligible foster care youth to remain in the foster care system from the ages of eighteen to twenty-one (CDSS: Department of Social Services, 2016). The eligible foster care recipients of this program then became "non-minor dependents" of the court. The goal of this Act was for the foster youth to maintain a support network and consecutively experience independence in a supervised living environment (CDSS: Department of Social Services, 2016). Simultaneously, this Act was enacted for youth to have extended time for opportunities in education and employment for successful transition into adulthood and self-sufficiency. The California Fostering Connections to Success Act has been in place for the past seven years, and county agencies have created their own programs to best assist in the transition into adulthood. It is largely unknown whether these agencies are adequately informing and teaching extended foster care youths (EFC youth) on how to be self-sufficient once exited the program.

Prior to this bill, foster youth were forced to exit the system on their eighteenth birthday, whether adequate provisions were in place for their care (Youth Law, 2019). In past years, the strict policy of termination forced many youths to drop out of high school and forgo college (Youth Law, 2019). With the sudden lack of educational opportunity, financial disparities were the reality for these youths (Youth Law, 2019). There are multiple obstacles foster youth face while in the foster care system that inhibited them from performing well in school (Youth Law, 2019). Research has shown that about 75% of foster youth in care are performing below grade level (Youth Law, 2019). Reports have also recorded that about 49% of California's foster youth will graduate from high school or receive a GED (Youth Law, 2019). Statistics were even lower for foster youth to go on to attend postsecondary education; of these youths only 5% received a degree (Youth Law, 2019). Outside of the educational realm, data revealed that eighteen months after exiting foster care about 65% of foster youth were homeless (Bay Area of Legal Aid, 2019). Furthermore, by the age of twenty-four approximately 60% of foster youth males had been convicted of a crime (Bay Area of Legal Aid, 2019).

Other proposed pieces of legislation, including AB 2093, have attempted to provide support for extended foster youth in higher education. This bill was aimed at reforming the higher education system in California. The proposed bill designated a program coordinator at each campus to provide additional support for EFC youth who attended their school (Youth Law, 2019). The bill was not

pushed further and died in November 2012. As a result, few provisions of support are available in higher education settings for EFC youth to access.

When self-sufficiency programs are not successful, former foster youth face higher rate of homelessness, substance abuse, untreated severe mental illnesses, chronic health conditions, and other crises (YCalouth Law, 2019). The social workers who work with this population have the potential to help EFC youth, but only if they are properly trained and provided adequate resources in how to support these vulnerable young adults. In addition, social workers need to know how to assess their work in helping to teach EFC youth about self-sufficiency (Contreras, 2014). The child welfare system created the EFC program to address the issues of youth leaving the system without proper provisions, and although these programs are regularly adapted and updated, EFC youth still struggle to become self-sufficient.

This proposed study examines the perspectives of former EFC youth regarding the extent to which EFC programs helped them to become self-sufficient. Through this study, the researchers hope to contribute to the literature on EFC programs, to better inform the agencies and workers administering these programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine EFC youths' views on the effectiveness of extended foster care programs. EFC youth are provided classes designed to prepare them to live independently after leaving the program. These

coursed include career/job guidance, parenting classes, and home management. These classes are optional, and EFC youth are usually given incentives to participate. In addition, youth who participate in programming are eligible for Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP+). This housing program allows EFC youth to live independently while still having access to the supportive aspects of the EFC program. Unfortunately, youth who participate in the THP+ program are only allowed to live there up to 24 months. During this time, they are expected to develop appropriate life skills and transition out of the program. If the youth's needs are not being met through the ILP classes, THP+, or other amenities in the program, then they may not reach self-sufficiency within this 24-month period.

Few studies examine participants' experiences or beliefs regarding EFC programs. This study fills a gap in the literature by exploring participants' beliefs about the benefits and shortcomings of EFC programs and these programs' abilities to help youth become self-sufficient.

This qualitative study will use in-depth interviews with former and current EFC youth to explore the youths' perceptions of the program's benefits and limitations. Participants will be asked questions about their ability to live self-sufficiently pre-termination and post-termination. The study will use snowball sampling, in which participants recommend other EFC youth to participate in the study. Gift card incentives are to be offered to participants, as recruiting participants is expected to be difficult. Formal, in-person interviews are

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appropriate for this kind of study, because qualitative interviews provide more thick description of participants' experiences, beliefs, and recommendations.

Significance of the Project for Social Work Practice

The significance of this project is that the findings may contribute to our understanding of EFC programs for youth in foster care. Furthermore, the findings of the study may contribute to social work practice and research by giving child welfare agencies and workers a better understanding of the perspectives of EFC youth. Practitioners and programs may adapt their EFC programs, classes, workshops, and therapies to better meet the needs of the recipients.

Policy Implications

On a macro level our study findings may illuminate policy changes needed to better help this vulnerable population. EFC youth participants in California need ongoing support such as successful and beneficial programs for life outside of foster care (Charles, Courtney, Halsted, Napolitano,& Okpych, 2014). Finding better ways to assist these youths will hopefully positively impact the foster care system as a whole in practice, policy, and research.

Regarding the generalist intervention model, this study will be informed through evaluating and terminating phases. The EFC program is used for interventions for the youth to acquire the skill set for life outside of the foster care system. This study will explore participants' feelings and beliefs about EFC programs and the usefulness of these programs to their life circumstances. Then

the study will evaluate the intervention phase, by assessing the participants current state once terminated from the program. The research question examines the perspectives and experiences of EFC youth regarding the EFC programs.

This proposed study is relevant to child welfare practice because EFC is a fairly new program in public child welfare agencies. It is important for research to be conducted on the adequacy of these programs in the agencies because of the vulnerability of this population. A portion of Title-IV funds are also allocated to the EFC programs, and it is appropriate to evaluate the extent to which these funds are useful in improving the lives of foster youth. Finally, this proposed study is relevant to continue guiding child welfare practice to better performance.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter examines the literature related to EFC programs. The

chapter will introduce the theories guiding conceptualization such as Maslow's

Hierarchy of Needs and Arnett's Emerging Adulthood theory. The chapter will

also explain how these theories guide the researcher's conceptualization of the

research project.

