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Perspectives of Family Engagement in the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Program

Toni L. Mahaney Stubbs
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Education

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Toni L. Mahaney Stubbs

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Review Committee

Dr. Donna Brackin, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Patricia Anderson, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. Karen Hunt, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost

Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University

2021

Abstract

Perspectives of Family Engagement in the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Program

by

Toni L. Mahaney Stubbs

MA, Walden University, 2012

BS, Walden University, 2010

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2021

Abstract

The problem is that there is a significantly lower percentage of Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) families (2%) volunteering in Head Start (HS) programs where 75% of volunteers are former or current HS families. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how the local MSHS program incorporates family engagement through home and school experiences by examining how migrant family participants and teaching staff define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the local MSHS program are influenced by family engagement. The conceptual framework was culturally responsive teaching/practice. This qualitative case study involved examining how participants defined family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and the influence on families enrolled in the MSHS program. Data were collected by using the Mathematica Policy Research (MPR) interview tool. The MPR coding scheme tool was used to analyze data. Participants identified family engagement as working collaboratively to promote learning at home and school, consistently communicating through a culturally responsive lens, and culturally respectful relationships as motivating them to engage in the program and having a positive influence. Even though the problem of the significantly lower number of MSHS families volunteering compared to HS families was not evident in this program, the Office of HS Program Information Reports (PIR) continue to reflect this problem throughout the state. Implications for positive social change include increasing family engagement in early childhood programs serving diverse populations and increasing academic success by engaging in the program.

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and many friends who never failed in their love, support, and encouragement. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents, Kenneth J. Mahaney (late) and Marliese B. Mahaney, who always encouraged me to go for my dreams. Your support has always given me strength to continue, even during difficult times.

To my loving husband, Troy K. Stubbs Sr., for always supporting and encouraging me to pursue my goals. You have been with me through this journey every step of the way, always encouraging and supporting me. To our children, Ashley Eversole, Samantha Stubbs, Bonita Stubbs, and Troy Stubbs, Jr., I dedicate this dissertation to you as well for always understanding and never complaining when I had to put time and effort into my dissertation.

Without all of you beside me I could not have made this journey and achieved my goals. Your love, support, and encouragement mean the world to me and I will never forget all you have done for me to achieve my dreams.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The 2018 PIR created by the Office of Head Start (OHS) showed that more current and former Head Start (HS) families volunteer within their programs than do families in the Migrant and Seasonal HS (MSHS) programs. The problem is that this is significantly lower than HS programs where 75% of volunteers are former or current HS families (OHS & HS Enterprises, 2018). This lower percentage of MSHS family volunteers is a gap in practice. When families are engaged in their children's education through family engagement, there is an increase in school readiness for young children, higher academic success rates, and higher retention rates (Epstein, 2010; Gay, 2015; Smith, 2019).

I explored how the local MSHS program incorporates family engagement through home and school experiences by examining how migrant family participants and teaching staff define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement with the local program. Implications for positive social change from this research include improving school readiness, academic success, language development, increasing retention rates, increasing family engagement, and connecting migrant families to community resources. This chapter includes the background, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, conceptual framework, nature of the study, operational definitions, assumptions, scope of delimitations, limitations, and significance of this qualitative case study.

Background

In recent years, the southern United States (U.S.) has seen an increase in its migrant population and fluctuations in its agricultural industry. In 2019, Hispanics accounted for almost half the foreign-born labor force (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2020). In 2019, foreign-born individuals made up over 17% of the U.S. labor force, and this number continues to increase each year (BLS, 2020). A migrant farmworker is defined as an individual who leaves their permanent place of residence for the sole purpose of seeking seasonal agricultural employment (Migrant Clinicians Network [MCN], 2019). Migrant farmworkers can be both U.S. citizens and immigrants from other countries. An immigrant is defined as an individual who comes to live permanently in another country (MCN, 2019).

The MCN (2019) said “50,000 to 100,000 additional workers are given foreign certification through the Federal H2A program which brings temporary workers into the US for a specified amount of time, after which they return to their country of origin” (p. 1), while still others come into the country undocumented for seasonal work. The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS, 2017) said that the southern United States has the largest percentage of hired farmworkers. Migrant workers are predominantly Latino, principally Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Central Americans. Migration is linked to the demand for labor during economic growth, and typically these populations have limited education, speak limited English, and are foreign-born (Dominguez & Gould, 2019; Gonzalez, 2015).

A large influx of Hispanic migrant farm working families has been seen in the local area, the majority whose primary language is not English. Migrant families are often considered disadvantaged due to language barriers, immigration status, and transient lifestyles (Gonzalez, 2015; Pew Research, 2020). It can be difficult for school systems and early childhood programs to meet the needs of migrant families. Their transient lifestyle, culture, socioeconomic status, and language pose barriers that schools and programs must address (Artar, 2014; Moyce & Schnecker, 2018). Diversity within the migrant population also poses barriers for early childhood programs, with different language dialects and different cultural traditions.

This influx of diverse families across the educational landscape creates a specific challenge for programs like the MSHS when it comes to building partnerships with families. The NHSA (2019) said since 2017, diversity within communities they serve continues to increase. Due to the transient lifestyle of families, MSHS programs have unique challenges involving facilitating family engagement (MCN, 2019). This qualitative case study explored how migrant family participants and teaching staff defined family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement. For the purpose of this study, the term family engagement refers to the combination of strong partnerships between families, early childhood programs, and communities (HS Resource Center, 2020).

The migrant education program director in the local area, who also collaborates with the local MSHS program, advised that children from migrant families can often be

overlooked, and this is an issue they are continually working on throughout the education system (Director of Migrant Education, October 21, 2020). Migrant children are among the most vulnerable of populations, with approximately 33 million children living outside the country in which they were born (You et al., 2020). Frequent moves of migrant families disrupt school and healthcare needs, while educational disruptions create low academic achievement and frustration for children of migrant families (You et al., 2020). The migrant education program director said the biggest challenge is building relationships with migrant families, so they feel welcomed into early childhood programs and feel as if they have a voice in their child's education. The local migrant education program collaborates with MSHS in attempting to ensure that all migrant families and their children have access to early childhood programs.

The NHSA created the OHS National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE) to identify, educate, and distribute information to early childhood programs, families, and communities regarding best practices for strengthening partnerships that support the positive growth and development of young children. The NCPFCE links research to practice and collaborates with federal, state, and tribal partners to bring high-quality services to all children enrolled in HS programs. All HS programs from EHS to MSHS programs use the framework for family engagement created by the NCPFCE. The HS parent family and community engagement (PFCE) framework was developed using the NCPFCE framework and supports parent-child relationships in a way that values the culture and language of enrolled families (NCPFCE, 2020).

MSHS programs were established in 1968 by the NHSA to “provide safe, nurturing, and culturally rich environments to young children of migrant families” (U.S. Department of Health et al., 2019, p.3). Migrant families travel frequently for work and often live in poor living conditions, and they are one of the lowest-paid populations in the United States (Arcury et al., 2015; Boss, 2014; Gonzalez, 2015; Moyce & Schnecker, 2018). Due to lack of childcare, families are often forced to take their children to work with them, which puts their children at greater risk for environmental dangers (Boss, 2014). The local MSHS program director said the MSHS program operates during peak growing seasons, which can range generally from April through December of each year, and the program provides services through the summer as well for families. The long work hours of families can create challenges for MSHS programs involving staffing and engaging families regularly. MSHS programs have implemented principles designed by the NCPFCE to engage families enrolled.

The 2018 PIR created by the OHS showed that more current and former HS families volunteer within the program than MSHS programs. While both programs implement the framework for family engagement created by the NCPFCE, there remains a gap in practice and a need for exploration regarding why the percentage of MSHS volunteers is significantly lower than HS families, and what role family engagement plays in determining whether parents volunteer within the MSHS program. When programs engage families in their children’s education, they not only improve school readiness for young children, academic success, and language development; they can connect families to community resources and other families within the program. By

examining how the local MSHS program incorporated family engagement through both home and school experiences, I explored how migrant family participants and teaching staff define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement.

The research for this qualitative case study involves growing diversity within the U.S. as well as challenges faced by diverse populations in education, cultural responsive practices, global perceptions, the role of organizational structures and context, and family engagement initiatives in HS programs. Implications for positive social change from this research include improving school readiness, academic success, language development, increasing retention rates and family engagement within educational programs for children of migrant families, and connecting migrant families to community resources. This study is important in understanding how family engagement can influence families and classroom environments.

Problem Statement

The 2018 state-level PIR said that in MSHS programs, only 2% of volunteers are former or current MSHS families. The problem is that this is significantly lower than HS programs which reflect 75% of volunteers are former or current HS families (OHS, 2018). The lower percentage of MSHS families (2%) engaging in the program demonstrates a gap in practice and a need for exploration into why the percentage is lower for MSHS families and what role family engagement plays in determining whether parents volunteer within the MSHS program. Researchers have identified long-term

benefits to young children when families are engaged in their children's education. These benefits include higher academic success (passing grades), lower dropout rates, more parental involvement, maintaining young children's self-identities, and fostering cultural awareness in young children (Epstein, 2010; Gichuru et al., 2015; Halgunseth & Peterson, 2009; Kossek & Burke, 2014; LiBetti, 2019).

In this qualitative case study, I explored how the local MSHS program incorporates family engagement through home and school experiences by examining how migrant family participants and teaching staff define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement within the local program. According to Epstein (2010), the benefits of creating partnerships between schools, families, and communities include providing family support, parent education, connecting families with local resources, and assisting young children in achieving academic success with long-term benefits. Title 1 mandates address the need for increased family, school, and community partnerships in the form of requiring school-family partnerships in order to receive funding and requires HS initiatives on family engagement. To meet these Title 1 mandates, programs and schools must gain a better understanding of why families become engaged with programs and schools in their communities.

Locally, the director of migrant education also advised that the migrant population is often overlooked in terms of family engagement, and local educational programs like MSHS are always looking for more ways to engage migrant families within the local community. It is vital to the success of the MSHS program to determine why the MSHS

volunteer percentage is low since researchers have shown when families are engaged in early childhood education, there are many long-term benefits for both young children and their families (Epstein, 2010; Gay, 2015).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how the a local MSHS program in the southern part of the U.S. incorporates family engagement through home and school experiences by examining how migrant family participants and teaching staff define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement within the local program. The conceptual framework for this qualitative case study was culturally responsive teaching, also known as culturally responsive practice. According to Gay (2015), culturally responsive practice goes beyond just incorporating language and traditions into classrooms and programs, but also includes bridging the gap between home and school connections by incorporating families' cultures into young children's learning experiences and environment. Since in this qualitative case study I interviewed and observed migrant families and teaching staff at the local MSHS program and examined their experiences within the local program, an interpretivist or constructivist paradigm was used in this study. An interpretivist paradigm acknowledges the subjective world of human experience.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used:

RQ1: How do the teachers and families enrolled in the local MSHS program define or perceive family engagement?

RQ2: How do MSHS teachers and families enrolled in the local MSHS program perceive that parent-teacher/home-school relationships influence family engagement within the program?

RQ3: How do families whose children are enrolled in the local MSHS program perceive family engagement has influenced their families?

Conceptual Framework

Gay (2015) said disconnection between home, school, and community cultures of low-income students plays a significant negative role in student achievement and language skills. Gay (2015) stated that for programs to truly create cultural responsive environments, they must incorporate students' and families' cultural experiences by building home-school connections to facilitate learning experiences. Cultural experiences involve how families communicate with each other, ways they interact with each other, lifestyles, traditions, language, and learning styles (Gay, 2015).

By connecting experiences at home and school, educators can connect academic concepts and sociocultural realities (Gay, 2015). Giruchu et al. (2015) said culturally responsive practice goes beyond learning generalities of families served within a program, and educators must learn more about children's ethnic and cultural identities. When programs and educators use culturally responsive strategies, they build on students' strengths, give students and families a sense of belonging, and empower students and families during the learning process (Gay, 2015). Gay (2015) said culturally

responsive environments and teaching is validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory. Even within cultures, there is diversity and culturally responsive practice should connect home experiences of students to their learning experiences. Teachers can build stronger relationships with families they serve by using culturally responsive practices. Supportive, stable, and committed relationships have been found to reduce toxic stress and promote resilience in young children (Center on the Developing Child, 2015).

Culturally responsive practice is relevant to MSHS programs as its mission is to advocate for vulnerable populations and provide comprehensive services that empower young children and their families (NHSA, 2015). The MSHS program is supposed to incorporate and use the culture of the families they serve, connecting experiences at home with learning experiences at school through family engagement initiatives (OHS, 2013). Culturally responsive practice was chosen for this study and found to be best because it incorporates children and families' cultural experiences into learning experiences and environment, building a connection between home and school experiences, which is the foundation of HS programs' family engagement initiatives (NHSA, 2015).

