

2021

## Impact of Emotional Disturbance on Crime among Latinos in Texas

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Patricia K Sellers

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Walden University  
2021

Abstract

Impact of Emotional Disturbance on Crime among Latinos in Texas

by

Patricia K Sellers

Walden University, 2021

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Forensic Psychology

Walden University

August 2021

## Abstract

Latinos are a minority population who are largely stereotyped as violent and vulnerable to committing crimes in America. While Latinos' vulnerability to committing crimes is attributed to multiple factors, little attention has been drawn towards the relationship between Latinos' emotional disturbance and probability toward perpetrating or preventing crime. The rational choice theory, trait theory, and biological theory were used to show relationships between emotional disturbance and cognitive processes underlying recidivism that are common among Latinos in Texas. This study investigated the impact of emotional disturbance on decision-making processes among Latinos in Texas as a motivator or deterrent to engage in crime. An explorative qualitative research approach was adopted. Five professionals working in the criminal justice system in Texas were interviewed. Data analysis was done thematically and findings were presented in a narrative format based on Braun and Clarke's model for thematic analysis. Themes regarding discrimination, racial stereotyping, emotional stability, increase in criminal behavior, unfairness in the criminal justice system, high incarceration of Latinos, and mitigation effects emotional disturbance were prevalent in the findings. It emerged that emotional disturbance has a relationship with criminal behavior activities among Latinos living in Texas, although, it is triggered by poverty, stereotyping, and discrimination. It is recommended that the criminal justice system in Texas should embrace community programs aimed at improving the living standards of Latinos. Texas should amend the Texas Labor code Chapter 21 to include more stringent measures that will mitigate discrimination against Latinos.

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## Dedication

I want to dedicate this dissertation project to all Latinos in the state of Texas who might have experienced stereotyping, discrimination, unfair criminal justice system and suffer from emotional disturbances.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the professionals who agreed to be part of this study. Despite the disruption caused by Covid-19, they were willing to give their individual and professional views on a significant subject facing Latinos in Texas. Their zeal and determination to be part of the study encouraged me to finish the project.

To members of the IRB board and my supervisors, thank you for the guidance, leadership and feedback provided and for continually being available to respond to my questions. I believe your contribution has been immense to finishing this project.

To my peers and family who supported me and encouraged me all through, I thank you and wish all the best in the New Year 2021. Finally, I wish to thank God for the mercies of being healthy when conducting this project.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### Introduction

The Latino population in the United States of America has considerably increased since the early 1990s accounting for 18.62% of the general population by 2019 and 51.98% of the national population growth between 2010 and 2019 (U.S Census Bureau, 2019c). Unlike previous shifts in Latinos' demographics, the current increase in population is largely due to high birthrate, which has significantly affected social contexts in which contemporary Latino Americans are socialized (Gramlich, 2019). Victimization and involvement in criminal activities among these new Latino population has been affected (Hosier & Hosier, 2017). Key to understanding recent experiences and willful behavior to engage in crime among new Latino generations may be rooted in acculturation processes and how they trigger emotional disturbance. For instance, Zhang et al. (2021) notes that from the beginning of the spring season of the year 2020, the rapid spread of COVID-19 in largely white populated states of America together with some political racists utterances and xenophobic labeling largely contributed in a surge of hate crimes against immigrant populations.

Race related stigmatization and subsequent increase in racial discrimination, pandemic or crime related labelling, and assault against minority populations in American society demonstrates a fundamental social problem that requires research attention (Gover et al. 2020). Between 1990 and 2016, the number of violent crimes reduced from a high of 700/100,000 to a low of 400/100,000 (James, 2018). By contrast, there has been a marginal increase in homicides between 2014 and 2016 (James, 2018).

The involvement of Latinos in crime is supported by data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, which indicates Latinos perpetrated 51% of violent victimizations reported across the US over the last decade (McCarthy, 2019). However, other studies suggest that there is no link between increase in Latino populations and increase in crime rates. For instance, Hosier and Hosier (2017) said the link between increase in Latinos and rises in crime rates is inconsistent and therefore negligible. Stowell et al. (2012) said despite the inconsistencies and lack of conclusive research, available evidence regarding the overrepresentation of Latinos in the criminal justice system is a cause of concern. Thus, assumptions that increase in Latinos leads to increase in crime might be attributed to racial profiling of Latinos or misleading perceptions of crime due to mediatization of migrant crime (Hosier & Hosier, 2017). Therefore, this study explored probable associations between emotional disturbances among Latinos and increases in crime in Texas. This chapter includes a background literature of the topic, the problem statement, purpose of the study, and research questions.

### **Research Background**

The prevalence of crime is attributed to different factors although racial marginalization and economic disenfranchisement are among the most common (Hurwitz et al., 2015). Other factors include, lack of education, intergenerational transmission of aberrant behaviors, and gang membership (Hosier & Hosier, 2017). Johnson et al. (2017) said cognitive processes leading to stress create emotional instability increasing the chances of individuals developing behavior such as involvement in crime as a way of defending themselves. Emotional disturbance (ED) is a cognitive process triggered by

fear, anxiety, depression, unfounded complaints of physical pain, unkemptness, diminished motivation to engage in strenuous or challenging events, learning difficulties and poor interpersonal skills, or lack of interest in social events (Bonevski & Naumovska, 2018). The prevalence of ED has been a major cause of psychiatric disorders among Latinos with approximately 28% of men and 30.2 % of women being diagnosed with the condition annually between 2004 and 2009 (Alegría et al., 2009). Zvolensky et al. (2017) said Latinos experience greater emotional disorders and associated health disparities, especially emotional dysregulation, compared to non-Latinos. As such, it is important to investigate the root causes of the ED among Latinos.

The historical examples of racial discrimination and criminal labeling against Latinos are highlighted to show or suggest that these occurrences are not new phenomenon in America (Cabanatuan, 2020). Rather, these occurrences are part of the larger social way of life and traditional anti-immigrant sentiments meant to cause mental torture and scare away the immigrants from native White populated regions of America (Jeung, 2020). The National Council for Special Education (2019) said attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) was a major cause of emotional disturbance among mentally challenged adolescents. Emotional disturbances can manifest in the form of conduct disorder, attention deficit disorder (ADD), childhood psychosis or neurosis (Shaw et al., 2014). Between 2014 and 2015, the prevalence of mental disorders such as ADHD, behavioral problems, anxiety, and depression among high school students in America 12.4%, 10.23%, 22.2%, and 28.9% respectively (NCES, 2018). In 2018, the prevalence of mental disorders such as ADHD, behavioral problems, anxiety, and



depression in America's general population was 9.4%, 11.3%, 27.72%, and 36.6 percent respectively (CDC, 2018). Over the same period, over 349,000 students between 3 and 21 years were diagnosed with ED in the U.S. (NCES, 2018). The primary issue of concern is that such conditions might persist into adulthood because as established by the National Council for Special Education (NCES, 2018), the prevalence of ED among adults in the US is comparable to rates reported among minors. Bagalman and Cornell (2018) said between 26% and 32% of adults in the US had mental disorders including ED annually between 2005 and 2015. Further, a report analysis by Beck (2021) indicates that persons of Latino origin were more likely to participate in single offender crime than any other immigrant communities in America whenever race related utterances were made towards them irrespective of their age or social status. The ubiquity of ED, especially among the Latino populations, regardless of age, validates the current research focus.

### **Problem Statement**

Overrepresentation of Latinos in the criminal justice system may be related to marginalization of minorities in the United States (Vazquez, 2014). Spurred by some influential politicians, most of recent waves of immigrating Latinos stipulate that Latinos are a threat and largely contribute to social, economic, and cultural insecurity (Beck, 2021). Even though some Latinos are US citizens, they are deprived of the full benefits of citizenship enjoyed by other nonminority citizens such as right to access equal rights in the criminal justice system (Walker et al., 2014). The denial of essential rights and systematic marginalization also extends to the criminal justice system where the immigration laws have informally become part of criminal law (Vazquez, 2014). There

have been instances of racial segregation across various states. In 2017, incarceration rate for Latinos was 823 per 100,000 compared to 272 per 100,000 of whites (Gramlich, 2019). Latinos in the criminal justice system had lost opportunities for a fair trial leading to an increase in the number of Latinos sentenced federal offenders from 48% in 2009 to 16.7% in 2012 (Walker et al., 2014). Impediments to a fair trial are diverse and the Latinos are negatively portrayed in the media as either violent or criminal-minded (Nieves, 2018). Rodriguez (2018) said negative media portrayals have contributed to misconceptions, which in turn, might have adversely impacted objectivity during trials of Latinos.

During the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, negative images of Latino groups were largely perpetuated in the media but due to lack of technological advancement in media publicity as it is currently, the level of outrage against immigrants was not sporadic (Nowrasteh, 2020). However, between 2010 and 2019 there has been increased usage of social media platforms being used to facilitate quick spread of negative images against Latinos which are used by policy makers to rouse public outrage and support for harsh immigration policies, more punitive laws Latino immigrants, and exclusion from the national U.S. population (Walker et al., 2014; Nowrasteh, 2020). Historical exclusion contributed to Latinos' invisibility (Cabanatuan, 2020). Racial invisibility of the Latinos was also extended into social, educational, political, and the criminal justice systems, leading to lack of adequate information for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders concerning this segment of the population (Walker et al., 2014). Even though the US Constitution guarantees equal rights for all as well as rights to due

processes, racial equality and unbiased criminal prosecutions have remained elusive (Tucker, 2016). Tucker (2016) further established that the composition of modern prisons epitomized the racial inequalities in the US given that the less privileged racial minorities constituted a significant portion of the prison population. The majority of Latinos, especially the contemporary population, experience a lot of ED (Alegria et al. 2009; Levy-Gigi et al., 2016; Zvolensky et al., 2017). There is a relationship between ED and high likelihood to engage in criminal activities (Bagalman & Cornell, 2018; National Council for Special Education, 2019; Shaw et al., 2014). Lack of information and research linking ED and likelihood to participate in crime among Latinos shows there is a gap in available literature. Therefore, there was need to investigate the relationship between ED and involvement in crime among Latino populations.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this interpretivist qualitative inquiry was to explore the relationship between ED among Latinos and involvement in crime in Texas. Presently, there is a paucity of research on the subject, even though it remains an issue of national interest. Criminal justice reforms, rehabilitation, and parole continue to inform political and social discourse. The state of Texas was the sample area of the present study because Texas has a substantial population of Latinos incarcerated for various crimes.

### **Research Questions**

*RQ 1:* How does ED impact criminal behavior among Latinos living in Texas?

*RQ 2:* What are the causes of ED among Latinos living in Texas?

*RQ 3*: What are some of the factors that have enhanced high levels of crime among people of Latino origin?

### **Research Objectives**

This research aimed at exploring how ED influenced involvement in crime among Latinos in Texas. To determine whether there was a relationship between ED and crime among Latino groups, the guiding objectives aimed at investigating whether there were relationships between ED and involvement in crime among Latinos. The study explored associations between criminal activities Latinos' racial origins. The study also explored factors enhancing ED among Latinos living in Texas and how these factors contributed to participation in crime. Finally, this study explored the criminal justice system's policies towards Latinos in Texas to understand whether there were any mitigation measures in place to prevent increase in ED, crime, and high incarceration of Latinos.

### **Theoretical Framework**

There are different social and psychological theories on relationships between ED and involvement in crime (Levy-Gigi et al., 2016). Socially unstable, unequal, and disorganized neighborhoods or societies inhibit and undermine control of crime and tend to increase willful participation in crime among the most vulnerable members (Ellis and Bowen, 2017). Texas is one of the states in the US with increased immigration law enforcement policies along with immigration policies that have attracted highly charged rhetoric. Among those largely affected are Latinos who live in mixed-status marginalized families and have at least one unauthorized immigrant family member (Zvolensky et al., 2017). Stringent immigration enforcements, highly charged discriminatory rhetoric and

increased Latino deportations and imprisonment lead to fear and emotional unrest among Latinos (Zvolensky et al., 2017). Consistent with the rational choice, biological and trait theories, this study investigated operant conditioning concepts of human behavior. Rational choice theory presumes that individuals weigh between benefits and costs before participate or withdrawing from an activity (Paternoster, 2010). The study took into consideration a secondary theoretical basis with biological theory, which defines basic behavioral reinforcements as being hereditary. Further, tertiary theoretical basis was based on the trait theory, which presumes that basic child-rearing elements are influential to behavior mechanisms. As such, these theories were used to determine relationships between ED and involvement in crime.