Effectiveness of Extended Foster Care Programs

Netzel and Tardanico (2014) examined the outcomes of young adults in

the Extended Foster Care program. Their study's findings indicated that the

duration in EFC contributed to gaining employment among the participants, and

that employment barriers were removed the longer the participants stayed in the

program. These findings suggest positive outcomes of the EFC program.

Researchers noted that the EFC program met the needs of former foster youth in

that they provided the necessary tools to be self-sufficient in the real world

(Netzel & Tardanico, 2014).

Lee (2014) found that foster youth who received EFC services had a

higher chance of receiving post-secondary education opportunities and delayed

pregnancies. This study also found a decline in arrest rates among EFC youth.

Since EFC youth had lower arrest rates, they were better able to participate fully

in society. However, Lee (2014) revealed that former foster kids who exited out of

the system have higher rates of arrest after becoming 18 years of age. This research study concluded that if foster youth chose to participate in extended care for at least one year, they had a lower chance of being arrested after exiting the system at the age of eighteen.

Fowler (2017) emphasized the importance of homelessness prevention in emerging adulthood. Extended foster care youth who aged out of the system experienced higher levels of inadequate housing compared to those who were not in the system at a similar age (Fowler, 2017). Consequently, the federal government created the Independent Living Program (ILP) to provide training in pursuing higher education, obtaining stable employment, and other life skills for youth aged 16 and older (Fowler, 2017). Yet only half of foster youth receive these ILP services. Fowler (2017) suggested that more efforts to keep the familial relationship between the youth and their biological families may reduce the risk of homelessness after exiting the EFC program.

Courtney (2017) described the benefits of prolonging extended foster care for foster care youth. With every step of educational attainment EFC youth achieved, they increased their chances of reaching their next step by 46 percent. Courtney (2017) concluded that the longer the youth stayed in the EFC program, the more likely the youth was to pursue higher education. Further, EFC participants who successfully left the program experienced increased earnings, delayed homelessness, reduced crime rates, and increased engagement of young parents with their children (Courtney, 2017).

Miller (2017) described how foster youth cope with the transition into adulthood. The research found youth who stayed in EFC care for a longer time, were more likely to identify self-sufficiency. Although, the study mentions a lack of data on EFC youth who did not participate in extended foster care services available to them. These youths were not found to be as successful as others who stayed longer in the EFC program.

Foster Youth's Experiences in Extended Foster Care

Courtney et al. (2016) assessed how influential the California Fostering Connections to Success Act was for foster youth during their transition into adulthood. The major findings of the first wave study revealed that the "one-size-fits-all" approach is inappropriate considering the diversity of California's foster youth population. The study also noted the importance of cultural sensitivity for extended foster care youth. The second wave findings demonstrated that many youths who remained in extended foster care perceived extended foster care as supportive in their life goals (Courtney et al.,2016). However, a small percentage of youth expressed discontent with the services as well as their interactions with professionals in the systems, such as social workers.

Furthermore, Jones and Stribling (2016) designed a study to examine the former foster youths' beliefs regarding the factors that contribute to positive and negative outcomes for youth aging out of the foster care system. The study's findings suggested that relationships contributed to the successful transition into adulthood (Jones & Stribling, 2016). This study also found that the independent

living program was also a contributing factor to the successful transition into adulthood (Jones & Stribling, 2016).

In addition, Contreras (2014) attempted to assess experiences of youth in extended foster care. The findings revealed several themes, including the need for services to better prepare foster youth for independent living (Contreras, 2014). The need for improved communication between the young adult and social worker was another theme (Contreras, 2014). In general, the study found that EFC programs need improvement in career/job guidance, parenting, and home management courses, as well as in training social workers to better help EFC youth.

Overall, the existing literature suggests that EFC youth report largely positive experiences with EFC services. Many youths reported feeling confident in their abilities upon exiting the EFC programs. These studies also suggest that youth who participated in EFC programs were less likely to be involved in crime, had fewer pregnancies, and were more likely to pursue higher education.

<center>Theories Guiding Conceptualization</center>

One of the most relevant theories to our study involves Maslow's Hierarchy of needs as described by Hutchison (2013). Maslow's theory demonstrates five different hierarchical levels of human need. These five needs from the bottom of the pyramid upward are the following: physiological, safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and self-actualization. Needs that are lower in the hierarchy must be satisfied before an individual can move up the hierarchy (

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Mclead, 2018). Once youth age out of the foster care program, they are forced to find their own living space, source of income, and to meet their own basic needs. Consequently, even if youth are able to move towards self-actualization when their basic physiological, safety, belongingness, and love needs were met in foster care, upon aging out they may regress back to the bottom of the pyramid, when they are responsible for meeting their own needs. This study intends to provide insight into former foster youth's level of needs after exiting the program, especially if they utilized county services to help them transition.

Arnett's Emerging Adulthood is also another theory guiding this study (Hutchison, 2013). Emerging Adulthood theory suggests that identity exploration is one of the most critical processes in emerging adulthood, both socially and economically (Arnett, 2000). Individuals have unique journeys, but in general, their successful transition to adulthood is often not complete until age 30 (Arnett, 2000). These former EFC recipients are attempting to navigate through life as they grow older and older. From age 18 and beyond, they may or may not have a plan of them. Emerging Adulthood theory suggests that it may take and extended time for individuals to adjust to life. For this vulnerable population, this time adjustment may take longer, especially without the proper knowledge and resources.

Summary

Foster youth and former EFC recipients are vulnerable and require intensive supports if they are to become self-sufficient in adulthood. The existing

literature on EFC programs suggests benefits, but also room for improvement.

This study will add to our understanding of EFC programs and their usefulness to

the participants who need them.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

This chapter presents the qualitative methods used for this study. The chapter describes the study's design, sampling method, data collection procedures and instruments, protection of human subjects, and qualitative data analysis.