In this proposed qualitative case study, I explored through research questions, in-depth interviews, and observations how the local MSHS program incorporates family engagement to connect home-school experiences by examining how migrant family participants and teaching staff define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS local program are influenced by family engagement. Interview questions for teachers and parents were

open-ended to allow them to describe how the program addresses cultural, social, and academic needs of enrolled children and families. The MPR interview tool was designed to examine the cultural needs of children enrolled in HS programs involving language barriers, incorporating materials from their culture within their classroom, and having available resources available in their native language. Observations were focused on the environment of the MSHS program as well as interactions between staff and parents during parent events as well as drop off and pick up of children as well as how cultural needs of families were met through family engagement. This conceptual framework allowed me to explore data involving home-school connections and examine the personal experiences of participants and the influence family engagement within the program had on participants.

Nature of the Study

This study is a qualitative case study in which I explored how the local MSHS program incorporates family engagement through home and school experiences by examining how migrant family participants and teaching staff define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement with the local program. Although case studies have their limitations by being difficult to replicate, they also have strengths and can provide in-depth descriptive portraits of a specific population or problem (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2015). Responses to interviews and surveys along with researcher observations and field notes allowed for the collection of more compelling

data than quantitative research and allowed me to identify subtleties and complexities that otherwise would be lost in quantitative data.

Case studies are “all-encompassing covering the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis” (Yin, 2013, p. 17). Case studies can also be time-consuming and labor-intensive (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2013). The researcher’s presence during data collection can impact participants’ responses data collected can also be difficult to categorize and code (Yin, 2013). Data were collected from family as well as teaching staff participants through in-depth interviews and observations and were analyzed using the MPR coding tool. The MPR tool was used to ensure consistent coding of interview data. Coding schemes for both parent and teaching staff interviews were created using this tool. Descriptive coding methods involve identifying specific words, phrases, patterns of behavior, participants’ perceptions, and events. I specifically looked for details involving home-school connections incorporated into the program through family engagement and cultural experiences of families and staff within the program.

Operational Definitions

The following is a list of terms and definitions that were used throughout the study:

Cultural responsive practice: An approach in which young children’s unique cultural strengths, resources, and experiences are identified and nurtured to connect school and home learning experiences, also known as culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2015).

Culture: Beliefs, customs, and traditions which impact the way individuals think, socialize, and interact with others (Gay, 2015).

Family engagement: Building strong partnerships between families, early childhood programs (teachers), and communities (HS Resource Center, 2020).

Home language survey: Surveys completed by MSHS families during the beginning of the school year to identify the primary language spoken at home. These surveys are completed each year in every HS program, including Early HS, HS, and MSHS programs (HS Resource Center, 2020).

Immigrant: An individual who comes to live permanently in another country; immigrants may be documented or undocumented (MCN, 2019).

Migrant farm worker: An individual who leaves their permanent place of residence for the sole purpose of seeking seasonal agricultural employment (MCN, 2019). This includes both documented and undocumented migrants. Migrant farmworkers are also sometimes referred to as migrant agricultural workers (MCN, 2019).

Parent meetings: Meetings held monthly by HS programs in which parents, teachers, and administrators meet to discuss the program and upcoming events, and collaborate on decision-making and address any concerns involving the program or families (OHS, 2013).

Partnerships: Mutual communications between families, schools, and communities (NCPFCE, 2014).

Policy council: The governing body of the HS program that acts as the parents' voice in making major decisions for the program. It is made up of parents and guardians of currently enrolled children and representatives of the community to make up voting members (OHS, 2013). The policy council meets monthly with the program director to review, share input, and vote on matters such as personnel reports, financial reports, and changes in program policy (OHS, 2013).

Seasonal farmworker: Any individual who earned half of their income from farm work within the last 12 months (United States Department of Labor, 2018).

Assumptions

I assumed participants would be forthcoming and give complete descriptions of their experiences and perceptions when responding to interview questions.

Confidentiality and anonymity was preserved throughout the research, and participants could withdraw at any time. My preliminary inquiries with the community action agency that runs the local HS programs indicated that executive approval would be given after reviewing the proposal for this case study, and permission was given. I believed that culture plays a significant role in families' perceptions and behaviors regarding children's education. I also assumed that participants would feel comfortable enough to provide honest answers to interview questions. As the researcher, I made these assumptions, as the focus of this study required this specific population in order to conduct the study.

Scope and Delimitations

For this study, I chose to use culturally responsive teaching/practice because it involves addressing the impact of connecting home and school experiences in terms of

young children's learning, academic success, and parent involvement. Participants were parents of families enrolled in the local 2018 MSHS program and teachers from each of the classrooms, with parents being the primary focus. Only those migrant and seasonal families who have a child (ages 3 to 5) enrolled within the local MSHS program were invited. Teaching staff who have worked within the MSHS program for a minimum of 1 year were also invited. Children in the MSHS program are 3 to 5 years of age. Early HS children between the ages of 0 and 3 were excluded.

This study was limited in size due to the low enrollment rate of the local rural MSHS program. There were two teacher participants and a total of five families participating. In one family, both parents participated, making a total of six parent participants. The total number of participants for the study was eight, with both teaching staff and family participants. This study is not intended to be transferable data to the general population, but instead allows the reader to be able to transfer results to their specific program or situation. Although limited in size, results are useful for administrators and directors of MSHS programs and programs serving diverse populations. Findings demonstrate the role that culturally responsive practice has on families and their engagement with programs their children are enrolled in.

Limitations

Limitations of this study included the small population included in this study. Although the study was limited in size, results are useful for other programs, teachers, administrators, and directors of MSHS programs and early childhood programs who serve diverse populations. Another limitation was the possible language barrier, since

concepts can be lost or misunderstood even with good translation of materials. I am not fluent in Spanish. My inability to read research materials in Spanish was another limitation in the study. To address this limitation, I used the program's interpreter as a translator reviewer after a confidentiality agreement had been signed to ensure all materials, questionnaires, and interviews were translated correctly. Also, since I was not familiar with families, building trust with them was a limitation, which I overcame by interacting positively with them.

Migrant and seasonal workers also have very long work hours, preventing some families from participating in the study. Local immigration and deportation issues were also a limitation due to families feeling uneasy with being recorded or even participating in the study. To address these issues, I conducted interviews at a convenient time and location for the parents. Parents selected times and places for interviews that would meet their schedules. For those who did not want to be recorded due to feeling uneasy over the local deportation issues, I wrote down their answers and provided them with a transcript to verify. I assured all participants their identity would be kept confidential.

I have worked with migrant families through my local HS program in another state and understand the challenges migrant families face involving language barriers and transportation. I have seen how their transient lifestyle can impact their children's education. While I believe in the mission statement of the HS programs and have seen children and families benefit from the programs, I realize that not everyone's experiences may be the same. In analyzing the data, I focused on how the local MSHS program incorporated family engagement through home and school experiences, how migrant

family participants and teaching staff defined family engagement, the role family engagement had on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program were influenced by family engagement within the local program.

Significance

This qualitative case study can contribute to current literature regarding perspectives of families being served by early childhood programs who serve diverse populations. As studies on migrant and seasonal farmworkers are limited, it will also contribute to the gap in the literature on the migrant population as well as address a gap in practice regarding the lower percentage of MSHS family volunteers in MSHS programs. This qualitative case study involved using a sociocultural perspective to explore parental home-school connection, views of education programs, and the role of beliefs, identity, and life experience.

Family engagement has been shown to increase school readiness, academic success, and retention rates (Children Now, 2019; Halgunseth & Peterson, 2009; Kossek & Burke, 2014). Other benefits include maintaining children's self-identities and fostering cultural awareness in young children (Gichuru et al., 2015). Implications for positive social change from this research include improving school readiness, academic success, language development, increasing retention rates and family engagement within educational programs for children from migrant families, and connecting migrant families to community resources. This qualitative case study may also identify potentially unique challenges that early childhood programs may face when working with migrant families. Other early childhood programs serving diverse populations can use the results

from this qualitative case study to increase family engagement within their own programs. When programs have good family engagement, benefits can be seen in young children's learning outcomes, and this positively impacts families.

Summary

MSSH programs may be able to address unique challenges that early childhood programs face when working with migrant families by connecting them with community resources. When migrant families connect with community resources, it allows them to develop a sense of belonging within the community and can reduce stress for families (Mistry & Wadsworth, 2011). When migrant families have greater social connections, they have lower stress levels (Kossek & Burke, 2014). Researchers found childcare, education, and separation had a significant impact on migrant families (Kossek & Burke, 2014). When families' cultures are acknowledged and incorporated into their children's learning environment, it can reduce stress for families (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2015). Findings from this study demonstrated the importance of incorporating culturally responsive practices into early childhood and secondary programs. This qualitative case study provides valuable information not only for the local program but other programs serving diverse populations in terms of improving school readiness for young children, higher academic success rates, and higher retention rates.

In Chapter 2, the literature review conducted for this study includes research and peer-reviewed articles that discuss families and teachers' perceptions of family engagement, challenges that programs face in meeting the needs of diverse families, lifestyles of migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and their impact on young children and

academic success and how culturally responsive practice can build strong home-school connections. Chapter 2 includes the literature search strategy, conceptual framework, and a literature review of key concepts.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The 2018 PIR created by OHS showed that more current and former HS families volunteer within their programs than families in MSHS programs. The problem is that the percentage of MSHS (2%) is significantly lower than HS programs where 75% of volunteers are former or current HS families (OOHS, 2018). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how the local MSHS program incorporates family engagement through home and school experiences by examining how migrant family participants and teaching staff define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement within the local program. In MSHS programs, only 2% of volunteers are former or current MSHS families; this is significantly lower than HS programs where 75% of volunteers are former or current HS families (OHS, 2018). The lower percentage of MSHS families volunteering within the MSHS program than HS families in the HS program demonstrates a need for exploration regarding why the percentage is lower for MSHS families, and what role family engagement plays in determining whether parents volunteer within the program.

Researchers have identified long-term benefits to young children when families are engaged in their children's education. These benefits include higher academic success, lower dropout rates, increased parental involvement, maintaining young children's self-identities, and fostering cultural awareness in young children (Epstein, 2010; Fehrer & Tognozzi, 2018; Gichuru et al., 2015; Halgunseth & Peterson, 2009; Kossek & Burke, 2014; LiBetti, 2019). The conceptual framework for this qualitative

case study was culturally responsive teaching, also known as culturally responsive practice. According to Gay (2015), cultural responsive teaching/practice goes beyond just incorporating language and traditions into classrooms and programs, but also includes bridging the gap between home and school connections by incorporating families' cultures into young children's learning experiences and environment. The following literature review examines growing diversity within the U.S. and its impact on the early childhood field, as well as global perceptions, family engagement in HS programs, challenges to family engagement, culturally responsive practice, and the role of organizational structure and context.

Literature Search Strategy

Literature for this review was obtained through ERIC, ProQuest, SAGE Journals, and EBSCOHost using the Walden University Library. Reference lists were reviewed for potential additional resources. The terms searched in databases were *family engagement*, *early childhood*, *migrant and seasonal farmworkers*, *culturally responsive teaching/practice*, *culturally responsive environments*, *culturally responsive pedagogy*, *culturally responsive practice*, and *MSHS*.

Criteria for inclusion in this review involved the scholarly nature of the source, relevance, recency, and applicability to the study. The literature review is organized by themes found when reviewing literature. Themes identified include culturally responsive teaching/practice, diversity and challenges, global perceptions, family engagement in HS programs, role of organizational structure and context, and challenges to family engagement. Identified themes demonstrate the complexity of family engagement in HS,

culture, and the influence family engagement has on families, young children, and their communities. In working with the Walden Library, I located articles and research related to family engagement in diverse populations and HS, culturally responsive teaching/practice, challenges to serving diverse populations, and the role of organizational structure and context, as well as challenges to family engagement.

Conceptual Framework/Theoretical Foundation

Historically, cultural responsive practice, also known as culturally sensitive teaching, involves including accurate cultural content in classrooms and classroom materials (Gay, 2013). When classrooms use accurate cultural content within the classroom, they can counteract negative stereotypes that are portrayed within society. By using the experiences of students and their families to connect in-school learning with home experiences, students have more positive educational outcomes and feel connected to the program.

Culturally responsive practice is an equal education opportunity initiative that involves embracing cultural differences among ethnic groups and cultures and accepting them as a normal part of life (Gay, 2013). Culturally responsive practices are a continual and ongoing process (Cressey & Donahue-Keegan, 2019; Gay, 2013; Souoto-Manning & Mitchell, 2010). Culturally responsive practices have the potential to improve student achievement in many areas (reading, language, social-emotional development, etc.) for all students. When culture and learning are connected, it has positive outcomes for not only students but families as well (Epstein, 2010; Fehrer & Tognozzi, 2018; Gay, 2013; Ikegami & Agbenyega, 2014; Walker et al., 2011). Benefits include stronger parent-

teacher relationships, lower dropout rates, and increased academic success for young children (Epstein, 2010; Gay, 2013).