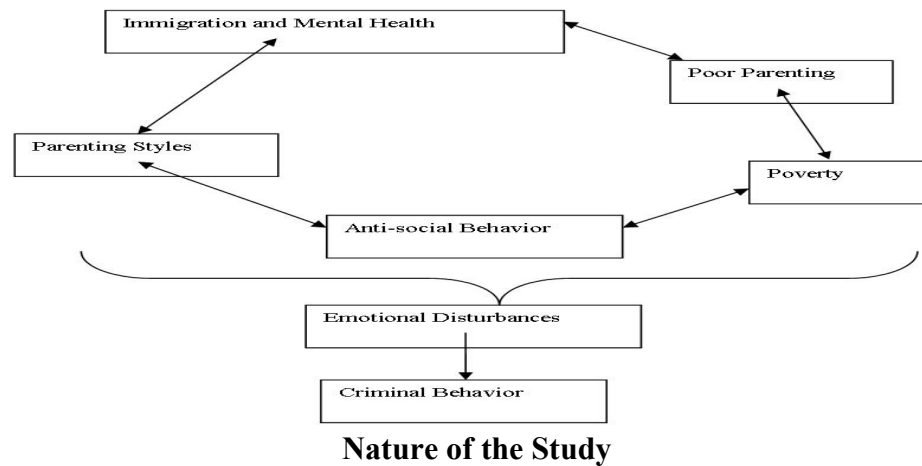
### **Conceptual Framework**

The current study involved investigating the role of ED on criminal behavior among Latinos in Texas. Main concepts related to factors that contribute to the development of ED among Latinos. ED is broadly defined as conditions that are characterized by a number of psychological disorders that when sustained over a period of time, impact the ability of individuals to realize positive educational outcomes (Raine, 2013). Some of the characteristics of ED include lack of ability to learn, which is not explained by sensory, health, or intellectual factors, inability to create interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers, and depression and inappropriate behaviors. Criminal behavior can be understood from sociological, biological and anthropological perspectives. In the current study, the relationship between crime and psychology is highlighted. The relationship between criminal behavior, mental illness, and individuals

with ED is a topic drawing of increased scrutiny in public discourse. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework that guided this study.

### Figure 1

#### *Conceptual Framework*



The current study involved using an interpretivist philosophy to respond to research questions. This necessitated the use of an inductive approach and qualitative strategies to collect qualitative data. The study included semi-structured interview questionnaires which were used to conduct interviews with five persons drawn from a pool of psychologists and professionals in the criminal justice system in Texas. Collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Chapter 3 includes details regarding the research methodology.

### **Assumptions**

It was assumed that participants were professional in terms of responding to research questions and avoided biases. It was also assumed that participants provided honest and professional perspectives.

### **Delimitations**

The study involved factors influencing ED among Latinos and whether said factors contributed to criminal behavior among Latinos in Texas. The topic was chosen because of a gap in the body of knowledge regarding unique attributes of ED amongst Latino populations, which may lead to their high involvement in crime. The study was limited to professional with psychological knowledge dealing with crime in Texas. It excluded individuals under the age of 18 and those without experience dealing with crime in Texas. Thus, general boundaries were limited to professionals within the criminal justice system, social services, and psychology.

### **Limitations**

ED and criminal behavior are largely based on correlational research, which is useful when finding relationships between variables, but fails to establish a definitive cause and effect. Although research shows evidence regarding ED as a cause to certain behavioral outcomes, this study did not consider temperament and personality. Secondly, the findings may not generalize all Latinos because data were collected from one region of the United States. Thus, it was not possible to compare the Latinos in this study to other Latinos in the United States. Data were collected and retrieved from professional within the criminal justice system and who may not have given accurate assessment of

their thoughts or practices, but responded based on what they believed were correct responses rather than their true practices. Hence, validity of collected data were determined by honesty of the respondents.

### **Significance of the Study**

The present study is built upon forensic psychology theory literature regarding crime and ED among racial minority groups. There is a gap in literature regarding the relationship between ED and crime among Latinos. Additionally, there is no evidence regarding root causes of criminal behavior and high rates of incarceration among Latinos in Texas. Minority Americans may have a higher probability of incarceration compared to the Caucasian Americans due to the absence of government accountability, inconsistent justice in the court system, and police violence (Kim & Kiesel, 2018). Determining whether there is a relationship between crime and race would enhance social hegemony and reduce racial mistrust associated with increased criminal justice contact among racial minorities (Taylor et al., 2016). The reduction of racial mistrust would, in turn, help enhance social relations in the country. Caucasians in America are likely to have lower incidence of mental health complications compared to Latinos (Zvolensky et al., 2017). Factors such as immigration, low levels of education, cultural beliefs, and socio-economic status contribute to higher incidences of ED in Latinos compared to Whites (Zvolensky et al., 2017). This study could improve criminal justice policy and practice, especially in terms of possible underlying causes of criminal behavior among Latinos in Texas. The paucity of literature on the subject may have impacted the prevention of crime and contributed to high rates of incarceration and recidivism among



racial minorities. The process of addressing logical gaps could potentially trigger positive social change. For example, resolving social differences that lead to increase in ED.

### **Summary**

Chapter 1 demonstrated the limited scope of earlier studies and why it is necessary to undertake further research among racial minority groups. Moreover, information presented in the background and significance sections suggests this study would make an original contribution to forensic psychology literature because it is the first to investigate ED and its possible contributions to criminality among Latinos residing in Texas. Chapter 2 includes an in-depth review of current literature.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

Chapter 2 includes a critical appraisal of existing theories concerning ED among racial minorities and contrasting views about root causes of criminality and overrepresentation of racial minorities in the criminal justice system. The general goal of the literature review is to establish defined patterns, deviations, and gaps in the general body of research regarding the state of the criminal justice system in Texas and the US in general. Gaps in the body of research in forensic psychology are reviewed in subsequent sections. The chapter includes information regarding the theoretical foundation under study and empirical evidence. Chapter 2 also includes a summary of identified gaps.

### **Search Strategy**

Sources included in the current review were obtained after developing an effective search strategy. Both primary and secondary articles were included in this analysis provided they contained information regarding the role of ED and other factors on criminal behavior. Boolean search strategy was used to identify existing research articles. Electronic database libraries including PsychInfo, CINHALL, NCJRS, BMC, and Google Scholar. Key terms and phrases used during literature search were *emotional disturbances*, *Latinos in Texas*, *immigration and mental health*, and *criminal behavior*. All articles were written in English and published between 2000 and 2019. A total of 69 articles were included in the review.

## Theories of Crime

Moore (2011) said the rational choice theory is founded on the supposition that crime involves a process of decision making in which one weighs the consequences against the benefits of a criminal activity before deciding to undertake or abstain from a crime. By considering potential costs and gains of an illegal act, perpetrators of crime continue to indulge in the act if they establish that the punishment attracted by the offense is minor compared to the benefits they may accrue (Paternoster, 2010). Gul (2009) said committing a crime reflects a personal choice that is not driven by external forces. Gul (2009) said the decision to take part in a crime is instigated via potential benefits due to the criminal act, which must outweigh the costs. Cornish and Clarke (2014) said the main motivators to participation in criminal activities are costs and means of avoiding or lessening these costs to maximize benefits. As a result, it is easier for repeat offenders to instigate another crime because they have already learned how to minimize costs and consequences of their actions (Paternoster, 2010).

Schmallegger (2011) described crime as a rewarding byproduct of abnormal psychological and biological characteristics. This implies that when people perform an illegal act, it is not within their control, and such acts are blamed on physical or mental states that were present at birth and developed over time or are the result of unique situations (Akers, 2013). A person committing a crime does not necessarily stand to gain anything, but instead performs the crime out of an impulsive decision or as a result of a disorder (Schmallegger, 2011). The individual lacks the ability to rationally and logically consider what consequences or benefits of the act would be (Akers, 2013). Crime results

from the inability of a person to control, overcome, or counter natural instincts (Moore, 2011).

Factors in the form of physical or mental traits such as genes, mental capacity, hormonal changes, and the environment where one is brought up are responsible for criminal behavior (Moore, 2011). Moore (2011) said these factors significantly contribute to or influence behavior patterns of individuals. Biological factors such as neurological deficits, unique genes, severe pollution, and malnutrition may provoke a person to act illegally or engage in violent activities (Schmallegger, 2011). According to Schmallegger (2011), while committing these crimes, perpetrators may not be aware of their actions and are unable to control their emotions, especially repeat offenders.

### **Crime and Latino Populations in Texas**

The state of Texas was chosen to review due to the high concentration of Latino immigrants and incidences of crime. The cities of Dallas, San Antonio, Austin, Arlington, and Corpus Christi were selected to establish relations between race and ED. Crime in Texas is concentrated in southern counties (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2018). Light et al. (2020) said the majority of Latinos living in Texas have relatives and second residences in Dallas, San Antonio, Austin, Arlington, or Corpus Christi. There is a definite link between Latino populations and crime, even after considering variations in populations across the states (Light et al., 2020). The city of San Antonio reported the highest crime rates ever committed by Latinos and has the highest percentage of Latinos out of the five cities (FBI, 2018).

### **Criminal Justice System**

Adult and juvenile Latinos in the US may have a lower probability of having a fair trial in the US owing to systematic discrimination as well as biased prosecution and sentencing (Wortley, 2009). Kim and Kiesel (2018) said the potentially biased criminal justice system and negative portrayals by the media may have contributed to the disproportionate incarceration of racial minorities, especially Latinos. It is estimated that about 16% of Latino men risk being incarcerated during the course of their lifetimes compared to 5.9% of White men and 32% of African American men (Kim & Kiesel, 2018). According to Wortley (2009), the criminal justice system was used to maintain the dominant White society through biased incarceration and criminalization of Latino masculinity. According to Kim and Kiesel (2018), legislation continues to favor white supremacy against the Latino population.

While rates of incarceration of Whites and Latinos are comparable at 27% and 26% respectively, the percentage of incarcerated Black Americans is more than 34% (Texas Department of Criminal Justice, 2019). These statistics point to a higher percentage of incarceration among minority groups compared to Caucasians. There were marginal cases of outgroup discrimination in the US (Hurwitz et al., 2015). Hurwitz et al. (2015) said there is a general perception of victimization by the criminal justice system among Latino subjects attributed to the linked fate of minority groups. Such perceptions are justified considering disproportionately high levels of incarceration among minorities. As of 2010, 1,252 Latinos were incarcerated per 100,000 people (Hurwitz et al., 2015). By contrast, only 456 Whites were incarcerated per 100,000 people (Hurwitz et al.,

2015). Prison populations are unequal based on race. Kim and Kiesel (2018) said racial minorities like Latinos face a higher risk of being incarcerated compared to Whites. Findings raise critical and pertinent questions concerning what motivates racial minorities to commit crimes and how are they treated by the criminal justice system.

### **Minority Crimes and Immigration**

Dawkins and Rodriguez (2015) said there may be a link between undocumented immigration and crime or criminal ideation. The risk of crime is reinforced by the intent to overcome individual hardships (Dawkins & Rodriguez, 2015). There has been a surge in the population of Latinos in the US especially between the late 1990s and 2010 (Stowell et al., 2012). Stowell et al. (2012) said between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of Latinos in the US increased by 25%. The surge was attributed to undocumented immigrants from Mexico and other South American countries as well as legal immigrants following the 2010 census (Stowell et al., 2012). Since Latinos are predominantly Mexican, migrants have been concentrated mainly in states close to the southern border, namely Texas and California, with the exceptions of Illinois and New York (Stowell et al., 2012). States such as North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee have also started reporting increases in Latino populations (Stowell et al., 2012).

There may be a relation between immigration, geographic distribution of Latinos, and localization of crime. For example, Texas has reported an increase in minority crime owing to the substantial population of Latinos in the state (Texas Association of Counties, 2017). The Texas Demographic Center (2018) said that the main issue of concern is that US border control agencies have silently adopted mixed policies towards

immigration. Chen (2016) said uncontrolled immigration increases crime rates, given that immigrants are underprivileged and therefore more likely to be engaged in criminal activity. Anderson and Lopez (2016) said proponents of illegal immigration propose that it is essential for the US economy to allow Latinos and other immigrants to be given citizenship, given that such persons are a source of cheap labor. However, Chen (2016) said the formation of sanctuary cities in states such as California where undocumented immigrants enjoy equal working rights have been cited as possible reasons for increased crimes. According to Chen (2016), police in sanctuary cities are prohibited from turning over undocumented immigrants who are arrested for local crimes, including violent crimes such as rape and murder, to federal authorities to be deported, in defiance of federal law mandating cooperation. Therefore, by allowing offenders to be integrated into communities, there is a high possibility of illegal immigrants committing crimes in those communities (Chen, 2016). Chen (2016) said most undocumented immigrants get involved in crime, and after imprisonment or deportation, they become a liability to the state. The cost of maintaining illegal immigrants is high given that the state government of Texas spent \$50 million on correctional facilities holding 30,000 illegal immigrants; such costs are unsustainable in the long run (Chen, 2016).

By contrast, a majority of African immigrants pursue legal means to enter the US. For instance, the population of Africans in the US has increased fourfold since the 1980s (Anderson & Lopez, 2016). The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (2019) said trends in documented and undocumented immigration are expected to be sustained over the long term, and eventually, it is forecasted that minority groups will dominate in the US. This

increase in minority populations in the country has resulted in a mixed effect on crime (Wortley, 2009). Wortley (2009) said chances of minority immigrants participating in crime and increasing crime rates are high. Moehling and Piehl (2009) said previous research on native-immigrant criminality was unreliable because it was compromised by aggression bias, such that predominant White scholars were biased against minority groups.

## **ED**

EDs are alleged risk factors that trigger criminal behavior among minorities in the US (Kaiser et al., 2017). Marston (2014) said other moderating factors such as poverty, parental education, educational qualifications, age, peer influences, and gender may explain or influence participation in criminal behavior. Marston said these factors had a distinct influence on the prevalence of ED in the population.