Study Design

The purpose of this study was to explore EFC recipients' perspectives and experiences in EFC programs. This study utilized open-ended questions designed to elicit participants experiences with the services offered in the EFC program, the services most helpful in the program, and potential services that should have been offered in the program.

This study employed a qualitative design with the use of face-to-face interviews with seven former EFC youth. This design allowed the researchers to obtain EFC youth's subjective views on the services offered in the EFC programs. EFC youth who participated in life skills classes or classes designed to help teach about independent living outside the program were able to express their opinions and comments through this study. This design was most effective in allowing the former extended foster care youth to express their views on the needs, concerns, and barriers they faced in utilizing EFC services with regards to their self-measured sustainability once exited from the program. This study was

not necessarily a representative of all EFC recipients in the Southern California counties. Self-reports of the participants did and did not coincide with other EFC recipients who had experience with the EFC programs in Southern California counties.

Researchers had a difficult time obtaining participants for this study, despite providing compensation. One of the major issues that contributed to this difficulty was due to the worldwide pandemic, COVID-19. Strict guidelines prohibited researchers to conduct face to face interviews; only phone interviews were allowed. Researchers planned to table out throughout various locations on the CSUSB campus to gather participants. However, due to social distancing regulations, researchers were unable to do so. Researchers continuously posted their flyer throughout numerous social media applications and reached out to personal connections on a day to day basis; little to no feedback was received. Researchers assume that the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic was one of the main impediments that affected participants motivations to partake in the study.

Sampling

The sampling used in this study was non-probability snowball sampling. Researchers created a flyer and distributed it in locations frequented by former foster youth. Researchers also distributed flyers through colleagues and classmates who knew former EFC youth. The researchers' colleagues and classmates then shared the study opportunity with potential participants. Participants then reached out to researchers via telephone contact. Researchers

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also reached out to collegiate staff for potential references of former EFC youth.

After each completed interview with the participant, researchers asked for

referrals to other former EFC youth within in the Southern California public child

welfare agencies. Sampling criteria for the purpose of this study included: those

individuals who were 18 years or older and were currently in an EFC program, or

had participated in the EFC program for 3 months or longer and had exited the

program by force, choice, and or by aging out. Inclusion criteria also involved that

the participants speak English and must consent to being audio recorded for the

in-depth interviews.

Data Collection and Instruments

Data for this study was collected using in-depth, face to face interviews

using an interview guide comprised of 20 questions (Appendix A). Demographic

information collected included age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, education,

and income. The questions were open-ended, and participants were respectfully

urged to elaborate on their responses. Some examples of the questions included:

Tell me about the EFC services you participated in? Which were helpful? Which

were not helpful? Were there any services/programs you wish you had

participated in or were there any services you wish were offered but were not?

Furthermore, the interview guide was designed by the researchers to

encourage the participants to elaborate on their personal experiences.

Researchers gathered information pertaining to the individuals' experiences in

EFC care, services provided in EFC care, barriers experienced in the EFC

program, services they felt should be offered in EFC care, and how well services prepared individuals for self-sufficiency after the EFC program.

Procedures

The researchers invited former EFC youth to participate in the study from January through March of 2020. The participants were interviewed in public places such as coffee shops, shopping centers, and college campuses in Southern California counties. Upon establishing former EFC status among individuals by self-report and meeting the criteria previously stated upon, the individuals were invited to participate in the study. Participants were given an informed consent form to inform them of the purpose of the study as well as the risks and benefits. The interviews took approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete, were audio recorded, and were administered by the researchers. Upon completion, participants were given a $35.00 gift card as partial compensation for their time.

Protection of Human Subjects

The researchers took appropriate measures to ensure the protection of participants in this study. All participants were interviewed on a voluntary basis and had the option to withdraw consent at any given moment during the interview. Participants were presented with an informed consent form and an audio consent form, to which they placed an "X" in the appropriate box to sign their consent to participate as well as to be audio taped during the interview.

Participants were informed thoroughly of the purpose of the study, risks and benefits, and measures to ensure their confidentiality. In addition, the researchers informed all participants their participation was voluntary, and had the option to stop at any time or refuse to answer any questions they feel uncomfortable with. Furthermore, each participant was informed about who was conducting the study, the supervisor of the study, IRB approval, and compensation for participation. At no time were the participants identified by name, but rather a number between one and seven was assigned to each interviewee. No other identifying information was collected during the interviews. All data was stored in a password protected computer, ensuring only the researchers, and researching supervisor had access to it. Upon completion of the research all audio recordings and transcripts were destroyed. These precautions served to ensure the protection of the confidentiality of all participants.

Data Analysis

This study utilized a thematic analysis process. The interviews were transcribed by a professional transcription company and reviewed by the researchers for accuracy. Field notes were taken by the researchers as needed during the in-depth interviews. Researchers analyzed the transcripts individually and then jointly, using open coding to identify categories and their qualities. The researchers compared their codes for each transcript, noting differences and similarities in codes, and refining codes to address disagreements. Next,

researchers organized these codes into broader themes. Researchers also utilized axial coding to identify relationships between the resulting themes.

Summary

In summary, this chapter presented the methods used to conduct this study. This study utilized a qualitative design, in-depth interviews, snowball sampling, and thematic analysis. Participants were provided with informed consent forms, the opportunity to discontinue participation at any time, and confidentiality. Face to face interviews were conducted using an interview guide of 20 questions. The data collected were transcribed and analyzed by the researchers using thematic analysis techniques.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter discusses the results of our study examining youths'

perceptions and experiences related to EFC programs designed to help them

become self-sufficient.   Our analysis revealed five themes including:

experiences with services, motivation to join EFC, social worker interaction with

youth, importance of a support network, and advice from EFC recipients. In this

chapter, we describe our research participants and discuss these five themes.