To successfully implement culturally responsive practice, the process of restructuring attitudes and beliefs must be the first step (Gay, 2013). Educators must analyze their potential biases and misconceptions involving diverse populations (Gay, 2013; Gichuru et al., 2015; Hollie, 2019). Hollie (2019) found that some diverse students may believe that schools do not care if they learn, they do not understand them or do not want them in school. Culturally responsive practice can be difficult to implement and some educators even question the validity of culturally responsive teaching (Gichuru et al., 2015). These are negative perceptions that must be overcome to address achievement gaps and inequality in education. Culturally responsive practice is founded on the principle that all cultures and diverse populations have strengths, resiliency, and resources that they can provide to assist teachers in education (Gay, 2013; Gay, 2015; Hollie, 2019). When teachers use culturally responsive practices, they can build connections with students and families to overcome these biases (Gay, 2013; Hollie, 2019).

When a student's culture is incorporated into the learning environment, there are many positive outcomes including increased academic success, increased language abilities, lower retention rates, and social-emotional development (Bennett et al., 2018; Boyce et al., 2010; Fehrer & Tognozzi, 2018; Zyngier, 2014). The foundation of culturally responsive teaching/practice is fostering relationships between children and teachers (Bennett et al., 2018). When educators create environments that reflect the

culture of children, it leads to meaningful connections between students' home experience and school experiences (Gunn et. al, 2020). While culturally responsive teaching/practice is complex, it is also consistently evolving, and it is essential that educators continue to learn and expand on culturally responsive teaching and practice.

Farinde-Wu et. al. (2017) found that culturally responsive teaching/practices challenges the academic disparities in urban schools and inspires students' strengths. Hockaday (2017) identified four components to creating a culturally responsive learning environment. These four components include assessing your biases as an educator and ensure you minimize the negative impact of those biases on students; to learn the cultural backgrounds of all students in the classroom; integrate effective instructional strategies; and to continually monitor and evaluate progress within the classroom. When educators acknowledge and embrace students' cultural and linguistic differences, they build on the strengths' students bring into the classroom (Farinde-Wu et al., 2017). These culturally responsive practices also build relationships between educators, schools, communities, and families (Farinde-Wu et al., 2017). Researchers found that culturally responsive practices are not effective unless educators and administrators embrace culturally responsive practices/teaching (Farinde-Wu et al., 2017). Hockaday (2017) advised that educators need to remember that "our own cultural norms are not absolute" (Hockaday, 2017, p.6). When educators understand and learn about the cultures of the students in our classrooms, they can help them achieve academic success and create a culturally responsive learning environment for all students.

DeMatthews et al. (2020) examined culturally responsive leadership in a Mexican American immigrant community. With the increasing number of Latino immigrants, a majority of who are Mexican American, there is a need for more culturally responsive leadership within school communities. Muniz and New America (2019) identified the need through their research of preparing educators to demonstrate culturally responsive teaching in order to reverse the underachievement gap of students of color and diverse learners. Culturally responsive teaching challenges educators to recognize the strengths their students and families bring into the classroom, as well as their own biases and how it impacts their teaching styles (Gay, 2015). The researchers found corrective reflection allowed the leaders they observed and interviewed to provide culturally responsive leadership (DeMatthews, et al., 2020).

Cultural differences are a part of life and the human experience. Just because individuals may be different, learn differently, interact with others differently, or speak differently does not mean one culture is better than another. Schools and educators must realize that not all children learn the same way and that there is not a one size fits all. By adapting to the learning styles and incorporating our students' cultures into the learning environment, we can begin to address the achievement gaps and inequalities in education by incorporating families' strengths and resources (Gay, 2013; Hollie, 2019). By understanding these differences educators and programs like MSHS can address the specific needs of the families they serve and can potentially increase family engagement within their programs. Researchers have shown that family engagement can also assist in academic success for young children (Epstein, 2010; Gay, 2015).

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variable

The population in the U.S. is growing in diversity every year. In the last population census, the U.S. Census Bureau (2018) identified the growing diverse population in the U.S., with the Hispanic population being the fastest-growing population. The U.S. Census Bureau report in 2018 also projected that the population of the U.S. will be more racially and ethnically diverse by the year 2060, with minorities making up 57 percent of the population. Bonner et al. (2017) identified the increased diversity of the U.S. since the 1900's with most immigrants coming from Mexico, Asia nations, Latin and Central America, and the islands of the Caribbean.

Some of these minorities will engage in migrant and seasonal work within the U.S. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm labor 2018 report identified the largest percentage of increases in hired farm labor occurred in the southern U.S. with the demographics showing 50 percent of farm laborers hired as Hispanic ethnicity (USDA, 2018). As our population grows in diversity it is important communities and educational programs can meet the needs of diverse populations. With the growing number of migrant and seasonal farmworkers, communities and educators must also know how to meet the needs of the young children from migrant and seasonal families.

The National Agricultural Work Survey (NAWS) is the only routinely documented survey conducted on farmworkers in the U.S.; since the survey is conducted randomly by demographic regions and only on workers at the time of the survey, the exact number of migrant and seasonal workers is not known (U.S. Department of Labor, 2018). It is estimated that there are approximately 2.5 million farmworkers in the U.S.

cultivating and harvesting crops, working on ranches, and with livestock (U.S. Department of Labor, 2018). The 2012 NAWS report estimated that approximately 48 percent of farmworkers are undocumented with 71 percent of farmworkers nationally being immigrants. As the survey is conducted randomly and in small numbers, estimates by State are not available. The NAWS (2012) report also estimated that of the percentage of farmworkers that 76 percent are of Hispanic ethnicity.

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers face many challenges for themselves and their families (Aikens et al., 2014; Artar, 2014; Moyce & Schenker, 2018). The Migrant Clinicians Network (MCN) and the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety collaborated to create the Protecting Children While Parents Work initiative to address the issue of safety for migrant and agricultural farmworker's children (Liebman et al., 2017). Risks for migrant and seasonal farmworkers include health and safety hazards on the job, lack of availability and accessibility to health care and educational services, language barriers, severe poverty, and cultural isolation (McLaurin & Liebman, 2012; Moyce & Schenker, 2018).

Migrant and agricultural farmworkers also face the challenge of obtaining childcare for their children while they are working long hours. The eligibility criteria of the MSHS program limits the number of spaces available for families to enroll their child. Parents reported scheduling challenges as a barrier once their child was enrolled due to their long work hours (Liebman et al., 2017). Many studies on migrant and seasonal farmworkers have overlooked the impact on young children (Kossek & Burke, 2014; Underwood & Killoran, 2012). Although not advised, many migrant farmworkers

take their younger children to work with them due to lack of childcare (Artar, 2014; Moyce & Schenker, 2018;). Some may even have their older children assist them in their work on farms, putting them at risk for the same environmental hazards that the adults face daily (Artar, 2014; Moyce & Schenker, 2018;).

There have been many studies conducted on the transient lifestyle of migrant workers and the impact of this transient lifestyle on migrant families, however, there has been very little research on young children (birth to age 6) of migrant workers (Artar, 2014). Moyce and Schenker (2018) reconfirmed the long hours, health hazards, working conditions, occupational exposures that migrant families face, as well as the growing number of migrant families within the U.S. Many migrant and seasonal workers are forced take their children to work with them due to lack of childcare. Artar's (2014) found that these young children shared the same environment as the adult migrant and seasonal workers and were exposed to the same toxins and environmental dangers. Artar (2014) along with Moyce and Schenker (2018) were able to identify the lack of research on young children (birth to age 6) of migrant families and illustrates the need for social policies and programs, like MSHS, that will improve the quality of life for these young children and their families. Migrant families face many barriers including language and cultural barriers, access to health care, documentation status, and even human trafficking of females (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) confirmed these hazards and identified 28.4 million foreign-born persons in the U.S. labor force which makes up 17.4 percent of the total workforce with Hispanics,

accounting for nearly half of the foreign-born labor force in 2019. This number is up by over four percent from the year 2000.

Many early childhood programs like MSHS have researched and examined policies and curriculum to bridge educational and community gaps for diverse families. The foundation of cultural responsive practice is incorporating young children's home experience into learning experiences and bridging the gap between home and school (Gay, 2015). The MSHS program not only attempts to bridge the gaps between home and school but also brings community members into the classrooms to connect migrant families with their local communities (Smith, 2019; OHS NCPFCE, 2013). Boyce et al. (2010) researched a MSHS program to determine if including language and literacy programs assisted in the language and literacy skills of young children from migrant families. Their findings indicate that programs like the Story Telling for Home Enrichment of Language and Literacy Skills (SHELLS) were beneficial to migrant families and their children. Boyce et al. (2010) found that families who received the SHELLS program in addition to HS services did have higher language and literacy skills and were more engaged with program teachers (Boyce et al., 2010). This study clearly showed an increase in academic skills for young children when their home and school environments related to shared experiences. Zyngier (2014) analyzed the Enhanced Learning Improvement in Networked Communities (E-LINCS) for his study focusing on school-community engagement with cultural, linguistic, and economically diverse (CLEd) communities to address social disadvantages.

Billings (2019) wrote about culturally responsive teaching and how it leads to equity within the classroom. She provided an overview of culturally responsive teaching in her article and the ways in which culturally responsive teaching can be incorporated within the school community. The primary goal of culturally responsive teaching is to address the achievement gaps between minority and white students (Billings, 2019, Gay 2015). Culturally responsive teaching moves the focus of the achievement gap from student failures to a failure of schools to meet the needs of students (Billings, 2019). Not only is culturally responsive teaching about understanding and learning about students' culture but just as important is for educators to identify how their own culture impacts their teaching style, methods, and beliefs (Billings, 2019). The E-LINCS program in Zyngier's (2014) study connected schools with the local community and University volunteers for an after-school program for elementary children. Zyngier (2014) found that family engagement was successful when all participants (teachers, staff, volunteers, students, and families) felt empowered. This study supports the HS mission which is to empower families and to connect families with local resources.

When MSHS programs adapted evidence-based curriculum, like the Classroom-based Approaches and Resources for Emotional and Social (CARES) skill promotion curriculum and the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum, it was found that the grantees experienced better communication between families and the programs (Fishman & Wille, 2014). Other benefits included increased family involvement within the program and allowed young children to relate their learning experiences to their home life (Fishman & Wille, 2014). The study conducted by

Fishman and Wille (2014) clearly shows that curriculum is not a ‘one size fits all’ and that culture plays an important role in children’s learning experiences. Park and Holloway (2017) also showed strong evidence regarding the effectiveness of school-based parental involvement and showed support for the federal and state-level legislation in support of school-based parental involvement. Growth was seen academically, and they were able to identify how the school-based involvement impacted that student’s academic growth, especially in lower socio-economic families.

These studies clearly showed a lack of research on diverse populations like the migrant and seasonal families especially in the 0-6 age range, illustrated the importance of acknowledging the culture and environments in which families live in, the importance of adapting curriculum for diverse populations, and gave insight into the lifestyle of migrant and seasonal workers. Researchers also identified that a connection between home and school learning experiences is linked to increased academic success for young children and that adaptations to curriculum that incorporate families’ cultures can be successful (Epstein, 2010; Gay, 2015; Gichuru et al., 2018; Halgunseth & Peterson, 2009; Kossek & Burke, 2014; LiBetti, 2019).

Family Engagement in HS Programs

From its inception in 1965 HS has included families in the learning experiences of young children enrolled in their programs through their family engagement within the programs (EHS, HS, and MSHS). The NHSA created the OHS NCPFCE to identify, educate, and distribute information to early childhood programs, families, and communities on best practices for strengthening partnerships that support the growth and

development of young children (OHS National Centers, 2013). In creating the HS Parent, Family, Community Engagement (PFCE) framework the NHSA partnered with programs, families, experts, and the NCPFCE. The PFCE framework is a researched-based change that demonstrates how programs can work across different agencies to build strong partnerships between families, schools, and communities.

Epstein (2010) has described family, school, and community partnerships as overlapping spheres. In her work Epstein (2010) describes six types of caring which included: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. These six types of caring have been incorporated into the HS Family Engagement initiative (OHS, 2013). Epstein (2010) also states that for partnerships to work they must be built on a foundation of trust and mutual respect. Throughout her studies, Epstein (2010) has found some important patterns relating to partnerships involving teachers, parents, and students. These patterns include partnerships declining as children get older; affluent communities having higher family engagement; schools in lower socioeconomic areas make more contact with parents regarding negative behaviors of children; and those single-parent households, parents who live in rural areas; and fathers are less involved on average (Epstein, 2010). The brief, *Leading by Exemplar* project, was a multi-year study that researched the practices of five ideal HS programs. Researchers explored the curriculum, assessment, and instruction, how the program met the needs of children, how the program ensured high-quality teaching, family engagement, and data utilization. They identified 27% of the children spoke a language

other than English at home, primarily Spanish. Family engagement was one of the primary aspects for closing the achievement gap for dual language learners.