### **ED and Poverty**

According to Kaiser et al. (2017), family income inequalities, parental wellbeing, and parenting characteristics are sources of child behavioral problems. Walker et al. (2014) said the possibility of developing ED is exacerbated by persistent poverty. Walker et al. (2014) argued that persistent poverty is a common phenomenon in Latino households in Texas as well as Latino populations across the US. Racial minorities such as Latinos in the US consistently experience high poverty as defined in terms of annual income (Burton et al., 2017). Burton et al. (2017) said Asians and Whites experience stable economic status and this pattern was consistent for over 35 years before and after



the recognition of the Latino population as part of the US. Poverty levels among Latinos remained high since the 1970s, but declined in non-Latino populations.

As of 2015, one in five Latinos was categorized as poor, and poverty among racial minorities was not equally distributed across the country (Burton et al., 2017). For example, Southern states had a poverty rate of 28% compared to 20% in Midwest states and 22% in Western states (Burton et al., 2017). Distinct patterns in poverty prevalence were also observed in rural and urban areas. According to Orrenius and Zavodny (2011), Latinos were twice as likely to be poor compared to non-Latinos. Pronounced poverty among Latinos in the US can be traced back to the countries of origin for migrants (Burton et al., 2017). Vakis et al. (2015) said chronic poverty was a common occurrence in Latin America and therefore a potential factor for intergenerational transmission of poverty considering that over 54% of foreign-born unemployed persons in the US are Latinos (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Links between poverty and Latino immigrants was also corroborated by Orrenius and Zavodny (2011), who said that influx in Latino immigrants had contributed to endemic poverty and inequalities in southern states of America. According to Orrenius and Zavodny (2011), poverty in Caribbean and Latin America is characterized by lack of access to clean water, sanitation, electricity, basic services, mobile connectivity, and devices, among other markers for development. Similarly, Vakis et al. (2015) said, there is a significant link between poverty and a depressed state of mind, which in turn predicted poverty in adulthood. In particular, Vakis et al. (2015) said that a depressed state of mind was an impediment to upward economic status mobility.

Based on previous observations by Grugel and Riggiozzi (2012), it can be argued that intergenerational transmission of societal inequalities could have long-term effects on minorities, including Latinos in Texas. Quillian (2017) said, the observations of Grugel and Riggiozzi (2012) were informed by published literature on intergenerational transmission of poverty in poor neighborhoods across the US, which are predominantly inhabited by racial minorities like Latinos. Studies cited above show relationships between poverty prevalence among racial minorities as well as potential risks posed by ED. The link between poverty and ED has significant implications for policymakers in the criminal justice system. According to Vakis et al. (2015) 46 million people lived below the poverty line in the US in 2011. According to the US Census Bureau (2018), the population of poor people in the US declined by 12.3% to 39.7 million in 2017. However, the percentage drop remains insignificant considering that one in ten persons in the US were at risk of poverty-induced ED (Vakis et al., 2015). Risks of poverty-induced ED was even higher if a US citizen was of minority origin. As such, the main question is whether those challenges would persist even in adulthood. Available scholarly discourse does not affirm whether the emotional disturbances acquired during one's childhood would persist in adulthood. In the absence of clear-cut data, the researcher presumes that such differences would persist even in adulthood. The role of parenting characteristics on the poverty-induced emotional disturbances is critiqued in the next section.

### **Education Levels of Latinos and ED**

The higher levels of emotional disturbances among Latinos compared to native Whites in the US could potentially explain why the rates of pre-school enrolment is

significantly low in foreign-born Latino communities compared to non-Latinos in the US as indicated in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (Ansari, 2017). In particular, the limited rates of school enrolment among Latinos were linked to misconceptions regarding school enrolment, child factors, and language use where a majority of the Latinos spoke Spanish which made it hard for them to be integrated in the English dominated education system (Ansari, 2017). Similarly, Crisp (2010) argued that generally, the pronounced prevalence of poverty among Latinos in the US is not coincidental but a phenomenon influenced by historical macro, micro, and familial factors.

According to Hu and Ma (2010), other than historical perspectives and findings regarding Latino students, recent research focusing on Latino students' ability to succeed in college and thrive in the higher education environment has focused on several variables. One such variable is the impact that key institutional agents have on Latino students as observed by Hu and Ma (2010) and which according to Museus and Neville (2012) can make a positive impact on the success of Latinos in college education because it may help design and provide programs aligned to successful adaptation into the education system and mentoring. According to Museus and Neville (2012), mentoring and Spanish adaptation programs have a significant influence on the success Latino and Spanish allied students in the US education system.

Hu and Ma (2010) further noted that another variable affecting the minority and Spanish allied students' success in college is the student's cultural and familial support. According to Toews and Yazedjian (2007), familial support encompasses the educational

level of the student's parents, cultural support, and financial support provided by the parents. However, Palmer et al. (2011) observed that cultural support includes the integral peer network systems developed in high school and college. Calaff (2008) argued that support can be built by creating relationships with community leaders and partnering with other stakeholders outside the education system. Similarly, Hu and Ma (2010) noted that community leaders and able stakeholders from the financial system are integral in supporting students because they occasionally provide key scholarships to at-risk, vulnerable and marginalized students. Additionally, cultural enrichment can include students' academic backgrounds and self-determination from high school preparation courses, to high self-esteem translated in determination, along with a sense of belonging and high aspirations (Toews & Yazedjian, 2007).

According to Museus, Yi, and Saelua (2017), the level and intensity of familial support directly affects students from the minority community's graduation from college. Primarily, generational college experience plays a large role in whether Latinos enroll and graduate from college (Museus, Yi, & Saelua, 2017). For instance, Young et al. (2011) established that first-generation college students are more likely to drop out of college than non-first-generation students, and first-generation Latino college students had the lowest graduating percentages compared to Whites and Blacks. The comparison between first generation and non-first-generation college students found that parental involvement served as the best predictor of educational ambitions (Young et al., 2011). As such, Museus, Yi, and Saelua (2017) concluded that increased interest, having concern, and more support from parents toward their child's journey to attain a college

degree increases the chances of the student to succeed. Strayhorn (2010), in discussing minorities in college, felt that development of conversation about college as well as the expectation to graduate enhances motivation and aspiration to attain higher educational success regardless of SES. Parents are most responsible for the academic success of their child in higher education, not the institutions (Strayhorn, 2010).

Most college students who drop out of college do not do so because of failing in their course work, but due to stressful circumstances in their personal lives, uncertainty about college goals, economic difficulties, or inability to integrate into the college life may explain the phenomenon (Kiser & Price, 2008). The same authors highlighted parental educational objectives for their child as contributing factors. When clearly and often communicated, these objectives enhanced the likelihood the students would graduate from college. In a derivative study of Kiser and Price's aforementioned research, Clark et al. (2013) reported that in poor minority Latino communities, the Latino patriarchal norms impose unique demands and financial expectations not aligned with college enrollment. Oftentimes under those conditions, young male Latinos are steered away from college enrollment because of the family's demands for them to contribute financially to the household and, therefore, are pressured to enter the labor force (Clark et al., 2013).

Familial attachments promote meaningful and purposeful experiences in the consideration of college attainment (Jimenez-Silva, 2009). For instance, Museus et al. (2017) observed that, for most first-generation Latino students there is a link between going to a college where they often find unsupportive conditions and the fulfillment and

satisfaction of self-discovery. In other words, Latino students attend institutions with limited Latino culture and as a result they record poorer college persistence (Museus et al., 2017). As a result, Museus et al. (2017) observed that they remain in college until graduation without dropping out although they end up with average to low academic performance. Familial ties have the biggest impact on the success of Latino college students (Museus et al., 2017).

In the same view, Jimenez-Silva (2009) noted that at times, parents encourage the expansion of self-discovery through earned opportunities, providing their child the chance to distance themselves from their traditional Latino values and assimilate into the norms and customs of mainstream America. On other occasions, although parents recognize and encourage postsecondary education and attainment, their support preserves their customs and limits the student from completely adapting to the culture of the institution (Jimenez-Silva, 2009). Jimenez-Silva also provided an interesting look at how familial ties impacted a handful of siblings who had the same upbringing but encountered varied college experiences based on their individual circumstances (2009). The study established that drop-out rates and academic performance was poor among students who attended institutions with limited Latino cultures and Latino parents unable to afford college tuition for their children depended on their children's ability to earn college scholarships and grants (Jimenez-Silva, 2009).

Given their academic aptitude, many college students from minority communities in the US can attend higher educational institutions but are often challenged with working to support themselves and provide financial relief to their parents (Lei & South, 2016).

According to Jimenez-Silva (2009) the drive and motivation Latino students assume toward improving their standard of living through attaining a college degree enables Latino families to take pride in nurturing unity and promoting familial resiliency toward that goal. In other words, Lei and South (2016) observed that the students have a role in encouraging their families to support their academic endeavors. For first-generation college students, Latinos are making strides in staying enrolled despite difficult familial conditions (Lei & South, 2016).

The college adjustment period among freshmen and predictors of their success or failure are related to student persistence in relation to obtaining their community, cultural, social, and classroom support (Museus et al., 2017). The same authors argue that the relationships students build with school officials, community leaders, partners, and stakeholders are important to students' college success. For example, many young Latino students enrolled in high school do not think about college because of the dysfunctional conditions of their surroundings (Calaff, 2008). Certain neighborhoods around the United States are hindered and limited in offering educational opportunities for children. These neighborhoods are often plagued with high crime rates, infested with gang-related activity, and infused with prevalent drug problems (Calaff, 2008). Enriquez (2011) and Talbert (2012) proposed that a community approach to build and implement successful strategies for motivating students toward higher education is necessary because many children, despite their lack of community resources, already exhibit a strong desire to attend college, stay there, and graduate.

Outreach programs may be effective because they create a welcoming environment for Latino male students in educational settings (Clark et al., 2013). The same authors argued that type of outreach program found to be most beneficial to male Latino students consisted of group programs perpetuating positive cultural ties to the community surrounding the educational setting (Clark et al., 2013). In emphasizing the need for a community approach, Enriquez (2011) further contended that various institutions of learning such as public schools and state and community colleges need to enhance their communication with the community as a pathway for increasing enrollment into universities for all racial groups. Talbert (2012) and Clark et al. (2013) proposed that allowing educationists to act as brokers of information is crucial in guiding, steering and propelling students to not only enroll in colleges, but also persist to attain a college diploma.

Additionally, both Baker and Robnett (2012) and Young et al. (2011) suggested that social capital acts as an important indicator of Latinos' success toward obtaining a college degree. Similarly, Enriquez (2011) observed that often, support network systems created by Latino college-bound students supersede what the higher educational institutions provide. Strayhorn (2010) noted that persistence among undocumented Latino students bound for college or in a college setting involves social networking and adjustment to the lack of existing resources. Enriquez (2011) conveyed how undocumented Latino college students seek informational resources through their own contacts.



## **Mental Health and Immigration**

One of the growing global health concerns is the increasing rates of mental illnesses. According to Whiteford et al. (2015), developing strategies to mitigate mental health issues involves taking into account cultural issues within a region or nation, political, financial, education and treatment considerations related to mental health. Patel et al. (2015) argued that mental health initiatives seek to reduce cases of mental health across the globe through provision of helpful information while identifying healthcare needs to develop evidence-based interventions to mitigate the various needs of the disorders. According to available evidence, mental illness is a significant cause of burden for many people globally (Whiteford et al., 2015).

Patel et al. (2016) further established that at least 10% of the global population is affected by the numerous mental illness types which gives an estimate of more than 600 million individuals. A large percentage of people who commit suicide have been found to suffer from mental illnesses (Worden, 2018). Worden further established that suicide is the second leading cause of death amongst the youthful generation yearly (2018). While making reference to the World Health Organization reports between 1996 and 2014, Walker et al. (2015) argued that approximately 800,000 people commit suicide each year due to mental illness. The 2010 Global Burden of Disease established that chronic depression was the leading cause of disability as well as being the main contributor to suicide and heart disease (Walker et al., 2015). It has also been determined that almost 90% of patients diagnosed with anxiety and depression receive their treatment at primary

health care (Walker et al., 2015). The same authors argued that many more people do not seek treatment because they are not diagnosed (Walker et al., 2015).

### **Factors That Impact Mental Health**

Evidence suggests that while many individuals are affected by mental health globally, some nations are worse than others owing to the various reasons that include political, financial, culture and traditions (Nguï et al., 2010). Patel et al. (2016) observed that in some low-income countries such as those in South America, there is a low ratio of citizen population to health workers. Some nations have no mental health programs or policies or effective legislations to facilitate care and treatment which according to Patel et al. (2016) is attributed to high poverty that increases the burden of mental illness. Such countries allocate limited budget to mental health programs (Patel et al., 2016). While the ratio can be one per 100,000 persons in the poor nations, the number climbs to more than 500 in higher income nations (Patel et al., 2016). In addition, the budgetary allocation to mental health is an issue of concern as many nations allocate limited resources to this sector (Walker et al., 2015).