Demographics

In this qualitative study, researchers used non-probability snowball

sampling to recruit participants. The researchers were able to interview a total of

seven individuals from the community. All participants were interviewed from

February 2020 to April 2020. All seven individuals who participated identified

themselves as current or previous recipients of extended foster care through a

Southern California public child welfare agency. In this qualitative study, there

were a total of seven participants. Four participants were in the age range of 18-

23 and three participants were in the age range of 24-30. Three out of the seven

participants were male, and four were female. Two participants identified as

African American, two identified as White, one identified as Hispanic, and two

participants did not state an ethnicity. Four participants reported that they had

participated in the EFC program for all three years, one participant participated in

the EFC program for a year and a half, and two participants are currently enrolled in the EFC program. Regarding the level of education, one participant reported being in college. Two participants received a bachelor's degree and one received a master's degree. One participant received a high school diploma and the remaining three participants did not disclose their level of education. Regarding reaching self-sufficiency, two participants described feeling independent. One participant reported feeling self-sufficient and successful. One participant revealed feeling a little independent. The remaining three participants did not reveal reaching self-sufficiency. Participants were also asked where they are currently living. One participant reported living with their significant other's parents. One participant reported living with their fiancé and mother. One participant reported living with their wife. Two participants did not disclose their current living status.

Experiences with Services

Many of the participants reported positive experiences with EFC services. As participants were interviewed, they identified beneficial services from the EFC program, such as life skills workshops and assisted housing opportunities. Participant 1 shared their most helpful service was participating in the Independent Living Program (ILP). The ILP allowed them to receive a free laptop for school, as well as taking part in life skills workshops. Other resources mentioned by participants included transitional housing/SILP, the THRIVE program, parenting classes, childcare, and financial assistance. Participant 2

also mentioned EFC provided opportunities to help them secure employment, by providing mock interviews and employment workshops. Other participants mentioned they were unsure of what EFC was going to provide them and has gone surprisingly well. When researchers asked Participant 3 how they felt EFC has impacted them, they stated, "…I would say the last two years has been really great for me 'cause I've gotten a lot of benefits and opportunities. I just feel like it turned out better than I expected." Other participants recalled specific services they deemed helpful during their time in the program, such as budgeting workshops and social gatherings with other EFC youth.

Although participants were easily able to recognize helpful services, they were just as easily able to identify inadequate and barriers to services. The common theme of barriers to services was the lack of resources offered to the youth. Many recipients also identified not having enough information to participate in services and workshops. Participant 4 identified the lack of guidance to these services as a major barrier in the EFC program. This participant felt the lack of guidance from their social worker contributed to the minimal services they had received. The same participant also mentioned they had the opportunity to participate in ILP, but later redacted their application, they stated, "…It didn't fit who I was at the time." As a result, the participant described they had become homeless. Another barrier identified by a few participants involve long waiting lists to participate in some services. As a result, participants were discouraged from signing up for the opportunities. The main identified

barrier to receiving services by multiple participants is the lack of transportation to and from services.

> I think my main thing with not participating in the EFC life skills and stuff was transportation. I didn't have my own means of transportation, and so getting to these places was a little difficult for me. Yeah, I would get flyers sometimes, but just seeing the location and seeing how far it was. Most of the time, they were late at night, they'd be like 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. and so it was like I'm not gonna get there on the bus on my own (Participant 5).

Participant 3 shared a similar account for their lack of participation in services to the lack of transportation. The participant described having to make childcare accommodations because childcare and services were opposite ways of on another. An Additional participant described how easily it was to be suspended from services and the difficulty to be re-instituted. During the time of suspension, most services were not being offered to the recipient and missed opportunities. Participant 6 described many barriers they faced while in EFC and the constant battle to receive services. This participant shared they had joined EFC when it was first enacted and felt the program had many issues. As a result, their EFC program did allow them to participate in many services to meet their self-sufficiency needs. Two participants also mentioned the effects of COVID-19 as being a barrier to services. These participants described sending out applications for services and workshops but received their applications back with a lack of

information on how to proceed. Many participants could not recall a specific service that was not helpful, rather recalled upon many barriers they faced to receive adequate services.

Participants also identified helpful services that should be supplementary in the EFC program. The following were some examples that participants felt needed to be implemented in the EFC program; help with transitioning from high school to college, a dedicated mentorship program, counseling services, and a variety of services in all EFC youths' locations. Some participants described having difficulty transitioning between high school and college. These participants shared a common belief of having dedicated personnel to check in with these youths and their transition progress. Especially, EFC youth who may be balancing college, becoming new, and young mothers. Implementing a dedicated mentorship program was another common belief that participants felt needed to be in the EFC program. Five out of the seven participants recommended having a mentor who was involved with their EFC youth on a weekly basis. This would be most hopeful for the youth as various participants voiced a lack of guidance in their experience. Participant 1 stated, "I think a mentorship program would help because…I feel like if someone intervenes early enough, that they will end up being guided more towards a better path."

Although most participants agreed on providing mentors to EFC youth, Participant 4 emphasized barriers for these mentors. This participant mentioned

the "huge lack of trust" between EFC youth and any type of guiding figure, because many youths felt like they were just going to leave. Other participants also described providing more adequate services and resources in areas for EFC youth. Many participants described having to take long bus trips to participate in services or workshops. In summation, additional local opportunities may engage more EFC youth.

Participants also described how they developed their life skills in the EFC program to meet their self-sufficiency needs. Many of the participants attributed their life skill development to a mentor they met during the EFC program. Participant 5 recalled they had a specific person they called upon when they had questions and needed help. The participant shared that this person helped to shape their current standing in life. Other participants named the ILP as their source for acquiring life skills.

> [In reference to the Independent Living Program] I feel that it's because they, in Riverside, at least, they really give you the skills needed in order to become self-sufficient, and I back that with my life. I've been in life skill classes, for example many people [In reference to EFC youth] just like myself that take it for granted. They don't really listen, but I sat there because my mom never told me, my family never told me about what to do [in reference to life skills], and being 18, I was clueless. (Participant 6)

Some of the other participants mirrored Participants 6's belief, and also felt these classes offered in ILP prepared them for life after EFC. Participant 2 shared they attributed feeling like they met their self-sufficiency needs when they started their higher education while in EFC. Many participants attributed their participation in EFC services and mentorship guidance as their development of life skills to meet their self-sufficiency needs post EFC.