For family engagement to be successful educators must be culturally sensitive and responsive to diverse family backgrounds and cultures and the impact family's culture and background have on the ways in which families become engaged within programs (Liang et al., 2020). Liang et.al (2020) found when educators have support from program/school administration educators can offer and provide effective parent/family education. Researchers also found that translating all materials for families was an essential component in breaking barriers to family engagement (Liang et al., 2020). Another way to promote family-engagement is through play (Liang et al., 2020). Liang et. al. (2020) believe it is important for educators to know that different cultures value play and child developmentally differently.

The HS programs have struggled with how to measure family engagement within programs. Aikens et al. (2014) conducted a pilot study initiated by the HS Family Voices (HSFV) to develop instruments to assist the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in obtaining a better understanding of family engagement in HS and EHS. The Office of Planning Research and Evaluation (OPRE) in the ACF contracted with MPR to develop, pilot test, and review the performance of the qualitative interview questions on family engagement experiences. MPR conducted a pilot test on the interview questions on 10 HS and EHS programs to identify potential flaws; interview questions were then revised. A coding pattern was also developed to assist in the coding of interviews and questionnaires. The interview questions MPR developed not only assisted the ACF in

developing tools for future use but also allowed them to gain a better understanding of families' perceptions on family engagement within the NHS programs. The questions that the HSFV developed explored staff and families' perceptions on how well the program met the cultural needs of their children, such as language barriers, incorporating materials from their culture within the classroom, and having resources available in their native language. The interview questions developed in this study can be utilized to examine other HS programs like the MSHS program. The researchers have already had the questions translated into Spanish, which could potentially be useful in this proposed study.

Many of the same barriers seen in the U.S. to engaging parents, academic achievement gaps, and retention rates, can also be seen in other countries around the world (Grace et al., 2014; Holdaway, 2018). Parental perceptions also play a role in children's education and how families engage programs globally (Grace et al., 2014; Smith, 2019). Grace et al., (2014) utilized a mixed-method study with an Ecocultural theoretical foundation to explore low enrollment in disadvantaged communities in Australia. In this study, the researchers explored families' perceptions on the quality of programs and cost. The researchers discovered that families were more likely to utilize services when families felt connected to programs, were assured of their children's safety, and when families were connected to other social services (Grace et al., 2014). Smith (2019) conducted an ethnographic case study that focused on three family members from a Mexican migrant household (a father, a grandmother, and a mother) to discuss the topic of education and their children and engagement in early childhood

programs offered to the farmworkers. Smith (2019) used a sociocultural perspective to explore parental home-school connections, views of educational programs, and the role of beliefs, identity, and life experience that impact early childhood education of their children. The study also addressed the gaps in the literature related to migrant farmworker families with young children in early childhood education programs. Smith (2019) found that when programs consider families' cultural values and child-rearing practices, they can provide better services to migrant and diverse populations.

Bartz et al. (2018) explored how family engagement enhanced children's school success and found programs that had effective family engagement had a greater potential for enhancing children's learning. Programs that have effective family engagement also had leadership as well as teachers that supported family engagement (Bartz et al., 2018). The research conducted by Hornby and Lafaele (2011) also demonstrates that parental involvement/family engagement is an important component and advantageous for children of all ages. These benefits include: improved relationships between parents and teachers, increased teacher morale and school climate, improved attendance ratings, attitudes, behaviors, and mental health of children, and increased parental confidence and satisfaction with their education (Hornby & Lafael, 2011). Researchers also identified culturally responsive teaching as a crucial element of programs with successful family engagement (Bartz et al., 2018). These studies were able to also reaffirm the advantages of early childhood education for children from disadvantaged families. These advantages included closing achievement gaps, academic success for young children, family resiliency, and connecting families to more community resources.

Barriers to enrollment were also identified and included cultural beliefs about parenting; distrust of government agencies by families; cultural differences between programs and families; trauma from death, immigration, or incarceration; parental intimidation of programs; and lack of information on available services (Grace et al., 2014). Other barriers included lack of services for disabled children, quality of programs, cost, transient lifestyles, and availability and accessibility of programs within the area (Grace et al., 2014). Their findings identified a need for programs and teachers to have a greater presence within the communities they serve so that families can engage with early childhood education and care services, and the need for programs to address cultural differences between programs and families. Hornby et al. (2011) identified and categorized barriers into parent and family factors, child factors, parent-teacher factors, and societal factors, each of which influences the others. They also identified that in the U.S. there has been a switch to facilitating family engagement within educational programs and schools as seen in the accreditation standards for teachers with the mandatory course requirements for teacher preparation to include the topic of family engagement (Hornby et al., 2011). The researchers also identified that cost is not as important as the quality of programs and parental perceptions of connectedness to programs (Grace et al., 2014).

Smith's meta-analysis (2019) examined the effectiveness of family-engagement on teacher-training programs on teacher family-engagement outcomes. The researcher explored teacher's practices, attitudes, and knowledge in relation to family engagement. Smith (2019) examined both pre-service and veteran educators. The researcher found

when teacher-training programs included key components of family engagement such as communication strategies, and cultural awareness/working with diverse populations were utilized, educators felt more confident when collaborating with families (Smith, 2019). Cultural and linguistic inconsistency compounds the challenges that Latino children and families face in educational programs. The multi-dimensional study on Latino families conducted by McWayne et al. (2013) utilized an emic approach to explore and understand family engagement for Latino families enrolled in HS. The researchers noted that family engagement not only bridges achievement gaps but can also have a long-term effect on parents. Parents who are engaged in their child's early education tend to continue to be engaged in primary and secondary schooling. The researchers also noted that while culture is acknowledged for its importance in education there is minimal knowledge to inform educational policies and practices and continued research is needed in this area (McWayne, et al., 2013).

McWayne et al. (2013) found that Latino parents tend to engage in more home activities than school activities. McWayne et al. (2013) contributed this finding to the cultural belief of Latino parents that they should not interfere or intrude on teachers. Latino parents also identified family engagement as being multidimensional to include not only school readiness skills but also life skills such as self-help skills, social skills, and encouraging education for their children (McWayne et al., 2013). These findings correlate with previous studies on family engagement. Researchers found that many Latino parents valued education as a way for their children to move out of poverty and to have more than they have (McWayne et al., 2013). These finding demonstrate the need

for programs and educators to reach out to these families at risk. Markowitz et al. (2020) found that when programs like HS match teacher-child racial/ethnicity family engagement is enhanced and even found that student absences decreased. Family engagement is a central component to HS programs due to the overwhelming evidence of the benefits for both children and families. Markowitz et al. (2020) provided an innovative exploration of the correlation between teacher-child racial/ethnic match and parental engagement in HS.

Smith's (2020) study on teacher perspectives on communication and parent engagement with migrant farmworker families examined the perspectives of teachers who share language and cultures with migrant families and of those who do not share the language and culture but who work with migrant families. Smith (2020) identified communication as a key theme and communication was found to be highly valued in HS programs (Smith, 2020). Participants of the study identified face-to-face communication as essential in building strong relationships and home-school connections with families. The findings from this qualitative case study confirmed other findings from other studies and indicate a need for further recommendations which can reinforce HS and MSHS programming relevant to linguistically diverse families (Smith, 2020). The studies on the perceptions of participants, staff, and teachers in early childhood programs identified areas in which programs could improve family engagement, thereby providing a better quality of services to the families they serve (Aikens et al., 2014). Research also identified that when children's cultures are incorporated into their learning experiences, like culturally responsive practice, it meets the needs of the whole child (Aikens et al.,

2014; Gay, 2015; Hollie, 2019). Hollie (2019) also identified that individuals (staff, families, and teachers) have different perceptions of what family engagement is and what it looks like in a program. Culturally responsive practice, for teachers, is a continual and progressive process and it is clear through the research studies that more research is needed in the area of how families perceive family engagement.

Role of Organizational Structures and Context

The organizational context is often overlooked in policy and research (Douglass, 2011). Doyle and Zhang's (2011) found that organizational structure had a significant impact on the parents' enrollment and completion of early intervention literacy programs. Douglass (2011) found in her research that relational bureaucratic theory has the potential to improve systems for high-quality relationship-based work and to assist in closing the gap between the family engagement initiatives and actual practice. In her research Douglass (2011) described the relational bureaucratic theory as one in which administrators and teachers support and model caring responsive relationships and demonstrate professionalism. The mission of HS programs is to connect with and empower the families they serve and utilizes a relational bureaucratic theory (OHS, 2013). Organizational structure can also play a role in retention rates, recruitment, and participation by participants. Doyle and Zhang (2011) researched the relationships between participation structure, recruitment, and retention of families.

The shift in educational policy to focus on family engagement or parental involvement within our educational system can be seen within legislation such as the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and most

recently in Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. These acts mandated that schools include parental involvement initiatives in school reforms to increase student achievement (Curry & Holter, 2015). Even with these reforms, consistency in the successful implementation of family engagement policies has not been seen in the U.S. (Park & Holloway, 2017). Hornby and Lafaele (2011) also identified a disconnect between policy and practice. Social scientists believe that changes in American society have led to the decline of parent involvement in education these changes include more parents in the workforce and a faster-paced lifestyle (Curry & Holter, 2015).

The benefits of family engagement in education have also been found to have long-term effects on families (Gay, 2015; Gichuru, 2018; Halgunseth & Peterson, 2009; Libetti, 2019). The research conducted by Comer and Ben-Avie (2010) on two Jewish programs (Jewish Early Childhood Education Initiative [JECEI] and Program Kavod) identifies that building relationships with families can provide long-term benefits not only for the programs and young children but for the families themselves. Comer and Ben-Avie (2010) found families in the JECEI program not only developed strong relationships with program and teachers but also built strong long-lasting relationships with other families within the program. Families in the JECEI program were able to share their traditions, Jewish-lifestyle, and beliefs with educators thereby becoming a part of the learning process. Educators were able to incorporate families and a Jewish tradition into the children's learning experiences. These concepts can be useful to other early childhood programs, especially those like the MSHS programs that serve diverse populations.

Within the last couple of decades, there has been a growing number of families with preschool-age children who speak a language other than English at home (OHS, 2020). These students are known as dual language learners. Dual language learners are more likely to be academically behind when entering kindergarten (Fehrer & Tognozzi, 2018, Tobin, 2020). Children from migrant families are most often dual language learners (Fehrer & Tognozzi, 2018, Tobin, 2020). The academic gap seen in Kindergarten can continue through high school (Fehrer & Tognozzi, 2018). When addressed in early childhood education programs educators can close this gap (Epstein, 2010; Gay, 2015). Culturally responsive practices when implemented throughout the program can have a positive impact on DLL students and families (Fehrer & Tognozzi, 2018). Programs must do more than just implement culturally and linguistically responsive practices in the classroom, it must be incorporated with family engagement and rooted in teacher preparation programs (Fehrer & Tognozzi, 2018). Warren (2018) explored the role of empathy and educators and their ability to incorporate culturally responsive practice in the classroom. Warren (2018) identified that for educators to be effective they must acquire orientations toward instruction, and relational interactions with youth, that produce evidence of culturally responsive pedagogy. For future educators to develop these orientations it must be modeled and incorporated into pre-service education (Warren, 2018).

These studies demonstrated a clear connection between cultural knowledge and experiences of families being incorporated into the learning experiences for young children and the positive impact that the cultural responsive environment had on young

children and families (Fehrer & Tognozzi, 2018; Gay, 2015; Holli, 2019; Tobin, 2020). The relationships that were built by participants and teachers through this culturally responsive environment kept families in the program, increased retention rates, and continued family engagement (Comer & Ben-Avie, 2010). The studies also show that the organizational structure and context of programs impact on parents' perceptions, enrollment, retention, and completion of early intervention services as well (Douglass, 2011; Doyle & Zhang, 2011). The research studies identified that culturally responsive practice can increase family engagement thereby providing significant benefits for young children and their families.

Challenges to Family Engagement

When implementing family engagement educational programs face many challenges from socioeconomic status, language barriers, cultural differences, to rural locations (Crosnoe, 2012; Grace & Trudgett, 2012; Knight-McKenna et al., 2019). Programs also must determine how they will implement family engagement and what will work for their programs and the families they serve. Fehrer and Tognozzi (2018) found that while there is no defined script or equation to a culturally responsive classroom it is essential that family engagement is a component of culturally responsive teaching and programs. Andrage-Guirguis et al. (2019) recommended that higher education programs educate future teachers to become culturally responsive and sensitive to the needs of diverse cultural groups, such as Latinos. With the continued growing number of minority children in the U.S. it is essential that educators implement culturally responsive learning environments. For all students to succeed, early childhood programs

should ensure the learning environment is representative of the students by finding culturally responsive and relevant connections between students and academic outcomes (Andrage-Guirguis et al., 2019).