Immigration is one of the most significant factors that contribute to high prevalence of mental health problems (Rechel et al., 2013). As such, Walker et al. (2015) concluded that rates of mental illness differ from one migrant group to another, but the variance is not indicative of the levels in the country of origin. The frequency of particular types of health conditions, however, does indicate the course of the difficulty they experienced before migration, during, as well as after settlement (Rechel et al., 2013). The effects of the factors that inform the mental health status of migrants vary

with the severity of their occurrence and what they mean to particular individuals, families, and communities (Carswell et al., 2011).

It has been established that the health of migrants and refugees is superior to that of the host and sending countries' general population (Rechel et al., 2013). One of the reasons is the 'healthy immigrant effect,' which requires that an individual go through various filters before they achieve migrant status (Carswell et al., 2011). Rechel et al. (2013) argued that the mental well-being of the migrants tends to deteriorate to equal that of the residents in the host country. A recent analysis of data conducted in the United States revealed that there were lower rates of depression and other mental conditions among new immigrants, but these increased with time and matched the rates of the general population (Rechel et al., 2013). The analysis of Rechel et al. (2013) further found out that the rates for persons that arrived before age 12 and for the kids of migrants, the rates were similar to those of the general population in the host country.

According to Carswell et al. (2011) the migration process consists of three major transitions including a change of personal ties and rebuilding of the social relationships, the shift from one social and economic environment to another and the movement from one cultural set up to another. The trajectory of migration is, therefore, grouped into three phases each corresponding to the three processes including the phase before migration, during migration and after migration resettlement (Carswell et al., 2011). However, Kirmayer et al. (2011) noted that every one of the phases has particular risks and exposures associated with it. The pre-migration period is characterized by disruptions in the social and personal networks (Kirmayer et al., 2011). During the migration stage, the

immigrants usually experience extended anxiety concerning their citizenship status and other conditions that may render them exposed to violence (Kirmayer et al., 2011). However, Sandhu et al. (2013) noted that this is especially frightening for those migrants that seek asylum and refugees who have to live in deplorable conditions and detention centers which leave them hopeless and with a sense of helplessness. According to Sandhu et al. (2013), these conditions can either provoke or worsen stress, and depression among other psychotic illnesses.

Sandhu et al. (2013) further observed that resettlement brings optimism, which has an initial positive effect on well-being. However, mental problems may develop later when expectations and hopes are not achieved and when the immigrant families face unending hindrances to development in their new community due to exclusionary policies and discrimination (Rechel et al., 2013). According to Rechel et al. (2013), challenges like failing to have academic credentials recognized by the host jurisdiction compromise the ability for individuals to hold jobs that commensurate with their education levels. Sandhu et al. (2013) further observed that extensive research and analysis suggest that resettlement stress springs from strains in social and economic loss of status, discrimination, and exposure to hostility.

Another aspect of concern is that immigrants, especially the recent ones, are less likely to look for or be referred to mental health services compared to the general population, even when they display comparable levels of health problems (Bhugra et al., 2014). This phenomenon can be explained by cultural and structural challenges and the apprehensions that the health providers will not understand their problems because of

language and culture or due to fear of stigmatization (Siriwardhana & Stewart, 2013). As a result of cultural explanations of illnesses, mental health diseases are highly stigmatized in a majority of developing countries, and many patients shy from attributing symptoms to mental health illness (Siriwardhana & Stewart, 2013).

There is wide variation from research conducted on the mental health of teenage immigrants. While some studies from community samples and health providing facilities indicate that the adolescents are at a higher risk for disorders like depression, PTSD, conduct disorder and substance abuse, other research from larger samples and organizations shows that the rates are not any higher than that of youths born in the host country (Davydov et al., 2010). It has been observed that some immigrant youngsters do exceptionally well and even achieve better grades than the native-born children (Sandhu et al., 2013). According to Davydov et al. (2010) elevated levels of grief and depression are prevalent in many young refugees, who had to experience disruptions to educational and social development. Similarly, Sandhu et al. (2013) established that during migration, many young refugees lose the emotional, financial and material support from the relatives if they separate from their parents during immigration. In the last phase of post-migration, the youngsters are confronted with acculturative stress and poverty (Sandhu et al. 2013). Even after the adolescents are reunited with family, they still have to deal with discrimination, isolation, learn a new language, and racism among other challenges (Rechel et al., 2013). Sandhu et al. (2013) contended that as the youngsters acculturate, they may come into conflict with relatives, parents, and seniors.

Migrant women are impeded in accessing mental health facilities because of the many roles they play in their homes and at work (Rechel et al., 2013). According to Rechel et al. (2013), migrant women are at two times at risk for post-partum depression than native-born women. Most migrant women do not seek help for this depression because they lack knowledge about post-partum depression, an unwillingness to share the emotional problems, and fear of stigmatizing the family by disclosing mental health concerns (Kirmayer et al., 2011). Besides, migrant women fear losing their children to authorities and are reluctant to undertake treatment for psychosocial problems (Kirmayer et al., 2011). Research by Sandhu et al. (2013) established that refugee women with high levels of exposure to fighting suffer from PTSD that has not been clinically addressed. The same authors argue that psychologists and experts in this area advise that exploration into the history of rape and sexual abuse should be done with sensitivity and be guided by comfort and needs of the patient (Sandhu et al., 2013).

In first migration, the proportion of migrant elders to the general immigrant population is very minute and the seniors arrive later to join the family after it has settled (Kirmayer et al., 2011). Kirmayer et al. (2011) further established that elderly people are at higher risk to such challenges as unwelcome sexual advances, unemployment, and chronic diseases like asthma, diabetes, cancer among others. Also, they normally have less education, are widowed, divorced, lack social support and sometimes live alone, all of which contribute to higher risk of developing or aggravating mental health disorders (Kirmayer et al., 2011). Additionally, Siriwardhana & Stewart (2013) observed that in instances where senior immigrants are joining a settled family, issues they face include

learning a new language, which takes a lot of time because of their advanced age, being separated from extended family, familiar surroundings, and peers. They also experience reduced social support because of the lost natural family and community networks (Siriwardhana & Stewart, 2013). As a result, they have a high dependency in areas of language, mobility difficulties, reduced opportunities for work and productivity, and the loss of status as a respectable elder in the new cultural setup (Kirmayer et al., 2011).

### **Parenting Characteristics and Poverty-Induced ED**

Empirical studies in the US show considerable variations in parenting characteristics across different races (Valdez et al., 2014). For example, the parenting behaviors of Latino parents are moderated by their legal status in the US (Valdez et al., 2014). As expected, there is a higher prevalence of externalizing and internalizing behaviors among children whose parents were undocumented immigrants (Landale et al., 2015). A contrary trend was observed among children whose parents were either legal residents or naturalized residents who have a normal child development trajectory (Landale et al., 2015). The study outcomes reported by Landale and co-researchers are in line with a German study by Kaiser et al. (2017), which established the presence of externalizing challenges among children primarily triggered by negative parenting and poor parental emotional wellbeing.

Externalizing behavior as described by Kaiser et al. (2017) refers to the act of children showing the learned behaviors from their parents and people in the immediate surroundings. For instance, if children are brought up in set-ups where the parents have drug related problems or the children witness or experience domestic violence, they are

more likely to abuse drugs or show aggression and antisocial behaviors in their childhood and transfer these behaviors into adulthood (Kaiser et al., 2017). In addition, Kaiser et al. (2017) established that there was a link between lack of disposable income at the household level and negative parenting, which is considered valid due to the impact of economic hardships it has on emotional wellbeing (Kaiser et al., 2017). According to Calzada et al., (2015), Latino households experience numerous challenges and stressors in the process of adjusting and assimilating to the US culture. The adjustment stressors are further influenced by the area of residence especially the inner-city households and poverty. The findings by Calzada et al. (2015) and Valdez et al. (2014) are an indication that there was a link between parenting styles and poverty induced emotional disturbances among Latinos.

Moreover, cultural elements had a considerable influence. The observation was further validated by an empirical investigation of 1,462 Latino children in the first grade in Texas and Phoenix, Arizona (Valdez et al., 2014). The children in this study had either English or Spanish-dominant parents. The children were exposed to varying levels of parental involvement in academic, social activities, and emotional wellbeing (Valdez et al., 2014). However, parental depression impacted a child's social competencies by inhibiting parental involvement in a child's social development and emotional wellbeing (Valdez et al., 2014). The findings suggest that parental experiences had a domino effect on the emotional wellbeing of the child (Calzada et al., 2015).

Although Calzada et al. (2015) established a relationship between these variables, the researcher further established that parenting styles were not uniform among Latinos.



Research by Ayón, et al. (2015) demonstrated that at least four different parenting profiles were utilized by Latinos namely family parenting, disciplinarian parenting, moderate parenting, and child-centered parenting. The prevalence of one model of parenting over the other was moderated by the presence or absence of social support systems and acculturation and gender (Ayón et al., 2015). As a result, Ayón, et al. (2015) suggested that upcoming studies should help to explain why varying levels of disengagement, irritability, and hostility among parents with depression exist.

Ayón, et al. (2015) further postulated that depression could be asymptomatic and hence difficult to predict whether the negative parenting behaviors were attributed to depression. However, despite the limitations in the data, the observations made by Valdez et al. (2014) have significant implications for the current study. The authors used 56 percent of the parents of first-grade children who were residents of Texas which is the primary area of interest for this research (Valdez et al., 2014). Additionally, based on the research outcomes, it can be postulated that some of the emotional disturbances that triggered criminal behaviors and consequently incarceration among Latinos in Texas could be traced back to poor parenting and negative parenting (Valdez et al., 2014).

Based on Valdez et al. (2014) postulation, it is evident that emotional disturbances were possibly linked to violence and crime may be an intergenerational problem that could be addressed by psychologists, policymakers, educationists, and social workers (Valdez et al., 2014). The multi-stakeholder approach is vital from the researcher's perspective because depression is often asymptomatic, and challenges faced by Latinos might not be known to other races. In brief, studies by Landale et al. (2015), Calzada et

al. (2015), and Valdez et al. (2014) suggested that negative parenting styles increased the risk of emotional disturbances through externalization. The emotional and mental problems were most common in low-income neighborhoods occupied by racial minorities, including Latinos.

### **Youth Delinquency**

The high number of youth delinquency has been associated with numerous risks factors such as exposure to drugs, unstable family units and poverty (Cloward & Ohlin, 2013). Similarly, Nwalozie (2015) also noted that negative influence from the media with ease of accessing weapons contributes to the high number of young people engaging in criminal activities. Farrington and Loeber (2012) further recommended that community and juvenile youth services can develop programs which mentor vulnerable individuals. As Nwalozie (2015) indicated, recent research has focused on the development of subcultures in the middle-class and how it contributes to youth and adult offending. While there are marked differences between lower-class and middle-class delinquency, it is undeniable that joining gangs is a systematic process that affects teenagers from both classes (Nwalozie, 2015). Nwalozie further provided that the motivations for forming the subcultures are the same for both lower and middle-class; they both perceive it is an alternative approach for providing solutions to problems imposed by existing structures (2015).

Besides, such factors as individual, social and environmental conditions and how they interact with each other have a significant impact on the development of antisocial behavior on all children (Farrington & Loeber 2012). The general findings from the

literature are that, unlike the lower-class subcultures, middle-class antisocial behavior and joining of gangs is not associated with poverty, presence of guns, violence, and exposure to drugs (Cloward & Ohlin, 2013). Cloward and Ohlin (2013) further argued that for middle-class, offending is associated with keeping bad company, lack of family support, living in a transforming neighborhood, and stressful family conditions. Individuals that are highly committed to delinquent friends are likely to be swayed to the gang beliefs (Cloward & Ohlin, 2013). Indeed, the nature of gangs is that they have appealing social actions such as music, parties, drugs, and opportunities to socialize with opposite gender (Cloward & Ohlin, 2013).

The family is an essential component that can limit the development of antisocial behaviors (Pinquart, 2017). However, some parents could be too busy to support their children while others are too demanding and pushing their children to achieve certain grades in schools (Cloward & Ohlin, 2013). The resultant pressure could depress these children and lead to development of antisocial behavior, which increases risk for joining gangs (Cloward & Ohlin, 2013). Finally, transforming environments are enabling more interactions among youth from different classes (Cloward & Ohlin, 2013). Such interactions have increased exchange of behaviors between classes leading to transfer of cultures.

### **Social Discrimination and ED among Latinos**

Beyond poverty and parenting characteristics, centuries of discrimination of Latinos could predict emotional disturbances among Latinos (Gamboa, 2019). According to Gamboa (2019), this school of thought is supported by media reports, which suggest

that racism and not the inability to integrate and assimilate into the American culture is the main social challenge experienced by Latinos. In the same view, Stacey et al. (2011) observed that media reports are in line with the growing cases of hate crimes committed against Latinos, especially due to immigration. The growth in hate crimes coupled with the history of systematic marginalization suggests there could be a link between social discrimination and emotional disturbances among Latinos (Stacey et al., 2011).

In another study, Hassan (2019) observed that while some statistics showed that the hate crime has shown signs of reducing, actual reports from the FBI indicated that hate crimes towards Latinos hit a 16 year high in 2018. The increase dwarfed assault violence targeting Muslims and Arab-Americans (Hassan, 2019). However, the purported relationship can be challenged considering that nearly all racial minority groups were exposed to some form of racism (Gamboa, 2019). The episodes of racism did not always translate to emotional disturbances due to resilience.