<div align="center">Access to Extended Foster Care</div>

Participants shared various motivations joining EFC to best meet and develop their self-sufficiency needs. Some of these motivations included stable housing opportunities, assistance securing employment, and continued support from their social worker. Many of the participants initially joined EFC as their social worker described how wonderful of an opportunity it would be for the youth. Participant 4 reported that their social worker informed them about the EFC program at eighteen years of age. They described how the social worker pitched the program and motivated the participant well enough so that they entered the program at eighteen years of age. Participant 4 stated, "I joined because she [the social worker] was honestly givin' me all opportunities, showin' me anything that will benefit me. Give me everything, whatever can help." Other participants shared similar testimonies as to their reasoning of joining EFC. Participant 3 noted they mainly joined EFC because their social worker discussed the benefits of the program and emphasized the fact that they would receive adequate support to pursue a higher education. The participant stated

they joined at the age of 18 and are still currently enrolled. The participant reported that EFC would offer the extra support needed.

> I guess the only reason is because of the whole college thing- you go to college for free and stuff like that. That's honestly the only reason why […] Just because I felt like it was the only option for me, because I have a baby and stuff I needed the extra support and stuff like that […] I just felt like it was a great opportunity, honestly. (Participant 3)

Other participants felt it was their only option as they had nowhere else to go after turning eighteen. Participant 7 reported their social worker repeatedly told them about EFC since they were fifteen years of age. They reported filling out the required paperwork for EFC at age seventeen and joining EFC after graduating high school. Participant 7 was also motivated to join EFC due to having a child in their care. Participant 5 also reported feeling worried about their plans after turning eighteen; they shared they had nowhere else to go. Their social worker mentioned the EFC program and described the benefits of being an EFC youth.

> My social worker told me that I had the option to stay in foster care 'cause I was worried what was gonna happen after I turned 18. She was like well there is a brand-new program. I think we had just made the cut. She was like you can participate in EFC, but she told you me you have to either be working or going to school which was already in my plans. (Participant 5)

Similarly, Participant 2 reported enrolling in the EFC program on their own behalf. They had received a letter stating their rights to receiving EFC benefits. As they turned eighteen, they had not reached self-sufficiency and their living provisions were not appropriate, therefore they sought EFC as an opportunity to better support themselves.

Alternatively, a few participants described some barriers when trying to join the EFC program. Participant 1 had shared that their social worker informed them of the EFC program but were very resistant to staying in the system. Participant 1 noted that their social worker influenced her to join EFC and felt glad about her decision.

> I didn't want to join it. When I turned 18, I was like, "no". I just wanna be done with the county. F that, screw that" and I was just like, "nope". Then my social worker was like, "no, it'd be a really good opportunity […] That's the reason I stuck with it 'cause my social worker was really pushing me on it and persuading me. (Participant 1)

In a similar note, Participant 6 was hesitant on staying in the system as well. Their social worker had informed the participant of a new instated program for foster youth that allowed them to stay in foster care until 21 years of age. The participant agreed and joined the program after they turned 18 years old and stayed until they aged out of the program.

Over the course of each participant's EFC journey, four out of the seven participants stayed until they aged out of the program. Most participants who stayed in the program all three years, gave positive remarks, and accredited the program to their current success. Two participants are currently enrolled in EFC, and when asked if they would continue to stay in the program one participant stated they would stay until they turned twenty-one years old. The other participant stated they planned on leaving the program in a few months. Participant 2 shared leaving EFC because the program they were part of had closed due to lack of funds. Participant 2 stated, "[Their social worker] She helped me move forward in my life. She helped me become an adult 'cause before, I was still young...She helped me enroll in school and everything. Now, I'm growing. She was a good mentor."

Social Worker Interaction with Youth

Participants identified two main factors contributing to their relationship with their EFC social workers. These two factors being how many social workers they interacted with throughout their EFC experience and the support they received from their social worker. Furthermore, it was suggested the more their social worker advocated and supported the youth, the better their relationship.

Four out seven participants shared they only had one social worker throughout their EFC experience. These participants described positive and supportive interactions from their social workers. Although, one participant who

had one social worker, described a lack of a relationship with their social worker. Two participants who had two social workers through their EFC experience, shared they had a negative relationship with having to transition from one social worker to another.

Many participants described positive and supportive experiences interacting with their social workers. Participant 1 shared they had a "super supportive social worker" in EFC. This participant described their social worker helping them move into their dorm and provided extra supplies. Participant 2 described their social worker as "nice" and felt they had checked on them often enough to make sure they had adequate supplies. Other participants attributed their positive relationship with their social worker to their reason to pursue a higher education.

> I just feel like one thing that she does is she checks up on me a lot, because I—well, for me, 'cause I've had, I guess mental illness before and depression and stuff like that. She checks up on me a lot. She'll call me and stuff like that and make sure that I'm good. Just making sure that I don't need anything, especially during this whole COVID-19 situation. She's just always there. (Participant 3)

This participant describes how vital their social worker's role has played in their life, especially in uncertain times. Other participants described examples of their social workers advocating on their behalf to receive certain services. As well as a

supportive enough relationship with their social workers, they felt comfortable enough to call them if they needed assistance.

As much as participants described positive relationships with their social workers, other participants described negative interactions. Some participants shared they began EFC with a supportive EFC social worker and due to unprecedented events transitioned to a different EFC social worker. During the transition, participants described their new social worker's to be uninvolved in their cases. Participant 6 described a time where they had to "battle" their way to the attention of their social worker to receive services. Similarly, Participant 5 stated,

> I feel like my social worker kind of saw that I was a good kid and I was in college and I didn't really give her any trouble, so she was like she's fine. She was kind of letting me rely on myself. (Participant 5)

This participant went on to describe they had minimal interaction with her social worker and participated in a few services offered through EFC. Furthermore, Participant 2 described an experience where he transitioned to a new EFC social worker and stated, "The new worker never reached out to me." The participant went on to explain they would never receive a phone call back from their new worker. Participants seem to share similar negative experiences of the lack of support from their EFC social workers. When asked what they felt has been helpful from their current EFC social worker, Participant 7 stated, "Not really. I

don't see her like that." They went on to explain they had minimal contact with their social worker and were leaving the program in a few months.