Crosnoe (2012) used the data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K) to examine different types of engagement. Crosnoe (2012) found a pattern that identified greater reading gains in children for programs with mutual engagement and family-initiated engagement; there were smaller gains with school-initiated engagement; and no gains with non-engagement. These patterns demonstrated that even some engagement with families can be beneficial for young children. This study was also important in that it identified different types of engagement that can be seen within programs. The education of migrant children is a significant policy issue for both China and the U.S. (Holdaway, 2018). Holdaway (2018) found issues with a higher drop-out rate and lower levels of attainment for migrant children, as well as cultural and language barriers. The education of migrant children is essential to the economic development and social interconnection of both countries. The 2020 Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that individuals without a high school diploma earn significantly less than those who have a secondary degree.

Researchers have also found that some educators and student-educators may have anxiety at the prospect of working with diverse families, fearing the challenge of communicating across different languages and cultures (Knight-McKenna, et.al., 2019). Knight-McKenna, et. al. (2019) identified the importance of family engagement and the impact it has on parent-teacher relationships and students' academic outcomes. The

researchers identified the importance of preparing educators to be skilled at building trusting partnerships with diverse families (Knight-McKenna, 2019). Grace and Trudgett (2012) researched an indigenous population in Australia and focused on challenges that the Australian program encountered when engaging families. The challenges faced by the indigenous population of Australia included cultural and language barriers, transportation issues, and families living in very rural areas, much like migrant families in the U.S.

Researchers identified several strategies that addressed these challenges. Strategies included professional development, relationship building, embracing community and culture, and acknowledging families' fears (Grace & Trudgett, 2012; Knight-McKenna, 2019). The recommended strategies allowed early childhood workers to increase family engagement within their programs. The studies on the challenges of family engagement demonstrated that diverse families have similar challenges such as transportation, living in rural areas, and language barriers. The researchers showed that when programs and educators utilize culturally responsive practice and meet families in their home environments connecting learning experiences to the home it builds a strong home-school partnership. The researchers also identified different types of family engagement to include: family-initiated, school-initiated, mutual engagement, and no engagement (Crosnoe, 2012).

A review of the literature on family engagement demonstrated that the consensus is that family engagement is a positive influence on young children's academic success, family well-being, and in building home-school connections (Crosnoe, 2012; Gay, 2015; Hollie, 2019; Knight-McKenna, 2019). Even though there are challenges to

implementing family engagement in educational programs research shows that across ethnic groups and socioeconomic groups that most parents value education to more opportunities for their child and that they want to be involved in some way in their child's education (Walker et al., 2011). There were no conflicting studies found indicating that family engagement would be a negative influence on young children or their families. There are many different studies on how family engagement is implemented, and research shows that more studies are needed on diverse populations and the perceptions of families and teachers. How families and teachers define family engagement can impact how successful family engagement is within a program.

Global Perceptions

Civitillo et al. (2019) examined the correlation between culturally responsive teaching, teacher cultural beliefs, and self-reflection on their own teaching. Civitillo et al. (2019) found a correlation between culturally responsive teaching and cultural diversity beliefs and identified differences between teachers in their cultural responsiveness and their cultural beliefs. A key finding in this study showed that the German educators found to be more culturally responsive also showed a higher degree of self-reflection on their own teaching (Civitillo et al., 2019). The perceptions and expectations of families and teachers also play a vital role in developing strong partnerships between families and teachers. Dotson-Blake (2010) researched Mexican nationalists in Veracruz and Mexican families who migrated to North Carolina in the U.S. Dr. Dotson-Blake (2010) found that the expectations of both families and educators of both groups varied greatly. He also found that there is a need for continued research

into the expectations of and perceptions of family-school relationships. Underwood and Killoran (2012) also examined the perceptions of families and parents and how they perceive family engagement in early years services in Ontario, Canada. Their study also found that often the perceptions of the families differed from administrators and teachers of the programs. By identifying the differences in perceptions between families, teachers, and administrators the researchers were able to provide recommendations for improving family engagement.

Tobin (2020) proposed recommendations on ways in which today's early childhood education programs can meet the needs of today's immigrant/refugee children and families that the programs serve. Tobin (2020) discussed that educators are often underprepared to manage the challenges of working with immigrants/refugees and that parents often find it difficult to play an active role in their child's education. The political and social climate has put increased pressure on the early childhood education sector to build connections between the education systems and immigrant/refugee parents (Tobin, 2020). Smith and Johnson (2019) conducted a qualitative case study on the parental perspectives of Mexican and Mexican American farmworkers whose children were enrolled in a local MSHS program. They explored the factors that contribute to parental engagement of migrant farmworker families and their perspectives on their children's education (Smith & Johnson, 2019). It was found that even though families faced challenges of constantly moving, immigration status, and often a lack of connectedness to their communities the participants all identified the importance of education for their children (Smith & Johnson, 2019). Participants of this study also identified ways in

which they felt connected and disconnected to their child's school, the importance of their Latino identity, and identified communication as a key factor to their engagement within the program (Smith & Johnson, 2019). Smith and Johnson (2019) explored the role of beliefs, identity, and life experiences and how they impacted the early childhood education of young children. The father in Smith's study identified "responsibility" as an important aspect for him and that his children see him involved in the school and taking responsibility for their education.

Walter (2018) looked at how culturally responsive teaching can become a fundamental part of music education. She examined the history and movement of culturally responsive teaching and its increase as the predominant pedagogy for relating to students and families. The way in which educators began to understand cultural diversity began to change in the 21st Century and the shift to culturally responsive teaching was made (Gay, 2010). Culturally responsive teaching is considered student-centered approach to learning and is believed to be more equitable and includes all students (Gay, 2015; Walter, 2018). Walter (2018) defines culturally responsive teaching as a comprehensive approach and is considered student-driven and culturally relevant to students than the more curricular-driven approach of multicultural music education. Walter (2018) also identifies culturally responsive teaching as being more equitable and that when educators get to know and understand their students culture it enable equity.

Walker et al. (2011) conducted an exploratory study into Latino parents' motivations in their child's school. This exploratory study focused on the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model for parental involvement which was developed in 2005.

Walker et al. (2011) focused on why parents become involved in their children's education and how parental involvement impacts student outcomes. In exploring why parents become involved they included: "1.) personal psychological beliefs, 2.) contextual motivations, and 3.) perceptions of the life-context variables" (Walker et al., 2011, p. 410). While many Latino families have high expectations of their children and value education, due to cultural beliefs they fall into category three, believing that they should not interfere with the school's authority. This may lead to the misconception of educators that Latino parents are not involved with their child's education. Researchers also identified that life-context variables (time, energy, and knowledge) were not an important factor in predicting parental involvement. Walker et al. (2011) found that if parents perceived that they were wanted and needed by their children and educators they were more likely to find a way to make it work. Iruka et al. (2011) conducted a quantitative study on the impact of parent-teacher relationships and the perception of aggressive behaviors and social skills on kindergarteners. The data utilized came from the 2001 National Center for Early Development and Learning's (NCEDE) Multi-State Study of Pre-Kindergarten study. By examining parental perceptions researchers can dispel negative stereotypes and educators can obtain a better understanding of what motivates families to become involved in their children's education.

Iruka et al. (2011) identified that teachers' and parents' ratings of their relationships correlated with their ratings of children's social skills and aggressive behaviors. When parents' and teachers reported strong, close relationships with each other founded on trust, communication, and the agreement they reported stronger social

skills and lower aggressive behaviors in children (Iruka et al., 2011; Walker et al., 2011). The researchers also identified that higher-income parents reported stronger relationships with teachers than did low-income families, but these perceptions did not vary by ethnicity (Iruka et al., 2011). Researchers were also able to identify that when teachers' have a better understanding of children's culture and home environment, they are more apt to see children positively (Gay, 2015; Hollie, 2019, Iruka et al., 2011; Walker et al., 2011).

How parents perceive the quality of their child's early childhood programs can be influenced by context and culture. Ikegami and Agbenyega (2014) conducted a qualitative case study on six Japanese early childhood programs in Sapporo, Japan. The researchers explored educators' perceptions of quality early childhood programs. This study showed that perceptions of quality in early childhood programs varied contextually as well as culturally. It is important to understand quality from different social and cultural perspectives as it allows educators to meet the diverse needs of children today. The programs included in this study incorporated the beliefs of the culture to create a quality program that would meet the needs of the whole child (social, emotional, cognitive, linguistically, and physically). Ikegami and Agbenyega (2014) demonstrated that when students' culture was incorporated into learning experiences it created 'happiness' which leads to meeting the needs of the 'whole' child. HS programs, like MSHS, also attempt to meet the needs of the 'whole' child (socially, emotionally, cognitively, linguistically, and physically).

Communication is another important aspect to consider when meeting the needs of diverse families (Crosnoe, 2012; Gay, 2015; Smith, 2020). Riley et al. (2012) conducted a study on perceptions of the participants of HS programs. They conducted six focus groups utilizing the programs family service providers (FSPs) to invite families who had children enrolled in the HS services. The researchers showed that although families were overall pleased with the academic experiences for their children and trusted the teachers and staff, communication was an issue for those families whose primary language was not English. Families claimed that if the family service provider was not available it was often difficult to communicate with teachers and other staff and that they were often not aware of events within the program. Unfortunately, this is a common occurrence for diverse families whose first language is not English. The study also identified that the perception of what is culturally relevant differs between teachers and families. Riley et al. (2012) demonstrated the need for more research on the perspectives of HS teachers and families on how they design and implement culturally relevant experiences within their programs and classrooms.

Researchers have also identified how teachers' perceptions can change over time, and that the utilization of culturally responsive teaching is a continual process for educators. Souoto-Manning and Mitchell (2010) documented through a teacher's journals, reflective notes, and observations how a teacher progressed from holiday multicultural teaching to incorporating families as experts and incorporating them into everyday practices. This is important as it demonstrated how culturally responsive teaching can be implemented and that culturally responsive practice is a continual process

for teachers and programs (Gay, 2015; Gunn, 2020). The teacher's journals and reflective notes demonstrated that her perspective changed on what culturally responsive teaching entailed over several years.

Summary and Conclusions

Researchers identified a need for further examination into how families and teachers define family engagement, the long-term benefits when families are involved in their children's education, and the impact that strong parent-teacher relationships can have on young children. How parents and educators define family engagement can impact whether parents and teachers have a strong relationship with good communication or poor relationships with poor communication (Iruka et al., 2014; Walker et al., 2011).

Family engagement with diverse and migrant populations clearly showed the benefits of children and families, including higher retention rates, academic success, and school readiness skills (Crosnoe, 2012; Horby & Lafaele, 2011; Smith, 2011). There is a gap in practice in terms of how diverse and migrant populations define family engagement, the impact on parent-teacher relationships, and how family engagement within programs can influence families (Iruka et al., 2014; Walker et al., 2011). This study adds to the literature on programs serving the migrant and seasonal farmworker families by exploring how the local MSHS program incorporates family engagement through home and school experiences by examining how migrant family participants and teaching staff define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement within the local program.

In Chapter 3, the research design and methodology, research questions, setting and sample size, ethical protections, role of the researcher, data collection, analysis, and interview tool, as well as validity and reliability of data collection tool are discussed. The methodology and research questions were developed by MPR to examine how well the program met the cultural needs of the children, including language barriers, incorporating materials from their culture within the classroom, and having resources available in their native language.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how the local MSHS program incorporates family engagement through home and school experiences by examining how migrant and family participants and teaching staff define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement within the local program. In this chapter, I review the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, methodology, participant selection, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, participation, data collection, the data analysis plan, trustworthiness, and ethical practices used during the study.

Research Design and Rationale

Three research questions guide this study:

RQ1: How do teachers and families enrolled in the local MSHS program define or perceive family engagement?

RQ2: How do MSHS teachers and families enrolled in the local MSHS program perceive that parent-teacher/home-school relationships influence family engagement within the program?

RQ3: How do families whose children are enrolled in the local MSHS program perceive family engagement has influenced their families?

The 2018 PIR created by the OHS showed that more current and former HS families volunteer within the program than MSHS programs. While both programs implement the framework for family engagement created by the NCPFCE, there remains

a gap in practice and a need for exploration regarding why the percentage of MSHS family volunteers is lower than HS families, and what role family engagement plays in determining whether parents volunteer within the program. These research questions allowed me to explore how the MSHS program incorporated family engagement by connecting home and school experiences. I obtained a detailed view of how families and teachers perceived and defined family engagement, how family engagement influences parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement. Interview questions also allowed teachers and families to elaborate on their experiences and perceptions regarding family engagement. Culturally responsive practice can help families and young children feel validated, welcomed, and accepted (Gay, 2015).

I used a qualitative case study design for this research. A bounded case study involves a detailed analysis of one setting and a specific population (Creswell, 2012). A qualitative case study design is best suited for this study because the study was conducted in a natural setting, was emergent in nature, and involved exploring participants' perspectives. The case study design also allowed for in-depth responses of participants. Qualitative research is exploratory and used to understand underlying behaviors, perceptions, opinions, and motivations (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research allows multiple forms of data collection, including questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and observations, allowing me to observe interactions between staff, educators, families, and young children and focus on family engagement.