### **Gaps in Literature**

A review of the current research in criminal justice literature identified the prevalence of the following gaps: First, the link between ED and crime in minority groups was underemphasized (Kim un& Kiesel, 2018). Moreover, earlier researchers had placed greater emphasis on the criminal behaviors of the Latinos without taking into account the root causes (Kim & Kiesel, 2018). No current data is available concerning the prevalence of ED among Latino adults. The available datasets published by Raley et al., (2015) and Bagalman and Cornell (2018) were not specific. Therefore, it is not possible to ascertain whether there were substantial variations in ED between racial majorities and

minorities in the US. Additionally, the lack of data limited the establishment of a relationship between crime and ED in criminal justice literature. However, historical research in psychology established emotional disturbance can play a role in criminality (Dawkins et al., 2016). The limitations of the secondary research helped to define the research methodology in the next chapter.

### **Summary**

The critical appraisal of the existing body of research affirmed that crime was more prevalent in Texas counties dominated by racial minorities (Kim & Kiesel, 2018). Such trends were not coincidental based on the ratio of Latinos in the criminal justice system (Kim & Kiesel, 2018). Diverse theories have been advanced in an attempt to explain criminality among racial minorities (Schmalleger, 2009). One school of thought posits that race should not be a predictor of criminal behavior under ideal social conditions (Moore, 2011). However, the current state of social conditions in the US has contributed to the systematic marginalization of Latinos in the criminal justice system (Wortley, 2009). Such forms of marginalization or racism can increase the chances of unfair trial and incarceration (Coker et al., 2014). Another school of thought argues that criminality among racial minorities is catalyzed by economic deprivation (Dawkins & Rodriguez, 2015). In particular, the FBI (2018) report and Stowell et al. (2012) indicated that criminal ideation is catalyzed by poverty. Historical data suggests that Latinos have been traditionally underprivileged, throughout the history of their immigration to the US (Kaiser et al., 2017). In brief, the mixed perspectives coupled with subjectivity and personal biases have impacted the scope of forensic psychology research. As such, this

research was intended to address these shortcomings through an empirical study in the state of Texas.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this interpretivist qualitative inquiry was to explore associations between ED among Latinos and crime in Texas. The study involved understanding factors that contribute to ED among Latinos and whether these factors can explain criminal behaviors of said population. The focus of this chapter is actions and tools used in designing and completing the study. Information detailed in Chapter 3 includes the research design, data collection and analysis methods, and issues of validity, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

*RQ1:* How does ED impact criminal behavior among Latinos living in Texas?

*RQ2:* What are the causes of ED among Latinos living in Texas?

*RQ3:* What are some of the factors that have enhanced high levels of crime among people of Latino origin?

### **Research Philosophy**

Research philosophies are essential in providing researchers with the necessary tools to help in designing studies that involve understanding phenomena. Research paradigms are therefore values and beliefs of research communities regarding occurrences that require examination. Positivism and interpretivism remain the two most broadly used philosophies.

This study involved using an interpretivist philosophy to explore relationships between ED and crime among Latinos living in Texas. Understanding a phenomenon is founded on interpreting subjective realities possessed by different individuals impacted by occurrences (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This explains why interpretivist researchers use social and discursive methods to capture perceptions and unique ideas of individuals. Thomas (2017) said qualitative methods and strategies are most suited for interpretivist philosophies. The choice of this philosophy is informed by research questions and objectives of the study. Understanding association between ED and incidence of crime is a highly subjective undertaking. This study involved collection and recording of emotions and perceptions that could be missed if a quantitative approach was used.

### **Research Approach.**

Inductive reasoning in research is critical as it allows following a bottom-up approach. In this case, I began by making general observations when the process of research began. Observations were used to make generalizations and conclusions about data. Creswell and Creswell (2017) said the inductive approach to research is critical in qualitative studies as it enables researchers to make meaning of the phenomenon they are investigating. Unlike in deductive studies, researchers are not required to formulate hypotheses and theories at the beginning of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Instead, observations and data are used to derive theories. The flexibility of the approach allows changing the study to meet expectations or mitigate challenging occurrences without losing the essence of the research design.



### **Research Strategy.**

An exploratory qualitative strategy was used for this research. The qualitative design enables researchers to explore unique perceptions of participants regarding a situation under inquiry (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The choice of the explorative qualitative strategy was essential for the current inquiry as it allowed for the use of available literature alongside primary data to enhance understanding of the impact of ED on crime rates among Latinos living in Texas. The goal of the study was not only to address this relationship, but also factors that contribute to ED and how these impacts the crime rates among Latinos. I did not anticipate achieving conclusive findings regarding ED and crime rates. Instead, my focus was to provide further evidence from available literature.

Exploratory designs are useful when investigating new challenges where there is limited research (Thomas, 2017). There has been insignificant research regarding the impact of ED on crime among Latinos. Many of the studies in this area involve factors that contribute to criminal behavior. This current study will form the basis for future studies involving the impact of ED on criminal behavior. This study therefore lays the foundation for future investigations.

### **Research Tradition.**

The study involved employing a grounded theory (GT) design to enable derivation of meanings and motivations that Latinos attach to ED and criminal behavior. The theory is critical in identifying concepts and building theories from qualitative data. Moreover, the GT was chosen since it allowed for exploration, establishment, and

explanation of why people adopt certain behaviors in different or similar situations. The GT was specifically suited for this research since emerging concepts of criminal behavior are grounded in experiences and stories of groups who deal with this population. The GT was therefore used to develop a model that helps explain risk factors for development of ED and criminal behavior. Another advantage of using this strategy was that it enabled inclusion of existing documents and literature as part of data analysis.

### **Role of the Researcher**

In this study, it was important to access feelings and thoughts of participants. One challenge with completing such an undertaking is risks involved with inquiring about personal and confidential information. It was important participants' confidentiality was protected. methods of safeguarding data were explained to the respondents. There was no relationship between me and participants, and thus bias was avoided during the data collection procedures. My main role as the researcher was as an observer-participant who asked probing questions to help achieve deeper insights into the topic. Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) provided approval to guarantee adherence to ethical requirements.

### **Methods**

#### **Population and Sampling Strategy.**

Purposive sampling was used because it allows recruitment of a sample with subjects who have comparable expertise and experience. The current study involved using psychologists and senior members within the criminal justice system working in Texas to respond to interview questions. The small sample size was sufficient in terms of

ensuring exhaustive data collection. The current study involved collecting data from six participants drawn from different professional backgrounds.

### **Instrumentation.**

There are numerous methods that researchers can adopt in terms of collection of qualitative data such as interviews, observations, and focus groups. King et al. (2018) said interviews are the most suitable technique for gathering qualitative data. In interviews, participants and the researcher exchange ideas that help improve discussions and understanding about a topic. Semi-structured interview questionnaires were used in the current study. The nature of these questions allowed probing and asking identical questions to all participants. Creswell and Poth (2016) said conducting individual interviews with participants provides extra nonverbal clues and ideas about perceptions and attitudes of respondents. For the current study, six questions were used with a semi-structured questionnaire (see Appendix A). Semi-structured interview questionnaires were developed after reviewing available literature.

### **Data Collection Procedures.**

Before data were collected, it was a requirement to obtain necessary approval from Walden's University IRB, as the study involved human subjects. Following suggestions from the IRB and obtaining approval (#09-29-20-0659014), potential respondents were contacted seeking their permission and possible availability to become part of the sample. The email content form included study objectives, purpose, and potential benefits. Potential respondents were informed of the requirement to sign the consent form before interviews were conducted. Interview questions were provided to

participants one week before actual interview dates. The goal of this was to ensure participants were sufficiently prepared to respond to questions during interviews (Chivanga & Monyai, 2021). Moreover, the strategy was essential to assure participants that questions included in the study did not undermine the essential aspects of their work. This allowed for calmness as participants responded to interview questions since they already reviewed requested information. However, to avoid possible bias in terms of participant responses, other essential supporting questions were developed to ensure that exhaustive information was collected.

During interviews, objectives of the study were clearly stated, which helped participants narrow their responses to answer interview questions. Before conducting interviews, each participant was given a consent form which they read and signed. To capture interviews, audio and phone recorders were used. Recordings were backed up with physical notes. Recordings were safely stored in a personal computer that is password-protected. All audio transcripts were confidentially transcribed to ensure privacy of respondents was not infringed.

### **Data Analysis.**

The study involved using thematic analysis to perform analysis of primary research findings. Clarke and Braun (2013) said thematic analysis is an essential tool that allows for identification of passages and texts that have common ideas and patterns. These common patterns enable researchers to put text into categories representing thematic ideas (Clarke & Braun, 2013). According to Clarke and Braun (2013), one of the main advantages of the thematic analysis approach is that it is a method and not

methodology, and therefore it is not founded on any specific theoretical framework. The method can be used with different philosophical and epistemological frameworks.

During the thematic analysis, six milestones were completed based on Braun and Clarke's model. The first step when doing thematic analysis is to familiarize oneself with the text in its entirety. All transcribed texts from interviews were read and reread at least twice to ensure ideas presented in each transcript were clearly interpreted. Secondly, initial codes were developed by systematically organizing text. This second step is crucial in reducing the amount of data to be analyzed into manageable chunks (Clarke & Braun, 2013). This involved using line-by-line coding to attach meanings to transcribed text. However, codes may undergo varied changes through remaining stages such as refinement, addition, and removal from initial codes. Main patterns representing significant connotations and meanings were identified from codes developed during the previous step. The next stage involved verification of whether information and themes are supported by text in interviews. Finally, information was checked to ensure the right volume of data was used and themes were verified before producing the final report.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness of collected data was achieved through ensuring credibility, transferability, conformity, and dependability (Chivanga & Monyai, 2021). The current study involved using purposive sampling, triangulation, and member-checking as strategies to achieve trustworthiness of the data. Triangulation is an essential tactic that was used to ensure that data were credible (Chivanga & Monyai, 2021). Consistent questioning of participants in addition to use of available literature are essential

triangulation strategies. Member checking was used in order to ensure credible information was collected. This strategy allowed all participants to conduct reviews regarding collected and transcribed data as well as final analysis (Chivanga & Monyai, 2021). Finally, participants were allowed an opportunity to review data to ensure they were accurate.

### **Ethical Considerations**

All research that involves participation of human subjects requires stringent application of ethical principles. In the current study, it was essential that maleficence, beneficence, justice, and autonomy be maintained. Participants' autonomy and privacy were upheld at all times via the use of pseudonyms. The study was not intended to harm any individual and was fair to all participants. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw their participation at a time of their choosing without having to provide any reasons for such actions. Respondents also signed informed consent forms to ensure their participation was voluntary and they did not gain any rewards or money.

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 justified the choice of an interpretive philosophy for research. The chapter shows that this is the most appropriate strategy as it enables the use of inductive reasoning and qualitative strategies when designing the study. Interviews were effective tool that enabled collection of qualitative data, allowing for a deeper understanding of the impact of ED on criminal behavior among Latinos in Texas. Data analysis was done via thematic analysis and findings were presented in a narrative format.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

This chapter includes an overview of research findings, demographics of participants, and themes which emerged from qualitative data. Further, trustworthiness was established as evidence is outlined in research. The purpose of this interpretivist qualitative inquiry was to explore the relationship between ED among Latinos and their probability in terms of participating in crime in Texas. As such, the main objectives were to explore the relationships between ED and crime among Latinos, understand the association between criminal activities and Latinos' racial origins, explore factors enhancing ED among Latinos living in Texas and how these factors contribute to participation in crime, and understand the criminal justice system's policies towards Latinos in Texas.

Interviews were used during data collection as the main data collection instruments. The purposive sampling approach was adopted with six key informant respondents with perceptions regarding ED, crime in Texas, the Latino community, and the legal and justice system. However, only five participants were available and interviewed, including two forensic psychologists, two lawyers, and one criminal investigator. Analysis of qualitative data was done via thematic analysis.

### **Research Setting**

Taking into consideration that the data collection process was undertaken during a pandemic, all necessary protocols and guidelines to minimize possibility of contracting the COVID-19 virus had to be adhered to. As noted, all interviews were recorded, and

confidentiality of respondents was protected. To avoid the risk of spreading or contracting the virus, online based video conferencing applications and platforms and phone calls were used to conduct interviews and subsequently recorded after asking permission from respondents. Settings of interviews were dependent on preferences of participants. Prior consultations were made with respondents before setting dates and time for interviews. Thus, respondents had the prerogative to choose where interviews would be conducted, either from their homes or offices. It was important to be in a quiet area where it was easier for myself and interviewees to engage without disruptions.

It was initially estimated that interviews would last for about an hour each. However, depending on explanations provided by interviewees and the speed of communication, lengths of time varied from one respondent to another. The minimum length was 40 minutes while the maximum was 80 minutes. It proved difficult gathering respondents to be part of the research. The fact that many people resorted to working from home made it difficult to access the target population in their offices. Several interviews were postponed due to scheduling conflicts, but over the course of 2 months, all respondents were successfully interviewed. Overall, four interviews were conducted through Skype, while one was done over the phone. There were significant differences between Skype and phone interviews in terms of how interviewees expressed themselves. The fact that phone interviews did not allow observations of nonverbal cues was a shortcoming. Interviews conducted over the phone took the shortest time possible.