Importance of Support Network

Participants were able to identify their support network and described how they contributed to their self-sufficiency needs. Almost all but one participant developed and identified one person as part of their support network in the EFC program. Participants even commented that they still had connections with their support network after terminating from the program. Participant 4 revealed their counselor was a major support for them during EFC and currently remains as a person they seek for guidance.

> Yes, my previous counselor, Michael […] yeah, so Michael, we're still in contact to this day[…] he was my counselor in EOP […] I met him from getting connected through EFC. (Participant 4)

Participant 6 reported that they also had a personal mentor and youth advocates within the life skills program. Participant 6 explained, "I had to seek out my mentor back in the day, Michael […] He helped me out a lot [..] He was the man."

Participants referenced sometimes needing their identified support networks to guide them in everyday life. Participant 5 shared they had identified a mentor as a key piece in their support network. Participant 5 stated, "I would ask Michael some of the questions especially when I moved out. I needed a lot of

help." The same participant clarified having other support networks through friends and some family support. Participant 3 noted that they had two people which they considered as part of their support network. They highlighted that if they ever needed something, they could rely on either of them. The participant described their support network as doing their best to support them and providing them with resources.

Various participants explained they viewed their social worker as their support network. Participant 1 mentioned that their social worker retired but were sure their social worker would still help them out. "I still have contact with my social worker […] I can just text her and she'll help me out if I need something […] She would be more than willing to (participant 1)". Participant 2 described that their social worker was indeed a part of their support network during the EFC program. The participant described their social worker as very helpful and attentive.

> She was really nice. She called me, checked up on me. She would call me
>
> every other day asking if I need a food card or a gas card, just always
>
> checking up on me...". (Participant 2)

 A few other participants also replied they would feel comfortable calling on their previous social workers if they needed help. A common theme amongst participants was describing having a strong support network throughout the EFC

program and after aging out has better prepared them once terminated from the program.

Participant 7 reported currently being enrolled in the EFC program and had not formed a support network. However, the participant commented that they had developed a prior support network with her child's father's family. The participant noted that they relied upon them often and was seeking support from them after terminating from the program.

Advice from Extended Foster Care Recipients

Many of the participants were eager to give advice for EFC social workers, EFC agencies, and proposed changes for the benefit of EFC youth. A few participants pointed out the best advice they would give an EFC social worker is developing a strong sense of patience. Participant 5 described the importance of giving the youth time and to allow them to follow their own timeline. Participant 6 described having patience when working with these youths and helping them find their voice. Other participants mentioned making sure to actively reach out to their youth. When asked to give advice for EFC social workers, Participant 4 stated, "…[In regard to reaching out to EFC youth] at least three times a week visiting, making recommendations, I'm talking the full nine yards." Another participant emphasized the importance of having open communication with EFC youth.

…believe your foster kid to some extent 'cause sometimes they lie, but to

know and to build that rapport with them so that they can trust you and

actually talk to you 'cause I feel like sometimes we don't think they're

gonna believe them. (Participant 1)

The common piece of advice given to social workers from the participants is to

build a strong rapport with their youth and have open communication.

There was a wide variation of advice participants were recommending to

their former agencies. Some participants mentioned they would recommend

stressing the importance of mentorship programs. Participants felt EFC youth

need guidance and having the agency incorporate that belief into their trainings

for social workers. Participant 4 shared they would recommend their previous

agency to dedicate mentors specifically for EFC youth. This participant also

suggested having the agencies force their EFC youth to read a book.

…I think something a lot more to be beneficial than life skills would be,

provide a good book and make a kid do a book report on it, and then that's

how they get their gift card-a really good book. It could be a book about

business or spirituality or something like that. I feel like that's leading a

horse to water, giving these kids incentive to start reading, and then they

might read a book that transforms their life. That'll go a lot further.

(Participant 4)

Other participants recommended adding more programs and services to EFC youth and youth transitioning out of EFC. Specifically, Participant 5 recommended having social workers trained in the resources offered to the EFC youth, so they can provide them to the youth. Some participants shared their concern over the lack of resources offered to current EFC youth and proposed the agencies to try to keep the program thriving. Lastly, some participants just wanted to say thank you to their previous social workers and agencies.

Summary

This chapter presented findings from participants' responses obtained through qualitative interviews. The study explored the experiences of current and former foster youth in the EFC program. The data analysis was presented in the following themes: the importance of social worker interaction with youth, helpful services, access to EFC, importance of support system, and advice from EFC recipients. Some participants shared that their interaction with their social worker was positive throughout the EFC program. Others had little to no contact with their social worker. Participants reported that SILP, ILP, and the THRIVE program were the most helpful services in EFC. Other participants did not join any services and programs in EFC. Almost all participants advised county administrators to implement a mentorship program in EFC. Participants also advised social workers working with EFC youth to be patient, understanding, and remain in communication with them.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of the Extended Foster

Care (EFC) program in preparing youth for self-sufficiency, from the perspective

of current and former program participants. Despite significant reform efforts,

children who grow up in foster care struggle to successfully transition into

independent adulthood (Collins, 2015). Overall, our study's findings are

consistent with the literature on the barriers and facilitators to self-sufficiency for

youth in EFC.

Experiences with Services

Our study found that, in general, youth found the EFC program to be

helpful in gaining self-sufficiency. Participants acknowledged that housing

services contributed the most to their self-sufficiency. This is consistent with the

literature which suggests that independent living programs are a contributing

factor to the successful transition into adulthood (Jones & Stribling, 2016). Yet,

our study diverged from the literature with respect to participants' housing. Our

participants reported that remaining in EFC helped provide stable housing during

and after leaving extended care. This sentiment is inconsistent with the literature

which suggests that EFC youth who aged out of the system had higher levels of

unstable housing (Fowler, 2017).