A quantitative study design would not have been conducive for this study. This design would not allow for rich detailed descriptions or examining participants' underlying opinions and motivations. The quantitative design would not have allowed me to explore how family engagement influences MSHS families and their relationships with educators and would not have provided the thick rich descriptions from participants. I ruled out an ethnographic study because I was not conducting the study in families' natural or home environments. By using a qualitative case study, I explored how family engagement influences MSHS families, their relationships with teachers, and how MSHS families define family engagement compared to how teachers perceive family engagement.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in this study was to establish researcher-participant working relationships. Since I do not work in any professional manner with any of the participants or program, it was a priority to begin establishing these working relationships by visiting with administrators, teachers, and families after receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. By contacting the director of the local MSHS program first, I established a relationship and gained the local director's trust.

I have worked with migrant and seasonal families in another geographical area, and I am familiar with the transient lifestyle and difficulties that migrant and seasonal families face. I have also worked in other HS and EHS programs and am familiar with NHS policies and procedures and the family engagement framework used by NHSA programs. My previous experiences with HS and EHS were as a parent. It was my initial

experience with HS that assisted me in pursuing my educational goals. I found the HS program beneficial not only for my children but also my entire family. While my experiences were positive, and I am an advocate for HS, I realize that not everyone may define family engagement in the same way that I do, and everyone perceives experiences differently. Acknowledging my biases made me more aware when conducting interviews and observations and reviewing answers. To address any potential bias, I used an expert reviewer. The expert reviewer reviewed my data and themes and did not identify any bias in my notes and identified codes. It is also important to note that I no longer have children enrolled in a HS program, nor do I work for any HS program at this time.

Methodology

Participant Selection

I used purposeful sampling because it allowed me to select knowledgeable and experienced individuals in the MSHS program. Due to low enrollment, all participants who indicated they were interested in participating were selected. Participants were parents of families enrolled in the local 2018 MSHS program and teachers from each of the classrooms, with parents being the primary focus. Only those migrant and seasonal families who have a child (ages 3 to 5) enrolled within the local MSHS program were invited. Teaching staff who have worked within the MSHS program for a minimum of 1 year were also invited. A total of five families, with two parents from one family, made up six family participants. With two teacher participants, I had eight participants for the study (six family participants and two teaching participants). I sent invitation letters to all families who enrolled in the MSHS program. Recipients of invitational letters responded

to me directly if they were interested in participating. All but one family responded with interest in participating.

Instrumentation

MPR created the HS Family Voices Research Questions interview tool. MPR's publications department confirmed that this tool is available for public use and may be modified if needed. I made modifications to reflect the MSHS families. I removed the modules on home visitors, pregnant mothers, and single fathers, and the module on community involvement as modifications since the purpose of the study was to explore how the local MSHS program incorporates family engagement through home and school experiences. Home and school experiences were explored to examine how migrant family participants and teaching staff define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement within the local program.

The MPR interview tool provides a revised set of interview protocols developed by MPR, with accompanying training materials for use with the interview protocols. The interview protocols/questionnaire are provided in Appendix A in both English and Spanish. A coding scheme was also developed by MPR and analyzed data obtained with the interview protocols. When used together, these materials address best practices for conducting qualitative interviews, provide guidance on administering the interview, and offer a protocol for analyzing and grouping the resulting interview data (Aikens et al., 2014). The interview questions developed by MPR explored staff and families' perceptions of how well the program met their children's cultural needs, such as language

barriers, incorporating materials from their culture within the classroom, and having resources available in their native language. MPR developed interview questions to conduct a study on a HS program. These interview questions can be used to examine other HS programs like the MSHS program. The research questions explore how families' culture and family engagement are incorporated to build connections between home and school. The researchers have already had the interview questions translated into Spanish, which was useful for this study. This interview tool was developed in 2014 by MPR to explore staff and families' perceptions on how well the HS program met the cultural needs of their children. MPR examined cultural needs such as language barriers, incorporating materials from families' culture within the classroom, and having resources available in their language. MPR used a purposeful selection of programs, staff, and families to ensure that it was representative of a broad range of perspectives on family engagement in HS and EHS.

MPR conducted a pilot test on the interview questions on 10 HS and EHS programs to identify potential flaws; interview questions were then revised and utilized for the *HS Voices* study. The interview questions developed by MPR focus on obtaining a better understanding of family engagement from the families' perspective whose children enrolled in the MSHS program and the teachers who served them. The MPR interview tool provides a revised set of interview protocols developed by MPR, accompanying training materials for use with the interview protocols, and a coding scheme used to analyze data obtained with the interview protocols (Aikens et al., 2014). When used together, these materials address best practices for conducting qualitative interviews,

provide guidance on administering the interview, and offer a framework for analyzing and grouping the resulting interview data (Aikens et al., 2014). The interview questions MPR developed explored staff and families' perceptions of how well the program met their children's cultural needs, such as language barriers, incorporating materials from their culture within the classroom, and having resources available in their native language. MPR developed these interview questions to be used to examine other HS programs like the MSHS program. The research questions explored how family culture and family engagement are incorporated to build connections between home and school. The researchers have already translated the interview questions into Spanish.

The parent and staff interview questions were designed to gather in-depth information regarding the families' experiences and perspectives in HS and EHS focusing on family engagement. The parent interviews consist of four modules, each focusing on a specific topic. These modules were: Module 1: Opportunities for family engagement; Module 2: Program supports for family engagement and service receipt; Module 3: Working with families and Module 4: Components of community engagement. I modified Module 1: Choosing HS or EHS to reflect MSHS. Module 2: Relationships with program staff and Module 3: Engagement in the program and in children's learning and development were not modified. Module 4: Components of community engagement were not included in this study. Staff interviews also consist of four modules; this study utilized three of the four modules.

MPR developed the interview questions for the *HS Voices* study in the 2012-2013 school year. Interview questions were created by research on family engagement, the

OHS Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) framework. The modular approach underlying the instrument design is best suited for purposeful sampling. The modules can be used individually or can be combined to meet the scope of different studies. These protocols and interview questions were beneficial for the current study as it was designed for HS programs and used much of the same literature on family engagement. MPR established reliability and validity by establishing the protocols for administering the interview questions and developing the coding scheme's protocols. This data collection tool is available for public use and may be modified if needed.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I conducted this study within a local MSHS program serving approximately 10 to 20 families per year. I did not know the exact number of families participating in the program until enrollment for the 2018 MSHS school year was completed in March 2018. There are typically anywhere from 2 to 4 classrooms, depending on enrollment for the season or school year. Each classroom consists of a lead teacher, an assistant teacher, and one aide. The local MSHS program runs from April to December, and I conducted the study during the 2018 school/program year. Due to the low-enrollment rate, there was only one MSHS classroom in the 2018 school/program year. I conducted interviews at times chosen by the families to meet their needs, with teachers being interviewed outside of classroom/teaching periods in a separate room within the facility.

I sent invitational letters to all parents whose children were enrolled in the local MSHS program and teachers in the MSHS classrooms to participate in the study. The invitational letter explained the scope of the research and how I would maintain

confidentiality throughout the study. Parents and teachers who wished to participate returned the invitational letter to me via mail, notifying me that they wanted to participate. Parents and teachers were sent an invitation letter in their home language inviting them to participate in the study and explaining the study's purpose. The family resource director identified the home language of families enrolled in the MSHS program who indicated seven of the families spoke Spanish. The director shared this information with me since I had signed a confidentiality agreement with the Community Action Agency who oversees the MSHS program. The invitational letter informed participants that their identity would be protected, identified how I would ensure confidentiality throughout the study, and that they may withdraw at any time.

Five families, with both parents in one family, and two teachers responded that they wished to participate. After gaining the necessary approvals, plans were to identify potential participants through purposeful sampling, choosing participants by lottery method; however, due to low enrollment all who responded participated in the study. I contacted those parents and teachers who indicated they wished to participate to have consent forms signed, and scheduled interviews at times convenient for them, and I answered any questions participants had at that time. Consent forms were in the families' primary language to ensure they understood what they were signing. Participants were given 24 to 48 hours to review the material before returning consent forms. Participants could return consent forms by mail or via email. I utilized a translator reviewer and an expert reviewer for the study, both were given a consent form to review and return within the 24 to 48 hours via mail or email.

I scheduled interviews with participants and obtained a translator for the interview if needed. None of the participants requested phone interviews, or a questionnaire. I ensured that materials were translated appropriately for parents whose first language was not English. The program provided a translator reviewer for the scheduled interviews; I explained to the translator reviewer they would only be reviewing my interviews' translations. The translator reviewer had no objections and signed a confidentiality form. After receiving the confidentiality form, the translator reviewer read the translated materials ensuring they were correctly translated.

Plans were to have purposeful sampling conducted lottery-style from individuals who indicated they were willing to participate. I chose purposeful sampling because it allowed me to select individuals who are particularly knowledgeable and have experience with the MSHS (Creswell, 2015). However, due to low enrollment, all participants indicated they were interested in participating were selected.

I collected data through in-depth interviews with participants; observations from parent meetings held by HS programs, during family events hosted by the MSHS program, and during drop off and pick up times. While this program does not hold Policy Council meetings, they hold family meetings; during my data collection, I could not observe a family meeting. The director also informed me that they do not use the home language survey and instead advised me of each family's primary language; since I had signed the confidentiality agreement with the Community Action Agency, he could share this with me for this study.

I utilized the MPR interview tool created for the *HS Voices* study. MPR's publication department confirmed that this tool is available for public use and may be modified if needed. I made modifications to reflect MSHS families, and the modules on home visitors, pregnant mothers, single fathers, and the module on community involvement were removed. I conducted the interviews in a room that the program set aside for my use; this was a private room away from administrative staff and lasted no longer than one hour. I conducted interviews at a time convenient for families and staff participating in the study. During data collection, all participants were able to meet at the Center in the designated private room. It took a total of 3 weeks to conduct and transcribe all the interviews from parents and teachers. Participants were reminded at the start of the interview that they could withdraw from the study at any time. After I transcribed the interviews, they were returned to the participants to review for reliability. If participants had any changes, they could contact me by mail, email, or phone to notify me of any changes to their interview. No changes were requested to any of the transcribed interviews.

Plans were to conduct two to three observations, observe one Policy Council meeting and one parent meeting if possible, and tour the facility to observe the facility and classrooms. Specifically, I observed interactions between participating staff and participants of the study. I looked specifically at the types of materials available for children and families (books, dolls, puppets, etc.). I looked to determine if materials were labeled in more than one language, whether posters and art on the walls were illustrative of the families enrolled in the program, and whether families were represented within the

classrooms (family walls, etc.). I observed the drop-off and pick-up of children at the Center to watch how parents and staff interacted with each other. As the program did not have a Policy Council for the MSHS program and only had family meetings, I could not observe during the study.

Observations focused on the interactions between participants and participating staff during these events, I made notations on how often participating parents engaged with participating staff. Although I could not examine the home language surveys, the Family Resource Staff was able to identify the primary language of each family. This information was primarily utilized for demographic background on participants and to ensure all materials for families were in the appropriate language. The director shared this information with me since I had signed a confidentiality agreement with the Community Action Agency. Observational notes were also coded and added to the interview data. I methodologically triangulated data between interviews (parent and teacher) and observational notes to ensure validity of the proposed study.

Throughout the study participants were advised before, during, and after all interviews and observations that they could withdraw from the study at any time. None of the participants indicated they wished to withdraw at any time. The consent form also advised participants that they may withdraw at any time. No follow-up procedures were necessary.

Data Analysis Plan

MPR (2014) developed the HS Family Voices Research interview questions/tool. They utilized the interview tool in the study to determine the perceptions of the migrant

families enrolled in the MSHS program and classroom teachers who worked within the local MSHS program to examine their perceptions of family engagement and culture. The interview questionnaire intentionally does not ask how the program incorporates culture; this is a benefit, leaving teachers and families to answer honestly and openly. For example, it asked parents if the program encouraged them to join leadership roles such as Policy Council, then had a follow-up question to expand on the answer given. For teachers, the question asked if the program encouraged families to join leadership roles such as Policy Council, and the follow-up questions to expand on answers given. MPR felt if culture is incorporated within the program, its participants will mention this in the way they answer the interview questions. I chose this interview tool because it explored how HS programs, like MSHS, incorporate culture and family engagement within the program. The open-ended questions allowed me to explore cultural responsive practice by not leading the participant. For example, one of the interview questions reads as follows: “When you’re at your MSHS program, do you feel welcomed by staff? If so, what are some of the examples of ways staff have made you feel welcome/unwelcome?”