### Participants' Demographics

The initial sample targeted was six respondents with different professions within the criminal justice system in Texas. Using purposive and snowball sampling, I established that targeted respondents had knowledge and experience regarding criminal acts and behaviors of Latinos in Texas. Finding respondents from this profession was paramount because they were aware of the effect of ED on criminals in Texas. One female and one male forensic psychologist was part of the research sample. It was necessary to involve two criminal lawyers in the study because criminal lawyers have extensive experiences with behavior of clients. A male and female criminal lawyer were recruited. Further, one criminal investigator was recruited as an interviewee in the study, which was deemed vital because this profession plays an integral role in criminal justice and law enforcement. Criminal investigators have in-depth knowledge and experience regarding the effect of ED on criminals. Respondents had to have practiced for over three years in Texas criminal justice system. Table 1 includes a summary of the demographics of the 5 respondents who were interviewed for this study.

**Table 1.**

*Participants' Demographics*

Participant Code	Role	Years in Position	Gender
FP1	Forensic Psychologist	4	Male
FP2	Forensic Psychologist	6	Female
CL1	Criminal Lawyer	6	Male
CL2	Criminal Lawyer	3	Female
CI	Criminal Investigator	7	Male

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Using semi-structured interviews, data collected in this study were qualitative. The total number of participants was five, with two females and three males. It was important to not include the race of participants. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), researchers must establish a good rapport with respondents prior to carrying out interviews. Having relationships with respondents, whether over the short or long term, provides opportunities to create a good environment to conduct interviews. As such, during interviews, participants were assured of their privacy, and in return, participants gave honest and appropriate responses to the interview questions.

Each participant was assured that the purpose of the study was academic, and therefore information would not be reused for other purposes. Additionally, a brief explanation was given to respondents regarding motivations involving exploring the topic prior to interviews. This was important to ensure that respondents felt comfortable being part of the sample, and this was vital in achieving conversation during interviews (Chivanga & Monyai, 2021). Interview questions were formulated earlier and provided to respondents in advance to prepare for interviews as scheduled. As noted, locations of interviews varied between respondents. The only location requirement was that it was quiet in order to facilitate interviews without disruptions.

Collection of data began after necessary approvals had been granted by Walden University IRB, including the consent form. The consent form was provided to participants in order for them to become part of the study. The consent form was sent via email and each respondent was supposed to reply saying yes or no. Considering interview

questions were developed in advance, times for interview sessions had not much variance. Before each interview was conducted, further permission was sought from respondents to record conversations. An Olympus digital recording device was used to record interviews. All respondents were asked the same set of questions. After the end of the interview, each participant was thanked for participating in the study and assured that the project was for academic purposes. At the same time, for those participants who expressed their willingness to receive a copy of the study results, requests were noted and participants were assured they would be provided with recordings. After each interview session, the recording device was stored in a safe place. Recordings were stored and will be destroyed after 5 years in accordance with established university policies and guidelines.

Plans were initially to conduct the study through face-to-face interviews. However, due to COVID-19, the plan was changed to phone or Skype interviews. Further, six participants were recruited, but only five respondents were available to be part of the study sample. Initially, the plan was to use purposive sampling to recruit respondents. However, the technique was not sufficient enough to recruit a sizeable number of respondents. As a result, snowball sampling was used because it allowed respondents to provide referrals to individuals who have similar characteristics to be participants in the study. As such, respondents who had shown interest and were confirmed to be part of the study identified other potential participants. This technique was effective in recruiting three respondents. During data collection, there were no particular or unexpected circumstances which were encountered. Considering some

respondents were at their home or offices, disruptions were expected. Also, it was expected that before interviews were conducted, some would be postponed for various reasons.

### **Data Analysis**

Interviews allowed for collection of qualitative data. Thus, the most appropriate method to analyze this type of data was thematic analysis. After all the five interviews had been conducted and recordings secured in a safe location, transcription was undertaken. Audio transcription is the process of having speech converted into written text from an audio file. To successfully complete this process, recordings were played multiple times and paused whenever necessary to ensure right words were transcribed. Further, upon finishing transcriptions, transcribed texts were sent to respondents for verification.

To familiarize with the data prior to analyses, the primary researcher was responsible for all the clerical work throughout the study including transcriptions and checking errors in transcribed information and data. Strategies were put in place to ensure accuracy of final transcriptions. In this case, only five respondents were involved, and six questions had been formulated. From the analyzed data, six main themes were identified with each theme supported by various sub-themes. The first theme was on reasons for Latinos high incarceration rates. The theme was supported by subthemes on poverty, economic and social inequalities, and unjust criminal system. The second theme was on discrimination against Latinos. This theme was supported by subthemes on discrimination as a reality for all Latinos, discrimination as a major cause of mental

health issues, engagement in drugs, and increase in school drop-outs. The third theme was on ED among Latinos. This theme was supported by subthemes on difficulties to determine levels of Latinos ED, and difficulties in determining the relationship between ED and mental health issues, stress, anxiety, and depression.

The fourth theme was on associations between criminal behavior and ED. This theme was supported by subthemes on ED contributes to criminal behaviors and the link between discrimination, ED, and criminal behaviors. The fifth theme was on the injustices in the criminal justice system and how they contributed to ED. This theme was supported by subthemes on whether the justice system is not well equipped to handle emotionally disturbed criminals and whether psychological services were sufficiently offered. The sixth theme was on emerging issues and mitigation of effects of crime associated with ED in Texas. This theme was supported by subthemes on establishment of community-based crime prevention activities, counselling centers, provision of technologies and Equipment, and elimination of discrimination.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

Present study findings will benefit Latino community members in terms of how they can best avoid engaging in criminal behaviors. The criminal justice system in Texas will also benefit from adopting strategies that can help deal with ED cases and invest in solutions for affected communities in the state. Other stakeholders in the justice system will understand the need to be supportive of Latinos and develop policies, laws, and strategies that are consistent and fair to all communities living in Texas while taking into ED. This research will contribute to available literature regarding the relationship

between ED and criminal behavior among Latinos in Texas. No major changes were made to plans and methods outlined in Chapter 3 to maintain and enhance credibility of the study. Dependability of the research can be affirmed via Walden University's qualitative dissertation checklist. The University's dissertation guidelines were critical in addressing required ethics when collecting data from human subjects. As described in Chapter 3, qualitative data were concise and clear. Results of the study were derived from interview transcripts only. Participants were given an opportunity to verify transcripts.

### **Research Findings**

Results of the study involve relationships between ED among Latinos and participation in crime in Texas. Results led to six identified themes.

#### **Reasons for High Incarceration Rates Among Latinos**

The first theme which emerged related to factors attributed to high incarceration rates among Latino community members in Texas. According to respondents, there were various factors and subthemes that led to high incarceration rates for Latinos in Texas including poverty, economic and social inequalities, and unjust criminal system. FP1 said: "The adverse social conditions that have been created through this concentrated disadvantage because of segregation have a major effect on Latinos rather than white incarcerations" FP2 said: "The economic and social inequalities experienced by, us, Latinos as a minority group lead to similar issues in many areas including barriers to education and economic opportunities." From the observations made by respondents FP1 and FP2, it emerges that high poverty levels among the members of this community can largely be attributed to the high incarceration rates. These responses also show that

segregation tendencies in this state of Texas against Latinos have been also a reason for the high rates of incarceration.

Conversely, other respondents blamed the criminal justice system for higher incarceration of Latinos in Texas. Respondent CL1 said,

Latinos' incarceration rates have also increased because more offenders from Latino origin are being sent to prison due to diverse criminal activities. For instance, the war on drugs is on the rise in Texas, and this has sent many Latinos to prison. Mandatory minimum and longer prison sentences have also contributed to the growing incarceration rate among Latinos in Texas.

In the same view, respondent CL2 said,

These prisoners are also kept in prison for long. Besides, police practices in Texas have contributed to the increasing number of Latinos in prison. Harsher laws in the state have also facilitated the mass incarceration of Latinos.

Additionally, respondent CI said,

I have reason to believe that the nature of police practices in this state contributes to the number of Latinos who are in prison. Among the critical factors which influence this trend are harsh laws which are adopted in the state of Texas as well as the fact that many Latinos are found with drug-related offences.

From the responses made by respondents CL1, CL2, and CI, it is evident that the injustice and unfair trials instigated by the criminal justice system in Texas was to blame for the high incarceration of Latinos in the state of Texas. However, respondent CL1 further was of the view that drug related laws have been the cause of many Latinos being sentenced

for long prison terms as well as the growth of private prisons. In a subsequent observation by respondent CL2 it emerged that mandatory minimum sentencing causes the high rates of incarceration among Latinos in Texas. CI was of the view the criminal justice system in Texas, especially the police, were as responsible for the many Latinos in prison. Additionally, the high poverty rates among the members of the community can also explain their engagement in criminal behaviors and hence incarceration.

### **Discrimination and Stereotypes Against Latinos**

From the responses provided by the respondents it emerged that race stereotypes and discrimination against Latinos in Texas regardless of whether they poor, educated or successful could easily trigger episodes of emotional disturbance. When asked to respond on whether they have experienced incidences where Latinos were being discriminated and to comment about overall impact of such discrimination or stereotyping if any, respondent FP1 said,

I have seen instances where Latinos are criticized just because they spoke in Spanish while in public and have been told to return to their country; generally, they experience unfair treatment or discrimination simply because they are Latinos. At the same time, Latinos with higher income and education still report discrimination... this discrimination has led Latinos to avoid calling police whenever they experience or see crime taking place because they believe that they can be arrested instead.

Similar to respondent FP1, respondent FP2 said that



Personally, I have been discriminated upon especially when handing in job applications and when being considered for promotions at work. I have also had some family members facing individual discriminations with whites making offensive comments about their ethnicity and have been unfairly stopped by the police... These acts of discrimination often have crucial consequences on their health as well.

From the respondent's answers, it emerged that there is substantial level of racial discrimination in different aspects of life against Latinos in Texas. Additionally, Latinos experience substantial level of racial stereotyping with regard to their language. As a result of the stereotyping and racial discrimination, Latinos are victimized in general making them less willing to report crimes or act against criminal activities. Further, since a majority of the Latinos fear being victimized by law enforcement agencies when they report crimes, the respondents observe that crime has become a common undertaking and a common practice of everyday life.

Similar to respondent FP1 and FP2, respondent CL1 said, *"I have witnessed racial slurs and offensive comments being made against Latinos. Some Latinos report unfair treatment when seeking jobs and at the working environment based on their cultural background."* Subsequently, respondent CL2 said that *"Some individuals have been losing their self-confidence. Others develop bitterness. Besides, some Latinos have withdrawn from their work. Discrimination has also been causing high school dropout among Latinos."* Observations made by respondents CL1 and CL2 on whether Latinos in Texas experience discrimination or are stereotyped resonate those made by respondents

FP1 and FP2. Although, arguments of CL1 and CL2 are more inclined to psychological effects of discrimination and stereotyping and how they impact on individual wellbeing. According to respondents CL1 and CL2, discrimination against Latinos is common at places of work and leads to episodes of anxiety, stress, and depression, which causes ED among Latino population. Prolonged episodes of ED make affected Latinos to lose self-confidence, lose their jobs, and be fragile to anger management challenges. Additionally, respondent CI shared that “.... *increased and open discrimination negatively affects Latinos....this contributes to drug intake and also avoid seeking justice as they believe the police also works against them.*”

Based on responses received from the respondents, it is worth noting that Latinos are exposed to racial discrimination and stereotypes which evoke episodes of anxiety, anger, stress, and depression. Additionally, discrimination and stereotyping impacts on Latinos' psychological well-being making them to lose hope in the criminal and justice systems in Texas making them more willing to take part in criminal acts as a way of retaliation.

### **ED Among Latinos**

From the observations made by the respondents it was not possible to establish the various levels of emotional disturbance that Latinos undergo in their lives. Although there were some justifications that emotional disturbance caused mental health issues, stress, anxiety, and depression. When asked to determine whether Latinos had higher levels of ED compared to other racial groupings in Texas and how ED influenced Latinos, respondent FP1 said, “*I don't think that Latinos have higher instances of ED*

*compared to other racial groupings because other minorities like African Americans also face the same discrimination which also leads to ED.”* Respondent FP2 explained that

Accumulation of discriminatory experiences leads to ED and such features may lead to variations in how Latinos react to discrimination as a whole. Furthermore, there is a normalization that whites are superior to the marginalized societies and this is also distressing because communities like Latinos will fail to feel protected by the government or the local police.

The responses by FP1 and FP2 show that it is not possible to determine whether Latinos have higher or lower levels of emotional disturbances compared to other ethnic groups such as the minority African Americans. However, the respondent noted that distress arising from the discrimination often leads Latinos to view themselves as less than they are and that all they can be is the lowest society in Texas by engaging in petty crime and other criminal activities. Continuous racial inequities often lead to racial stigma and stereotypes which reinforce the cycle of racism. Interpersonal racial discrimination usually increases the risk of offending among Latinos because of the emotional disturbance that is caused.