Additionally, participants who stayed in EFC care for most of the three-

year program, reported higher levels of self-sufficiency. Many participants shared

they had received a college degree and secured their own place of residence. Conversely, participants who stayed in the program minimally, reported more struggles with self-sufficiency. This finding is consistent with the literature, which suggests that youth who participated in EFC for a longer amount of time were more self-sufficient than youth who exited the program early (Miller, 2017)

Our participants also reported significant achievements in higher education. Our findings related to EFC youths' educational attainment are consistent with the literature which suggests that foster youth who received EFC services have a higher chance of receiving post- secondary education opportunities (Lee, 2014). Yet, this same literature suggests that foster youth who received EFC services were more likely to delay pregnancies (Lee, 2014). Our findings were not entirely consistent with this literature, as two of our participants were parents, although it is unclear if these youth might have become parents earlier in their lifetimes had they not participated in EFC.

Access to Extended Foster Care

Participants stayed in the EFC program between one to three years and indicated stable employment. Participants did not inquire barriers or difficulty in gaining employment while being in EFC and after exiting. Our findings are consistent with the literature which indicated that the duration in EFC contributed to gaining employment among participants, and that employment barriers were removed the longer the participants stayed in the program (Netzel and Tardanico, 2014).

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Participants credited their social worker as their motivation to enrolling in the EFC program. Participants shared having an open relationship with their social worker as a reason for continuing to stay in the program as well. In previous literature, Jones and Stribling (2016), describe having positive relationship factors that contributed to the successful transition into adulthood. This has been consistent with the researcher's findings. Participants also shared that their supportive relationship with their social worker had allowed them to enroll and continue in the EFC program. As a result, some participants have had a successful transition into adulthood.

Participants in this research study remained in the EFC program between one to three years. Results demonstrated that none of our participants expressed involvement with the criminal justice system. These findings were consistent with the literature stated by Lee (2014), who suggested that if foster youth chose to participate in extended care for at least one year, they had a lower chance of being arrested after exiting the system at the age of 18.

Social Worker Interaction with Youth

Participants described having a supportive relationship with their social worker while in EFC care. Participants also attributed the encouraging relationship to be a motivating factor when reaching self-sufficiency. This is consistent with the literature review as Courtney (2016) noted youth who received adequate help throughout the program revealed positive outcomes. He

also mentioned youth who had negative or minimal interactions with their social worker expressed discontent with their experience in EFC care (Courtney et al, 2016). Our findings are consistent with the literature, as a few participants described negative remarks about their EFC care which was influenced by their relationship with their social worker.

Importance of Social Network

There was limited literature on the effects of developing a supportive network during a participant's time in EFC. In general, participants formed a supportive network with at least one individual from the program such as social worker, a mentor, and/or a family member. Participants who identified a support network through their EFC experience appeared to have a higher rating of self-assessed self-sufficiency. Participants described being able to contact or rely on their support network once exited from the EFC program.

Advice from Extended Foster Care Recipients

Participants shared pieces of advice for the child welfare agencies and social workers working with EFC youth. Participants reported the importance of providing more services such as childcare and mentoring, strengthening the ILP, improving social worker training to better engage EFC youth, and better selection of social workers to match with EFC youth. Participants also relayed that social workers should be patient, understanding, and have faith in their youth. Contreras's (2014) literature was consistent with our findings in that they

attempted to assess experiences of youth in extended foster care. The findings

revealed several themes', one of which includes the need for services to better

prepare foster youth for independent living (Contreras, 2014).

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the researchers struggled to

recruit participants. This population can be difficult to reach, and we gained

access to most participants through a university program supporting former foster

youth. Consequently, our data may be skewed favorably as almost all

participants were engaged in higher education. Second, the difficulty in recruiting

participants may also be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, which occurred

during our data collection period. Strict guidelines prohibited researchers from

conducting face to face interviews and enforced social distancing guidelines,

which limited our ability to meet in-person with potential participants. Third, we

were only able to recruit participants from the Southern California region and the

sample may not have reflected the experiences of EFC participants across

California counties or on a national level. Researchers believe the needs of this

population are even greater due to the limited participation from the study.

Fourth, due to the nature of the research topic and interview guide, some

participants found a few questions difficult to answer. These participants

described having blocked out the memories during their involvement in the foster

care system. As a result, are data likely does not reflect some of the difficult

experiences participants were reluctant to discuss due to fear of re-traumatization.

Implications

Researchers gathered data and developed potential solutions for social work research, practice, and policy for current and future EFC youth. Researchers hope that the findings will provide information to further assist this vulnerable population.

<u>Social Work Research</u>

There is currently limited research on the EFC population, as the California Fostering Connections to Success Act has only been in place for the past eight years. Future studies should engage in additional outreach with this hard to reach population to better identify ways services and programs can be better tailored to this population's needs. In addition, future studies should provide compensation to these youths as they often experience financial insecurity.

<u>Practice</u>

In order for EFC youth to continue to develop self-sufficiency after terminating from the program, public child welfare agencies should better adapt their services to the needs of the youth. Our findings suggest that agencies should seek to better match youth to the social workers who are able to understand and to work with each youth's unique personality. Youth also have different levels of trauma and different ways of expressing that trauma, and

especially emphasized the importance of a supportive relationship with their social worker. If better matchmaking services are offered to youth, they may have a stronger chance of reaching self-sufficiency.

Furthermore, researchers recommend better training for social workers on the resources available for EFC youth. Many youths described having a lack of information for needed services from their social worker. This may be related to high caseloads and to social workers' limited time to investigate resources, so reduced caseloads, and other means to improve social worker access to resources for this specific population should be investigated.

Policy

Our study suggests the need for policies that improve resources for EFC before termination from the program. Policies that require public child welfare agencies to institute intensive mentorship programs for EFC youth have the potential to improve self-sufficiency among youth before and after they leave the program.