The interview questionnaire utilizes both open-ended and closed-ended questions for both parents and teachers. I chose this interview tool because it was initially developed and designed for the NHSA, including the MSHS program. This instrument contained an interview questionnaire for both parents and teachers. I have included the parent and teacher questionnaires in Appendix B and C. I have also included the Spanish version as it was most likely that Spanish is the primary language of the local MSHS program. The interviews took one hour, with the parent questionnaire containing 13

questions with follow-up prompts, teacher questionnaires consisted of 21 questions with follow-up prompts. The teacher questionnaire is longer as it includes questions regarding professional training. The interviews were audiotaped and written verbatim for the participants to review later to verify accuracy.

The interview tool also included specific steps and protocol for administering the interview, which added to the interview tool's reliability. MPR identified the steps for interviewing within the tool with instructions for the interviewer. I audio-recorded interviews then transcribed them verbatim. I gave participants a draft of the findings, including their data, to check for viability of the overall findings and their data accuracy. Participants who had objections to being audio recorded had their answers written down verbatim. A copy was given later to the participants to review for accuracy of their responses.

MPR conducted a pilot test on the interview questions on 10 HS and EHS programs to identify potential flaws; interview questions were then revised and utilized for the *HS Voices* study. The interview questions developed by MPR focus on obtaining a better understanding of family engagement from the families' perspective enrolled in the MSHS program and the teachers who serve them. The interview tool provides a revised set of interview protocols developed by MPR, accompanying training materials for use with the interview protocols, and a coding scheme to analyze data obtained with the interview protocols (Aikens et al., 2014). When used together, these materials address best practices for conducting qualitative interviews, provide guidance on administering the interview, and offer a framework for analyzing and grouping the resulting interview

data (Aikens et al., 2014). The interview questions MPR developed explored staff and families' perceptions of how well the program met their children's cultural needs, such as language barriers, incorporating materials from their culture within the classroom, and having resources available in their native language. The research questions explore how families' culture and family engagement are incorporated to build connections between home and school. The researchers have already had the interview questions translated into Spanish, which was useful for this study. The interview and coding tool developed by MPR is available for public use and can be modified to meet a study's needs.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, and each participant received a transcript of their interviews to check for viability and accuracy. I methodologically triangulated data between interviews (parent and teacher) and observational notes to ensure the study's validity. Observational notes and interviews of parents and teachers were reviewed and coded using the MPR Coding Pattern from the codes I identified patterns and themes within the interview data and observational data. I utilized the coding pattern created by MPR for the parent and teacher interviews to ensure consistent coding of the interview data. MPR has developed coding schemes for both parent and teaching staff interviews. Descriptive coding methods identify specific words, phrases, patterns of behavior, participants' perceptions, and any events that may stand out. I specifically looked for details of home-school connections incorporated into the program through family engagement and families and staff's cultural experiences. The coding scheme for parents and staff interviews consisted of three levels: Level 1 (L1) representing the broadest level of analysis, and level 2 (L2) and 3 (L3) identifying subcategories under the

more general codes with an increasing level of specificity (Aikens et al., 2014). MPR created the coding patterns based on themes that emerged during their 2014 study *HSV*. These codes are grounded in the research literature and are tied to the research questions and conceptual framework in this study (Aikens et al., 2014). Themes typically combine several codes so that the researcher can examine the research questions (Lodico et al., 2010). After I collected all the data, I utilized these descriptive codes to develop coding categories to identify themes within the data (Lodico et al., 2010). Themes from the parent interviews, teacher interviews, and observations were methodologically triangulated and compared for similarities.

If needed, I conducted and translated interviews into the family's native language to ensure validity and accuracy. I utilized a translator reviewer from the MSHS program to ensure my translations' accuracy. I have the necessary Spanish conversational skills that I used to communicate with participants. The translator reviewer used was asked to sign a confidentiality form stating they will keep all information confidential. Many of the MSHS staff are bilingual and were available to assist if needed; however, I did not need to use staff to communicate. During parent meetings and during the drop-off and pick-up times at the Center, I took observational notes, focusing on the interactions between participants enrolled in the study. While making observational field notes, I annotated any impressions observed during interactions. I only took observational notes on participants who agreed to participate in the study. I took field notes on the interactions observed between consenting participants, documented interactions in a factual manner, and only recorded those interactions between consenting parents and

teachers. I coded observational field notes using the MPR data coding tool. The coding patterns and themes identified were triangulated between parent and teacher interviews and the observations. I utilized an expert reviewer to address any potential bias, challenge any assumptions, and ensure validity and reliability. The expert reviewer that assisted me is an individual with a Ph.D. in Education and has over ten years in education from elementary through high school.

Trustworthiness

To ensure credibility and accuracy of responses and for internal credibility, I audio-recorded interviews when possible and when not possible, I wrote verbatim what participants were saying. I provided participants a transcript of their audio recording or a copy of the transcribed interview in a sealed envelope to review. Participants did not request any corrections and assured their answers were correct in content. For those that spoke Spanish during interviews, the translator reviewer confirmed my translations were accurate as well. The translator reviewer also reviewed the materials I had translated into Spanish and confirmed the translation was correct.

I analyzed and triangulated the data from observations, teacher interviews, and parent interviews using open coding and the MPR coding tool, looking for specific words, phrases, patterns of behavior, participants' perceptions, and any events that may stand out. I then went back through interview data and observational logs and identified recurring words and patterns. These codes, recurring words, and patterns allowed me to identify categories and subcategories, then themes throughout the data. The MPR interview and coding tool included specific steps and protocol for administering the

interview, which adds to the interview and coding tool's reliability. The MPR interview tool allowed for open-ended questions, allowing me to explore culturally responsive practice without leading the participant.

To provide transferability I have provided thick, rich descriptions of the local program, data collection and analysis process. Interviews were scheduled at the parents' convenience, allowing them to select the day, time, and location of their interview. During their interview T1 stated "It is important to communicate with parents every day in their language, ensuring they understand and making them feel welcome in the program and the classroom." P1 stated, "It is very important to talk to my child's teacher, so I know how I can help with at home." The transferability of this qualitative case study allows the reader to use the same techniques in their own programs to increase family engagement. The study took place in a local MSHS. The program has two classrooms for MSHS children and runs from April through December each year. This qualitative case study was limited in size due to the local rural MSHS program's low enrollment rate. There were two teacher participants and a total of five families participating. In one family, both parents participated, making a total of six family participants. The total number of participants for the study was eight, with both teaching staff and family participants. Although limited in size, results can be useful for other administrators and directors of MSHS programs and diverse populations.

For dependability of the findings, I triangulated the data from the three forms of data collection (parent interviews, teacher interviews, and observations) to ensure the study's validity and reliability of the findings. For example, I began with a broader L1

codes like communication and narrowed down data to more specific L2 and L3 codes including types of communication, frequency, verbal and/or written. Parent responses were identified as P1-P6, teacher responses identified as T1-T2, and observations were identified as O and the number of the observation. To avoid bias, I utilized an expert reviewer. The expert reviewer is an individual with a Ph.D. in Education and has over ten years in education from elementary through high school. This individual reviewed the data and asked questions for clarification. The expert reviewer did not find any biases and gave suggestions ensuring my findings were articulated clearly.

To establish conformability and objectivity, during observations, I logged my factual statements in detail and put any perceptions I had out to the side to ensure that I did not input any of my thoughts into the findings. I have not worked with any of the study participants and acknowledge that while I have had experience in the HS and EHS programs, I did not previously have any experiences with MSHS. By utilizing an expert reviewer and having participants review their interview responses for accuracy, I ensured that I did not interject my opinions and biases.

Ethical Procedures

I took measures for the ethical protection of participants ensuring that confidentiality was maintained by coding participants randomly. I have also completed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research training on Protecting Human Research Participants. I implemented protection methods for human subjects including the use of general descriptions of program experiences, omitting names and any other identifying information from the study data. Participation was

voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any time throughout the study. Participants were notified that they may withdraw from the study at any time when they signed the consent form and before beginning the interview.

I applied to the IRB, ensuring my study met University policies and the U.S. Federal regulations for ethical standards for conducting research were met. Once IRB approval was obtained (IRB Approval # 12-04-17-0139974), I contacted the local MSHS program director to schedule a meeting where I explained the study's scope and requested assistance in obtaining permissions to conduct the study. After administrative permissions were given from the local MSHS program to conduct the study, I submitted a letter of agreement to the IRB. I signed a confidentiality agreement with the Community Action Agency that oversees the MSHS program to ensure participants' confidentiality. I provided materials in Spanish to ensure all participants would fully understand what they agreed to in participating in the study. I confirmed that participants knew they could withdraw from the study at any time, I included this information in the invitational letter, and I verbally reminded participants throughout the study.

Some participants who wanted to participate were concerned about being audio recorded due to some local immigration issues (these were not related to the MSHS program). To reassure confidentiality of participants, I allowed them not to be audio recorded and wrote their responses down verbatim instead. All interview responses, audio recordings, and observational notes will be kept in a locked personal filing cabinet in my home for five years. At that time, I will dispose of them by shredding all materials.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the research design and rationale, my role, methodology, participant selection and instrumentation, and procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection. I reviewed the data analysis plan for trustworthiness and ethical procedures. Chapter 4 includes results and findings from the study. This includes the process by which data were gathered, generated, recorded, and used to keep track of data collection. I also reviewed data analysis and patterns, relationships, and themes identified within the data. Evidence of quality is discussed as well in terms of the accuracy of data via member checking, an expert reviewer, and researcher logs.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how the local MSHS program incorporated family engagement through home and school experiences by examining how migrant family participants and teaching staff define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement within the local program. Research questions focused on teacher and parent perspectives of how family engagement is defined, how teachers and parents perceive the influence of family-program relationships on family engagement, and how parents perceive the influence of family-program engagement on their families. In this chapter, I discuss the setting in which the qualitative case study was conducted, the data collection tool used for data collected, coding schemes, results of data collection, and evidence of trustworthiness. I then provide an overall summary of chapter.

Setting

The setting for this qualitative case study was a local rural MSHS program in the southern part of the U.S. The local program had a low enrollment for the 2018 school year. Due to the program's low enrollment rate, I could only obtain six parent and family participants to participate. Two teaching staff replied that they would like to participate in the study, making a total of eight participants for the study. The demographics of participants were primarily Hispanic/Latino. The primary language of parent and family participants was Spanish, with the majority able to speak English. Teaching staff were bilingual. All participants chose to have their interviews conducted in a private room at

the local center. I interviewed participants in a private room away from administration and classrooms for privacy.

Data Collection

All interviews took place in a private room at the local MSHS Center. Parent interviews took 1 hour with each parent and took a total of 2 weeks to complete. Parents who participated from the same family were interviewed separately on the same day. Only three families allowed for audio recording, so I wrote answers down verbatim and read responses to participants to ensure I recorded responses accurately. For parent and family interviews, a translator reviewer sat in on interviews but did not ask any questions or assist the families. The translator reviewer only ensured that I was translating Spanish responses correctly and within context. The translator reviewer signed a confidentiality form. I did not need the translator reviewer for teacher interviews, as both teachers were fluent in English and Spanish. Teaching staff interviews were audio-recorded and lasted for 1 hour. I interviewed both teachers in the same week on different days.

Organizational conditions that influenced participants and their experience at the time of the study included concern about audio recordings of interviews due to a local immigration issue which led to some deportations. While the issue was not related to the school, it caused some to be hesitant to being recorded. To resolve this issue and alleviate their concerns, I documented their responses in the interview questionnaire and wrote their responses verbatim, only recording those participants who did not have concerns.

I also observed interactions between staff and families during drop off and pick up at family events. I toured the classroom and observed available materials to determine

if they were culturally representative of families enrolled in the program. Culturally responsive practices go beyond having appropriate materials and incorporating family culture into the classroom. During observations, I was introduced to families by the program director. While I conducted my observations, I did not interact with families. I observed from a distance and made notes in my research logbook. I wrote observations involving interactions between staff and children, staff and parents, and interactions between families. My observational notes were factual and descriptive. Observational events were an hour each. After each session, I reviewed my notes, writing my thoughts and feelings in the margins. Doing this and keeping observations factual allowed me to check for any biases. Classroom materials were culturally representative of families enrolled in the program and included materials in Spanish, the primary language, as well as English. The classroom also included a family wall that included pictures of each family and their children. The observations took a total of 3 weeks to conduct as I observed several pickup and drop-off times and a family event.

Variations from my data collection plan as presented in Chapter 3 were due to the lower enrollment rate for the 2018 school year, which resulted in fewer participants than I had anticipated. Due to the low enrollment rate, I did not use a lottery style method to select participants, but instead allowed all participants who responded to participate in the study. I did not audio-record all interviews due to a local immigration issue which cause several participants to be hesitant about being recorded. I also did not observe a policy council meeting since this program does not have a policy council for the MSHS

program, and I was not able to observe a family meeting. I was able to observe dropoff and pickup times and a family event and was able to tour the facility.