Conversely respondent CL1 said,

The critical factors that increase the development of emotional disturbance include poor diet and nutrition and family-related issues. Emotional disturbance was also associated with stress, anxiety, and depression among individuals in the Latino racial group. Disabilities, brain damage, and hereditary factors are also

causing emotional disturbance among Latinos. This is also caused by poor relationships and interactions, attitudes, and parenting.

Similarly, respondent CL2 said,

The level of injurious behaviors, short attention span, levels fear and anxiety, as well as poor coping skills among others can be measured across the races in Texas, thus showing if the emotional disturbance is higher among Latinos or not.....there are different critical factors that promote the development of emotional disturbances among Latinos, such as stress and depression. Besides, brain and behavioral disorders are also major causes of emotional disturbance.

From the arguments of respondents CL1 and CL2, impulsiveness, aggression, social withdrawal, immaturity, and learning difficulties can be examined among all racial groupings as factors to determine the level of ED. However, respondent CI explained that *“Determining if Latinos have high instances of ED compared to other races in Texas is a difficult task for me... However, Latinos just like other races have instances of ED and I can say it originates from poor background and the lack of equal opportunities.”*

From the responses it was worth noting that ED caused by mental health issues, stress, anxiety, and depression among the Latinos although it is not possible to determine whether there are variations in the levels of emotional disturbances experienced by Latinos from other racial groupings in Texas. A different approach that involves inclusion of other racial groupings in the study sample may help determine the different levels of emotional disturbance among Latinos in Texas. However, it is evident that ED is common among Latinos and is commonly associated with stress, anxiety, and depression.

### **Association of Criminal Behavior and ED**

The study findings suggest that there is an association between criminal behavior and ED. When asked to describe existing relationships between ED and criminal tendencies based on personal experiences with Latinos, respondents pointed out that ED contributed to criminal behaviors, and there exists a link between discrimination, ED, and criminal behaviors. Respondent FP1 said that

Discrimination usually influences the routine situations and life chances of Latinos' daily lives. Emotional disturbances often increase triggers for violence that eventually lead to criminal behavior... People only obey the law if they believe it assists them and is legitimate based on fair treatment. Many of the Latinos that were incarcerated felt like the system wronged them.

Similarly, respondent FP2 said, *“Hostile attribution biases can be found in emotionally disturbed Latino individuals which shows that discrimination is a stressful, antagonistic experience that often impacts the increased risk of engaging in criminal activities or offences.”* Additionally, respondent CL1 said,

Emotional disturbances among Latinos have been shaping their criminal behaviors in Texas. For instance, most individuals with this behavioral problem abuse drugs and other substances ending up in criminal activities. These individuals develop defiant behaviors and actions because of low self-confidence and esteem.... emotionally disturbed Latinos may focus on crime as a way of managing poverty and poor family conditions.

Respondent CL2 said,

I truly agree that emotionally disturbed Latinos living in Texas are more likely to participate in criminal activities. Emotional disturbances are responsible for .... disruptions in behaviors, decisions, actions, and attitudes in different social situations and environment.

In the same view, respondent CI said that *“many Latinos are not in the right state of mind and hence their decisions are quick and not informed. They have also developed a bad attitude towards some races and this anger has seen them participate in criminal activities.”*

The responses show that ED has a greater impact and contribution to criminal behavior. As a result, criminal practices orchestrated by Latinos in Texas are shaped by ED. Latinos with histories of ED emerging from family inheritance of the condition are more likely to get involved in crime. There is a link between ED among Latinos to institutionalized discrimination and hence their engagement in criminal behavior. Moreover, respondents established a link between discrimination, ED and criminal behaviors.

### **Criminal Justice System Support Against ED**

The respondents were asked to state whether they believed the criminal justice system in Texas and across US was sufficiently equipped to determine effects of emotional disturbance and whether the system provided required psychological services to emotionally disturbed Latinos. Responses varied from one respondent to another.

Respondent FP1 stated that

the policies that are in place do not consider psychological factors like ED to cause crime. The system in my opinion is still not doing enough to curb emotional disturbances, but instead it focuses on incarceration and probation programs that do not really assist the individuals but rather continues to lead them to the same cycle of crime as a way of defiance.

In another response, respondent FP2 felt that individuals that are affected by social marginalization and oppression require professional recognition, competent and respectful service. Therefore, counseling services need to ignite positive social change which requires persistent efforts in order to enhance continuity. Social justice needs to be integrated in provision of psychological services with the aim of empowering individuals from diverse cultures and promoting their well-being. On the contrary, respondent CI insisted that the criminal justice system of Texas and US as a whole were unjust in their implementation of the anti-narcotic laws. According to respondent CI, the criminal justice system was subjective and only targeted the Latinos in Texas. Respondent CI questioned, *“Why would many jails and prisons across the United States have individuals incarcerated because of Marijuana offences while other states in the same country have legalized it? Why the selective justice?”* Similarly, respondent CL1 said that

What I have witnessed over the years, our government agencies and criminal justice organizations are highly focused on arresting and prosecuting criminals. Little is being done to examine how emotional disturbances lead to crimes and how this can be addressed or prevented.

However, respondent CL 2 explained that

The federal and state government has not laid the procedure, tools, and approaches to implement for measuring and determining how the causes of emotional disturbances eventually lead to criminal activities. Despite this, government at all levels have invested heavily on measures to manage criminal activities and prosecute offenders rather than having psychological services that address the causes of these crimes.

Responses show that the justice system is not well equipped to deal with emotionally disturbed criminals. As a result, psychological services are not sufficiently offered in the system. It is not therefore possible to measure and determine the impact of ED on crime using the criminal justice system. Additionally, government agencies have focused on educating communities on different mental disorders, and little has been done to address causes of ED. As such, government agencies both state and federal have done nothing significant to address issues of emotional disturbances in Texas.

### **Mitigation of Crimes Associated with ED in Texas**

The respondents were asked to give their views on what they thought can be done to mitigate ED and its effects amongst Latinos as a way of reducing crime. Respondents gave varied responses although major emphasis were on establishment of community-based crime prevention activities and counseling centers, provision of technology and equipment to law enforcement centers, and increased advocacy for reduction in discrimination and elimination of stereotypical positioning in the society. Respondent FP1 said, *“The crime effects cannot be fixed through ‘silver bullets’ or hopeful signs*



*which may lead to expectations of spontaneous decline in this issue without first implementing dramatic policy action.*” Similarly, respondent FP2 said that

It is wrong to argue that tough law enforcement helps curb the effects of crime. Instead, community-based crime prevention activities need to be established to find out how emotional disturbances can be dealt with early so that the marginalized community cannot continue engaging in crime as an act of defiance. Texas needs to invest more in strategies of crime prevention that will have long-term effects in reducing crime.

Respondent CL1 further said that

There are different approaches through which the state of Texas can develop and implement for preventing effects of crime associated with emotional disturbances in the community. The state needs to set up counseling centers in society and hire highly competent and experienced individuals. This will facilitate behavioral change.

Respondent CL 2 explained that

law enforcement officers in the state need to be educated about this condition for ensuring they adopt effective deterrence measures for preventing the effects of crime. The state of Texas needs to invest heavily on equipment and methods of measuring the impact of emotional disturbances on crimes. This will lead to the development of effective strategies for addressing this behavioral issue.

Counseling and restorative programs should be provided to individuals and

communities across the state. Besides, the state needs to educate and train individuals and communities at high risk of developing emotional disturbances.

However, respondent CI said that *“there is need to have a zero policy to discrimination and racial stereotyping in Texas.”*

From observations and opinions made by respondents, it is worth noting that it is wrong to argue that tough law enforcement helps curb effects of ED on crime. Instead, community-based crime prevention activities need to be established to find out how ED can be dealt with early so that Latinos cannot continue engaging in crime as an act of defiance. Texas needs to invest more in strategies of crime prevention that will have long-term effects in reducing crime. Additionally, there are different approaches through which the criminal justice system in Texas can develop and implement for preventing effects of crime associated with emotional disturbances in the community. There is also a need for introducing highly advanced and technology-supported systems for monitoring individuals with a criminal history and emotional disturbance conditions. More importantly, it emerges from the respondents that one of the things the state of Texas should do is putting measures to eliminate discrimination against some members of the society. State and federal agencies in Texas should be in the forefront in eliminating historical injustices and not aid it as observed from the respondents' accounts. Professionals should be given an opportunity to draft programs that target communities that suffer much from emotional disturbances as proposed by the respondents.

### **Summary**

The study's findings establish that emotional disturbances negatively affect criminal behavior activities among Latinos living in Texas. There is a relationship between emotional disturbance and criminal behavior among Latinos. The findings also establish that poverty, stereotyping, and discriminatory acts are the triggers for the development of emotional disturbance among the Latinos in Texas. Finally, factors that enhance high levels of crime among Latinos in Texas are linked to emotional disturbances.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore whether there is an association between ED among Latinos living in Texas and crime. A literature review involving the relationship between ED and involvement in crime among Latinos showed that there were gaps in existing literature, especially in psychology, on this relationship that needed addressing. Secondly, the present study involved looking at root causes of criminal behaviors prevalent among Latinos in Texas. Present study objectives involved exploring relationships between ED and crime as well as associations between crime and Latinos' racial origin, factors that enhance ED among Latinos, how these factors contribute to the levels of crime, and criminal justice policies towards minority communities in Texas.

### **Summary of Findings**

This study identified six key themes from the literature review. As such, the study's findings were summarized according to the six themes as ordered in Chapter 4. The study established that high levels of poverty, segregation tendencies, economic and social inequalities, and the presence of an unjust criminal justice system were major factors leading to increased incarceration rates of Latinos in Texas. Discrimination and racial stereotyping against Latinos in Texas was also a significant issue. Discriminated Latinos lose their self-esteem at workplaces, leading to psychological effects characterized by episodes of anxiety, stress, depression, and other mental health issues, making victims vulnerable to engage in drugs, drop out of school, and eventually be

involved in crime. Additionally, it emerged that stereotypes against Latinos make them susceptible to criminal activities; hence, even when they witness a crime, they take no action against it for fear of being victimized.

It is difficult to determine levels of ED among Latinos although ED was a major cause of mental health issues, stress, anxiety, and depression among Latinos. The study established ED largely contributed to criminal behaviors among Latinos, and there was a strong link between discrimination, ED, and criminal behavior. It was also established that the justice system is not well-equipped and psychological services are not sufficiently offered to emotionally disturbed Latinos, making them lack understanding regarding how to avoid engaging in criminal activities. Finally, this study established that there was a need for establishment of community-based crime prevention activities and counseling centers, empowerment of the criminal justice system via supply of technologies and equipment, and establishment of zero tolerance policies involving discrimination and racial stereotyping in Texas.

### **Discussion**

According to respondents, discrimination, stereotypes, poverty, and racial profiling are among the significant factors that contribute to the development of ED among the Latino community in Texas. Similar to Jeung (2020) the current study established that compared to Whites, immigrants such as Latinos living in Texas are poor and subjected to discrimination. They are exposed to an unfair criminal justice system that is structured more to punish them rather than solve underlying problems, and this causes many members of this community to engage in criminal behaviors whose outcome

is incarceration. Further, similar to Light et al. (2020), respondents in the current study noted that Spanish speaking Latinos are discriminated against and often told to return to their country compared to other Latino communities.

Due to increased discrimination against Latinos, participants believed many avoid engaging the police when they see or experience crime because there is a likelihood of being arrested. Further, Latinos are discriminated against in the workplace in terms of not being considered for promotions as well as jobs. Additionally, participants suggested that police officers discriminate against Latinos by unfairly stopping them in traffic or suspecting them of having drugs. The consequences of these acts of discrimination, according to interviewees, affect victims' mental health and lead to increased poverty because of lack of opportunities and financial resources to educate their children. This becomes a vicious cycle for Latinos living in Texas. Discrimination leads to Latinos leaving their toxic workplaces, engaging in drugs, losing their self-confidence and self-esteem, resulting in criminal behaviors and higher incarceration rates. Gamboa (2019) said racism is the primary social challenge experienced by Latinos. Stacey et al. (2011) said the growth of hate crimes against Latinos is because of immigration issues.

Secondly, respondents revealed that there are high cases of incarceration among members of the Latino community due to factors such as high levels of poverty, economic and social inequalities creating barriers to education and economic opportunities, drug issues and drug-related laws involving mandatory minimum and longer prison sentences, unfair police practices towards Latino community members, segregation tendencies, and the unfavorable criminal justice system in Texas. Factors

which expose young people to crime include drugs, poverty, and unstable family backgrounds. Mainly, the criminal justice system is organized around incarceration and probation programs, which have proved not to be useful in solving the problem of engaging in crime among Texas Latinos. According to participants, ED among Latinos is caused by social oppression, discrimination, and marginalization, and the criminal justice system should recognize that only professional recognition can help solve it. Thus, there is a need to have social justice integrated into psychological counseling services as part of Texas' justice system.