Finally, our study suggests the need to extend the termination age from 21 to 23 years of age. This will allow EFC youth to continue to develop and foster needed self-sufficiency skills once ready to terminate from the program. Every youth's personality and intellectual capacity are unique. Some youth are better prepared than others to live independently. If policy reforms the age limit, this may provide EFC youth more time to reach self-sufficiency once terminated from the program.

Conclusion

The themes identified in this study are consistent with the existing literature on EFC youth. Although participants in this study provided positive feedback about their experiences in the EFC program, further research must be conducted to be reflective of the larger population. Perhaps the most important lesson to be learned from this study is that EFC youth need continuous guidance and support to reach self-sufficiency.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself and your time in foster care.
   a. How long were you in foster care?
   b. How long were you in EFC?
   c. When and why did you leave EFC?
   d. In which county did you participate in EFC?
2. Tell me about your life since leaving EFC?
   a. Where do you live now?
3. Thinking back to when you joined EFC, tell me about that experience.
   a. How did you know about EFC?
      i. Social worker? Foster parent? Peer?
   b. Why did you join?
   c. Did you join straight from foster care?
4. Tell me about the EFC services you participated in?
   a. Which were helpful?
   b. Which were not helpful?
5. Now I want you to think back on a specific EFC program service you participated in. Tell me about that experience.
   a. What was the program/service?
   b. Why did you participate?
   c. What was helpful/unhelpful?
   d. Any recommendations.
6. Were there any services/programs you wish you had participated in or were there any services you wish were offered but were not?
   a. Any services/programs during your time in EFC?
   b. Were there any post-EFC services offered?
      i. Any support networks established?
      ii. A mentor offered.
7. Looking back, what programs/services/help do foster youth need to become self-sufficient?
   a. What advice would you give to a new social worker?
   b. What would you instruct the agency to do?

8. What would you want County Administrators to know about your life after leaving EFC?
    a. What has gone well?
    b. What has been difficult?
    c. What could they have done or what could they do now?
9. If you could wave a magic want to change EFC, how would you change it?
10. Is there anything I did not ask you that I should have?

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APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate past Extended Foster Care recipients' experiences in San Bernardino and Riverside county child welfare agencies. The study is being conducted by Miranda Rubio and Carmen Covarrubias under the supervision of Dr. Deirdre Lanesskog, Professor in the School of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at CSUSB.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this research project is to analyze former extended foster care recipient's experiences through San Bernardino and Riverside County's Extended Foster Care programs.

DESCRIPTION: The researchers will conduct a qualitative study of about 15 to 20 participants through face to face or via telephone interviews. To gather participants, researchers will utilize snowball and purposive sampling and have participants send our contact information to other potential participants. Interviews will be held for 30 to 45 minutes each and will be conducted by both researchers. All interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in the study is totally voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study or discontinue your participation at any time without consequences.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All data collected from the interviews will be kept confidential. Identification numbers will be given to each interview and no identifying information will be linked to any data. Any audio recording collected will be kept on a secure external hard drive and uploaded to a password protected computer. All informed consent forms and audio recording files will be held in separate secure locations. After the research is completed all audio recordings will be destroyed shortly after the project has ended.

DURATION: The interviews will last 30 to 45 minutes.

RISKS: Although not anticipated, there may be some discomfort in answering some of the questions. You are not required to answer and can skip the question or end your participation.

BENEFITS: There will not be any direct benefits to the participants in this study. However, findings from the study will contribute to our knowledge in this area of research.

CONTACT: If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Deirdre Lanesskog (909) 537-7222.

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RESULTS: Results of the study can be obtained from the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database (http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/) at California State University, San Bernardino after July 2020.

****

I agree to have this interview be audio recorded: YES _____ NO_____

I understand that I must be 18 years or older to participate in your study, have read and understand the consent document and agree to participate in your study.

_____   _____
Place an X mark here   Date

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APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FORM

IRB-FY2020-120 - Initial: IRB Admin./Exempt Review Approval Letter

2 messages

mgillesp@csusb.edu <mgillesp@csusb.edu>   Tue, Jan 14, 2020 at 1:50 PM
To: 004569551@coyote.csusb.edu, 004953529@coyote.csusb.edu, Deirdre.Lanesskog@csusb.edu

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN BERNARDINO

January 14, 2020

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Administrative/Exempt Review Determination
Status: Determined Exempt
IRB-FY2020-120

Miranda Rubio Deirdre Lanesskog, Carmen Hernandez Covarrubias
CSBS - Social Work
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Miranda Rubio Deirdre Lanesskog, Carmen Hernandez Covarrubias

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Extended Foster Care" has been reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of California State University, San Bernardino has determined that your application meets the requirements for exemption from IRB review Federal requirements under 45 CFR 46. As the researcher under the exempt category you do not have to follow the requirements under 45 CFR 46 which requires annual renewal and documentation of written informed consent which are not required for the exempt category. However, exempt status still requires you to attain consent from participants before conducting your research as needed. Please ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional approvals which may be required.

Your responsibilities as the researcher/investigator reporting to the IRB Committee the following three requirements highlighted below. Please note failure of the investigator to notify the IRB of the below requirements may result in disciplinary action.

- Submit a protocol modification (change) form if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your study for review and approval by the IRB before implemented in your study to ensure the risk level to participants has not increased,
- If any unanticipated/adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research, and
- Submit a study closure through the Cayuse IRB submission system when your study has ended.

The protocol modification, adverse/unanticipated event, and closure forms are located in the Cayuse IRB System. If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the Research Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval identification number (listed at the top) in all

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ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILTIES

This was a two-person research project, both authors collaborated throughout
the paper. Miranda Rubio and Carmen Covarrubias collaborated on the following
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- Introduction

- Literature Review

- Methods

- Results

- Discussion

Both Miranda Rubio and Carmen Covarrubias contributed to the formatting,
editing and revisions process throughout the preparation of this paper for
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