There is a link between ED and vulnerability to engage in criminal activities. Based on this study's findings, Latinos experience high poverty levels and discrimination in Texas, which are major contributors to ED and increased participation in crime (Calzada et al, 2015; Valdez et al., 2014). Latinos feel that both federal and state governments as well as police have failed to provide them with a fair and equitable society to live and earn a living. In determining level of ED among racial groups, impulsiveness, aggression, social withdrawal, immaturity, and learning difficulties should be considered. Participants confirmed Latinos' ED has links to stress, anxiety, depression, disabilities, brain damage, and hereditary factors. At the same time, ED is caused by poor relationships and interactions, attitudes, and parenting. Study findings failed to emphasize the relationship between parenting and ED and crime engagement. Kaiser et al. (2017) said hostile parenting and poor parental emotional wellbeing led to externalized challenges among children. There is a link between parenting styles and poverty-induced ED among Latinos (Calzada et al., 2015; Valdez et al., 2014). The

narratives from the present study did not indicate there is a link between parenting styles and ED. Negative parenting styles increase the risk of ED via externalization (Calzada et al, 2015; Landale et al., 2015; Valdez et al, 2014). Thus, it would be difficult to postulate from this study, considering it was not addressed during interviews, that poor parenting can be linked to Latinos' ED which triggers criminal behaviors and consequently incarceration in Texas. Therefore, this study cannot authoritatively make a conclusion about the relationship between parenting styles and ED, as participants did not address it. It was established that discrimination against Latinos plays a role in reducing opportunities to access education because of high poverty levels. Ansari (2017) said there are low rates of preschool enrolment among Latinos compared to other races in the U.S.

Kiser and Price (2008) said dropping out of college for many Latinos is influenced by stressful circumstances, personal lives, uncertainty about college goals, and economic difficulties, rather than failing grades. The present research also established that Texas's criminal justice system is mainly unfair to Latinos, which concurs with the conclusion by Wortley (2009) that adult and juvenile Latinos in the US have a lower probability of being granted a fair trial because of the institutionalized discrimination. According to the interviewees, there is a widespread feeling among the incarcerated Latinos that Texas's criminal justice system is unfair to members of their community. The participants suggest that emotionally disturbed Latinos engage in criminal behaviors as an alternative to managing their poverty life and low self-confidence. It is noted from the responses that emotional disturbances are responsible for disruptions in behaviors, decisions, actions, and attitudes in different social situations and environments, which



explains engagement in drug-related activities and other criminal behaviors. The findings also conform to Hurwitz et al. (2015) analysis which revealed that more Latinos were incarcerated than Whites, and which attributed the incarceration rates to the biased criminal justice system.

Finally, as noted in the findings, one way to reduce and deal with emotional disturbances cases and reduce criminal behaviors is by establishing community mentorship programs (Farrington & Loeber, 2012). According to participants views, the state of Texas can set up counseling centers to facilitate behavioral change while adopting highly advanced and technology-supported systems to monitor individuals with crime history and emotional disturbance conditions. Law enforcement officers should also be educated on ED and its effects. Finally, state and federal agencies should develop strategies to help eliminate historical injustices and deal with acts of discrimination and not aid them.

#### Theoretical Interpretations

Theories used in describing relationships between ED and engaging in criminal behaviors were rational choice theory, traits theory and biological theory. According to Schmalleger, (2009) and Moore (2011), rational choice theory was established on beliefs that crime is a process of decision making where an offender has a logical and rational reasoning for weighing benefits and consequences of a criminal activity. Based on this research's findings, it is clear that involvement of Latinos in criminal behaviors in Texas is driven by emotional disturbances influenced by factors such as discrimination and poverty. The findings are in line with definitions of traits and biological theories, which

hold, mental and physical state of people lead to individuals committing illegal acts that are uncontrollable (Moore, 2011; Schmalleger, 2011).

This study established that engagement in crime is not a rational behavior where Latinos have to weigh between benefits and shortcomings of being part of a crime or acting towards preventing crime. This shows that the rational choice theory is overly simplistic with the cost to benefit concept which is believed to influence individuals when examining the incentives and the deterrents in a crime. As postulated by Schmalleger (2011), there are certain complexities involved during criminal decision making, in of which the offender flaws the cost to benefit perceptions leading to an elevated expected utility. As such Raine (2013) argues that increase in expected utility leads to an emotionally disturbed individual's reduction in the assessment of the cost and potential risks while increasing the optimistic perceptions towards a crime. By the fact that the study findings revealed that majority of those incarcerated especially in Texas are Latinos, strongly suggests that there is a significant contributing factor affecting the members of this community and not merely evaluating the cost and benefits of engaging in crime but Latinos have more optimistic perceptions towards engaging in crime.

The study findings have shown that that Latinos in Texas are faced with emotional disturbances that contribute to their high involvement rate in crime. This shows that the rational choice theory disregards the psychological and emotional factors that influence perceptions of costs and benefits. According to Akers (2013), moral costs such as conscience, social, and religious values are at times included in rational choice theory although they are already established in the trait theory as social background

factors affecting learning and identifying family and friends. As such, Moore (2011) argues that the rational choice perspectives ignore the emotional elements like guilt, shame, and the fact that offenders do not make rational choices. As established in the study findings, the justice system in Texas and the United States tends to believe that Latinos engage in crime to benefit and hence the reason the system unfairly treats them. However, the findings suggest that there is a link between emotional disturbances and criminal behavior. Based on this suggestion, Latinos in Texas lack the right mental and physical state, which is critical towards failing to be part of criminal activities. By failing to include factors such as guilt, shame, impulsiveness, and moral ambiguity as observed by the trait theory while explaining how people resonate and create family bonds, the rational choice theory portrays an incomplete view of crime.

The study has established from the findings that the idea that engaging in crime is a rational decision seems more outdated and lacks evidence. However, Raine (2013) argues that the biological theory goes beyond the differential reinforcements between costs and benefits. As such, the biological theory examines individual behavior based on cognitive receptors and inhibitors which are influenced differently depending on the preference of the individual (Raine, 2013). Similarly, Akers (2013) argues that criminal defiance is best interpreted through behavioral approaches of socialization found in the trait theory such as examining individual responses to rewards and punishments. As such, to strengthen the application of the rational choice theory in the context of Latinos involvement in crime, there is need to incorporate the behavioral responses that Latinos have towards the environment they live. This is then followed by an observation of the

offenders' cognitive processes with respect to the choices made, adaptations to crime, and their continuous learning experiences (Akers, 2013). Otherwise, even though the criminal justice system in Texas and the US may impose strict measures against criminal activities and incarcerate more Latinos who are engaged in Crime, the war against crime in will exemplify the effects of policy choices that do not focus on offenders with little or low prospects of negotiating any plea or bargain other than spending long time in prisons.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There were several limitations with the current research. Firstly, the study was limited to five participants and their views surrounding the idea of emotional disturbance in the Latino population of Texas. As such all the participants were drawn from the same larger metropolitan community of Texas and therefore may have overlapping ideas over the same issue. As such, other studies are required to draw comparison from a broader range of Latinos residing outside Texas yet in states with high crime rate and high incarceration to explore whether similar populations faced the same or different conditions as those of Latinos in Texas. Secondly, while conducting semi-structured interviews provides an opportunity for data saturation, a small sample fails to act as a representative of the population. Thus, the findings in this study cannot be generalized to other Latinos across the United States. The findings apply to or are limited to Latinos residing in the state of Texas. Thirdly, the research adopted a qualitative approach that relied on semi-structured interview schedules as the only data collection tool. Since no demographic data was obtained, it was impossible to ascertain whether the referred respondents had adequate experience and reliable information to inform the study. There

is need for future research to adopt an approach that incorporates respondents' demographics to avoid likelihood of misconceptions.

### **Implications and Recommendations for Further Research**

#### **Implications**

This study's findings have a potential social change impact, particularly for the Texas criminal justice system. The challenges facing Latinos, such as emotional disturbances, poverty, lack of job opportunities, and increased discrimination, which leads to criminal behavior, can be addressed to benefit members of this community. The results of this study direct to the need for social change, and the state government can broadly spearhead this through changes in the criminal justice system. The implications of this study are made through the recommendations made below.

#### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The current research was limited to a small sample size because qualitative methods were used. In the future, a quantitative study can be conducted as it allows the use of a large sample size, which means a collection of in-depth data. Additionally, the study relied on professionals who have had interaction with Latinos within the criminal justice system in Texas. Future research should incorporate the affected Latinos and who are victims of emotional disturbance or those who are victims in the criminal justice system to obtain data from the real victims and not perceptions from observers. Other research possibilities specifically include examining the relationship between parenting styles of Latinos and emotional disturbances and the gaps within the Texas criminal justice system viewed as discriminatory and unfair by Latinos.

## **Recommendations for Policy Implementation**

The present study findings have established a perceived relationship, as observed by professionals, between emotional disturbance among Latinos and engagement in criminal behaviors. Further, it was found that there is a widespread belief by incarcerated Latinos that the criminal justice system in Texas is unfair to them. Based on these and other findings, the below recommendations are suggested for consideration.

### ***Recommendation 1***

This study established that there is need for the criminal justice system in Texas engage professionals to build programs and policies that address emotional disturbance among minority groups within the state, including Latinos. It would be of greater importance to establish community programs that seek to improve the living standards of poor Latinos while ensuring they have equal opportunities to access education and job opportunities.

### ***Recommendation 2***

This study found that policy change regarding the current laws and policies responsible for high incarceration of many Latinos where some individuals serve more extended jail periods for offences that are not murder or related to murder may be changed. It is suggested that laws aimed at eliminating socio-economic challenges experienced by Latinos in contemporary age maybe reviewed to minimize the number of Latinos who get incarcerated for minor offences by the criminal justice system.

### ***Recommendation 3***

The study results have established mainly that discrimination is a significant problem in Texas, especially against Latinos. Discrimination has been linked to development of emotional disturbances, which subsequently led to violent and criminal behavior. As such, the state of Texas needs to establish adopt a zero policy to discrimination and racial stereotyping. Although, Texas laws prohibit discrimination, racial stereotyping, this study established that Latinos still experience discrimination in employment. Therefore, it is suggested that the state of Texas can amend the Texas Labor code Chapter 21 to include more stringent measures that will mitigate discrimination in employment against Latinos and other minority groups (Justice Policy Institute, 2018). Likewise, it is suggested that the state of Texas can establish community-based cohesive activities and counseling centers to help upcoming new White and old White communities interact with Latinos and break racial stereotyping of the minority communities to avoid resentment and further discrimination towards Latinos.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this interpretivist qualitative research included exploring relationships between ED and involvement in crime among Latinos in Texas. Existing literature indicates that Latinos in Texas face many challenges including racial discrimination, poverty, and high involvement in crime. Studies also show that there is a likelihood of ED influencing participation in criminal acts. However, other studies showed that the criminal justice system in Texas and US at large is to blame for high incarceration of Latino due to lack of fairness and being discriminatory towards Latinos.

An exploratory qualitative strategy was used for the current research. The study employed a GT tradition to enable derivation of meanings and motivations that Latinos attach to ED and criminal behavior. As such, purposive sampling was used in selection of research participants because it allowed for recruitment of a sample with subjects who have comparable expertise and experience in the area of study. Semi- structured interview questionnaires were used as main data collection instruments before thematic data analysis was undertaken to derive meanings from findings.

Six main themes were identified including, incarceration rates of Latinos in Texas, stereotyping and discrimination against Latinos in Texas, emotional disturbances among Latinos, association of criminal behavior and emotional disturbance among Latinos in Texas, criminal justice system's support against emotional disturbance, and mitigation measures for the effects of crime associated with emotional disturbance. This study's findings established that ED contributed to involvement in crime and development of criminal behavior among Latinos in Texas. There is a link between ED and criminal behavior among Latinos. The findings also establish that poverty, stereotyping, and discriminatory acts are main triggers of ED among Latinos in Texas.

Factors enhancing high involvement in crime among Latinos in Texas are linked to ED. As such, it is recommended that the state of Texas needs to establish of community-based crime prevention activities and counseling centers, empower its criminal justice system through supply of technologies and equipment for supporting emotionally disturbed criminals as well as its law enforcers, and establishment of a zero



policy to discrimination and racial stereotyping. Such acts will help mitigate acts of discrimination and racial stereotyping and eventually reduce ED episodes among Latinos.

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## Appendix A: Interview Guide

The purpose of this inquiry is to explore the impacts of emotional disturbance on criminal behavior among Latinos living in Texas. The following interview guide is open ended and the questions asked will be enhanced through probing during the actual interviews.

1. Evidence suggests that minorities and especially Latinos have higher rates of incarceration compared to the White majority. Reasons and factors could be diverse from state and from region to region. What do you think are the critical factors that influence the observed trends among Latinos in Texas?
2. One factor that was prominent during my review of literature is the association of negative stereotyping and systemic discrimination. In your professional capacity, have you experienced incidences where Latinos are discriminated against? What has been the overall impact of such discrimination?
3. Are you able to determine whether Latinos have higher instances of emotional disturbance compared to other racial groupings in Texas? What do you think are the critical factors that lead to the development of emotional disturbances in groups of the population?
4. There is growing evidence to suggest that emotional disturbance may be associated with the development of criminal behavior. Having worked with Latinos in Texas, what is your understanding of the possible relationship of emotionally disturbed Latinos and the development of criminal tendencies?



5. Do you believe that the criminal system in Texas and even in the country is sufficiently equipped to determine the impact of emotional disturbance on crime?  
Does the system provide psychological services such as counseling to communities at risk of developing emotional disturbances?
6. In your understanding, what do you think the Texas state should do to mitigate the effects of crime, especially those associated with emotional disturbances?