Data Analysis

After collecting all data, I began my analysis by using the MPR coding tool and open coding data. In MPR, level 1 (L1) broad codes represent the preliminary level of analysis, with level 2 (L2) being the final codes and initial categories and level 3 (L3) representing final categories. I went through transcripts and identified L1 codes, then proceeded to L2 codes and categories, then to L3 categories, identifying categories that emerged from the data. L1 codes included broad terms and repetitive words and phrases such as: communication, volunteering in the program, academic and language goals, home activities, and bilingual staff. L2 codes and initial categories were communication frequency, type of communication (written, verbal) and topics of discussion with teachers, participation outcomes for children, practices and processes affecting parents' engagement in the program, identifying children's goals (academic and developmental), types of activities at home, and involvement in home activities. L3 final categories were communication regarding child development and academic goals, communication involving children's social-emotional outcomes, communication regarding changes in terms of learning and academic skills, communication with parent and families, communication of academic, behavioral, and social-emotional goals, attendance in meetings, volunteer activities, and program leadership. I then went back through interviews and observational logs and open-coded recurring words and patterns.

Open-ended questions allowed me to explore cultural responsive practice by not leading participants. Culturally responsive practice is defined as an approach in which young children's unique cultural strengths, resources, and experiences are identified and nurtured to connect school and home learning experiences (Gay, 2015). Open coding and using the MPR coding tool allowed me to identify final categories and themes. During my data analysis, data showed overlapping themes. Discrepant cases were not identified within data.

Results

In analyzing the data, I found recurring codes relating to communication. I then reviewed those to categorize them into more specific types of communication, written (home activity calendars, notes sent home etc.) and verbal (conversations with parents, parent meetings, and phone calls). I also looked at how the communication was delivered, in English or Spanish, the frequency of communication and topics of communication (family needs, child development, etc.). From the codes and categories I identified a theme for RQ1 that participants defined/perceived family engagement as daily bilingual communication through a culturally responsive lens and working together to extend classroom learning at home. All six parent participants identified the importance of being able to communicate with teaching staff in their first language (Spanish) daily. Both teachers who participated in the study also identified the importance of communicating in a family's first language to ensure families understood what was being communicated (home activities, parent conferences etc.). Parents defined or perceived communicating with their child's teacher as family engagement, and while they enjoyed participating in

the classroom, they felt it was most important to communicate with their child's teacher daily. Both teachers also felt that to get families into the classroom and engaged with events and home activities they must first begin with communication with the families in their own language to build strong positive culturally responsive relationships.

I also identified recurring codes of positive relationships between families and teaching staff. I then narrowed the codes down into categories of the types of positive influence the relationship between parents and teachers had on families (positive influence on the parent, child, classroom). From this I was able to identify the theme for RQ2 that participants believed their relationships (parent/teacher, home/school) encouraged them to become engaged within the MSHS program by participating in family events, helping within the classroom, and completing home activities.

I also identified recurring codes of positive influences on families from being engaged with the local MSHS program. I then narrowed that down into more specific categories of ways engaging within the program influenced families and children (i.e. learning English, academic goals for their children, American traditions, and their families and children making friends). From these categories I was able to identify the theme for RQ3 that participants (families) believed that family engagement (daily bilingual communication with staff and extending learning at home) in the program had a positive influence on their children and families by encouraging community engagement and utilizing services within the MSHS program, meeting other families within the program, and learning English.

The recurring codes included daily communication through a culturally responsive lens; for example, bilingual teaching staff and materials in Spanish and English and families and teaching staff speaking daily. Helping teachers in the classroom and through home activities were also recurring codes through-out the data. Parent/family participants and teaching staff believed it was important to communicate daily with each other and work together. During my data analysis, data showed themes overlapping throughout the research questions and building on one another. Discrepant cases were not identified within the data.

RQ1 Results

RQ1 was: How do the teachers and families enrolled in the MSHS program define or perceive family engagement? The data for RQ1 identified the theme that participants defined/perceived family engagement as daily bilingual communication through a culturally responsive lens and working together to extend classroom learning at home. All six parents that participated identified the importance of being able to communicate with teaching staff in Spanish and appreciated staff being bilingual. Parents defined or perceived communicating with their child's teacher as family engagement, while many stated they enjoyed participating in the classroom, they felt it was most important to communicate with their child's teacher daily. Both teachers who participated in the study also identified the importance of communicating in a family's first language (Spanish) to ensure families understand materials. Participants (teachers and families) also defined family engagement as working together at home and at school to promote learning by consistently communicating through a culturally responsive lens.

Parents defined/perceived family engagement as daily bilingual communication through a culturally responsive lens. P1 described family engagement as “making sure I speak with my child’s teacher every day.” P4 stated, “I like that the teachers can speak Spanish and English, so my child learns more English but still speaks our language.” While they did engage in the classroom and participated in activities within the program, they felt it was more important to communicate with their child’s teacher on a daily basis.

Teacher interview data showed the same pattern of daily bilingual communication as an essential part of family engagement. When asked to define family engagement, T1 defined family engagement as, “communicating (Spanish and English) with parents daily and making them feel welcomed in our classroom,” while T2 defined it as “making connections with our families and children. It is important to see and speak to the parents daily, by phone, in person, or through written notes.” Teachers also stressed the importance of being respectful of families’ cultures and communicating with them verbally and in writing in their first language, whether English, or Spanish.

Participants (families and teachers) also identified that they perceived family engagement as working together, extending learning from the classroom at home. P2 described family engagement as “knowing what my child is learning.” Parents described family engagement as helping their children learn and being part of the program, working with their child’s teacher to promote their child’s learning. P4 said, “It is important to talk to my child’s teacher every day so I know what I can help with at home.” By communicating daily through a culturally responsive lens families were able to know how to extend their child’s learning at home.

Both teachers identified the importance of building a partnership between families and the school and believed being bilingual assisted them in building these partnerships. T2 defined family engagement as “a partnership between the parents and the school.” Teachers advised they make it a priority to speak to parents every time they see them if possible. During observations, staff greeted each family member of the children in their classroom by name; speaking to families in their first language (Spanish). Families also communicated with each other in Spanish, and I noted that families appeared to be familiar with each other and greeted each other as well. At the family event that the program held they discussed the event’s agenda and what children were learning in school. During my observation of the family event, families were interacting with each other and staff. Everyone was smiling, laughing, and engaging with each other, teachers knew the names of older and younger siblings and greeted them as well.

When initiated through family engagement, culturally responsive practice can assist in family and young children feeling validated, welcomed, and accepted (Gay, 2015). Because staff were bilingual, they were able to greet families and children in their language and make them feel welcomed into the program and at the event. Both parents and teachers believe that they must work together by communicating daily and helping each other to promote children’s learning at home and at school; building partnerships with each other.

RQ2 Results

RQ2 was: How do MSHS teachers and families enrolled in the local MSHS program perceive that parent-teacher/home-school relationships influence family

engagement within the program? The findings identified the theme for RQ2 that participants believed their relationships (parent/teacher, home/school) encouraged them to become engaged within the MSHS program by participating in family events, helping within the classroom, and completing home activities.

The strong positive relationships built between parents and teachers through daily bilingual communication encouraged families to become engaged within the program. Parents can volunteer in the classroom, by completing home-activities, and attend family events. Several parents indicated they had come in to read and play with children and to help in the classroom, completed home activities, and assisted at family event set-ups. P1 stated, "My child's teacher always makes me feel welcome to volunteer, attend family events, and help in the program. I always volunteer when my work schedule allows, I love being able to help in the classroom." Parents felt their children's teachers are very approachable and like that the teachers are bilingual. P3 stated, "I am just now learning English, so it is very nice that I am able to speak Spanish to my child's teacher!" Participant P3 described feeling welcomed into the classroom and program.

Teachers identified other opportunities for parents to become engaged with in the program by being involved in the classroom, completing home activities, and at program family events but stressed that communication and building relationships with parents was the first step to getting families engaged within the program. Teachers identified that by being bilingual, they ensured that parents understand the information they are giving them and can ensure families feel welcome within the program. T1 stated, "We often ask families to come and share something from their culture in the classroom, we also have

family events and ask parents to assist, and volunteer opportunities are always listed on our daily (written) communications with families.” These opportunities to become involved allowed families to bring part of their culture into the school by sharing the music, food, or stories from their culture.

Both teachers and families indicated in their interviews it is essential that families are engaged within the program. T1 stated, “It is important to have the parent involved in their child’s education (within the program and extending learning at home); we are a team.” P5 stated, “I work with my child every evening doing the activities the teacher sends home. We sing the ABC song, we count together, and we read together before bed.” These responses demonstrate that both parents and teachers believe that family engagement is essential to children’s successful learning.

T2 stated, “The home activity calendar allows parents to practice the skills their children are learning in school.” These home activity calendars also give families another way to be engaged within the program. When connections are built with families through shared experiences (home/school) young children have long-term benefits of academic success, lower dropout rates, and higher parental involvement (Epstein, 2010; Gay, 2015). By building strong, positive, culturally responsive relationships with families the program encouraged families enrolled to become engaged within the program. T1 described parents as “always being willing to assist in the classroom, at events, and within the program in any way they can.” By interacting with each other through home activities, interacting with each other at events and during drop-off and pick-up, and families volunteering in the classroom, the teachers and families built strong culturally

responsive relationships. The program was able to build strong culturally responsive relationships by providing materials in families home language, through consistent daily bilingual communication, and by providing activities for families to do at home.

During their interviews, teachers also advised that to get families without transportation engaged within the program they will often send home materials and ask the parents to assist them in cutting materials out or some other activity that parents can assist with at home and return to school with the children. T2 stated, “For parents who can’t come in we call them and go over materials sent home. Sometimes we will ask if parents can cut out materials for us for upcoming activities in the classroom.” P4 indicated they like working on things at home to help the teachers, that it makes them feel “useful.” T1 stated, “For parents who have difficulty with transportation, we will do home-visits a few times a year. We also make sure to connect with these families by phone when possible.”

Observations showed many families attending the scheduled family event; parents interacted with each other and with staff. Parents assisted staff with monitoring children’s activities and making food plates for the children during the meal. I observed teachers and families during drop-off, pick-up, and during the scheduled family event speaking in Spanish and English to each other and the children. During drop-off and pick-up times, teachers and parents greeted each other in a friendly manner by smiling and even embracing one another, asking each other about the day, and waving good-bye as they left. During pick-up teachers were observed discussing the day with parents and reviewing activity calendars with parents.

Overall, data show that participants perceived their relationships (parent/teacher, home/school) encouraged them to become engaged within the MSHS program by participating in family events, helping within the classroom and completing home activities. Building a strong relationship with the families allows the families to feel comfortable enough to engage within the program. Families are eager to assist in the program as much as they can and are grateful for the teachers' and program's assistance to their families and children. Parents indicated that they want to help as such as possible because they have a good relationship with their child's teachers. P5 stated, "I am happy to help my child's teacher and the school. They are very important to my family, they have helped my child learn English, make friends, and love learning."

RQ3 Results

RQ3 was: How do the families whose children are enrolled in the local MSHS program perceive family engagement has influenced their families? The data for RQ3 identified that participants (families) perceived that family engagement (daily bilingual communication with teaching staff and extending learning at home) in the program had a positive influence on their children and families by encouraging community engagement and utilizing services within the MSHS program, meeting other families within the program, and learning English.

P6 described their child as making significant progress in their behavior, stating, "The school has helped my family by helping us set routines at home like at school. My child will follow the rules at home now" Parents also identified how much the program has helped their family by learning American traditions. P1 stated, "My child and family

have learned so much more English and American ways. The teachers help us learn our community.” Both teachers stated they have the Community Resource book available for parents and will assist families in locating resources when needed. Observations of the family event, drop-off and pick-up times showed that families are also familiar with each other. They greeted each other by name and would stop to talk to each other.

Families felt the community outreach program offered within the MSHS program had a positive influence on families learning English. The program offered parents the opportunity to learn English in the Center through a community outreach program. Parents were able to practice the skills they were learning through the community outreach program when they volunteered in the classroom and worked with their child’s teacher. P3 stated, “I wanted to learn more English so I can get a better job. The teachers and staff helped me with this. I know much more English and now I can look for a better job and understand more. Without the MSHS program the parent (P3) was not confident that they would know as much English as they had learned in the short time they have been in the United States. Even families who were previously unaware of the program and were initially hesitant felt a positive influence from being enrolled in the program. P4 stated, “I was not aware of the MSHS program until the director came to our door; he spoke Spanish and made us feel very welcomed.” Another parent, P5, also stated, “I was unaware the community could offer my youngest children an education”.

The data identified overlapping themes of defining family engagement as working together (parents and teachers) to promote learning through daily bilingual communication through a culturally responsive lens and working together to extend

classroom learning at home. Participants believed their culturally responsive relationships as encouraging them to become engaged within the MSHS program by participating in family events, helping within the classroom, and completing home activities. Culturally focused and responsive community outreach was an essential part of establishing a culturally responsive relationship, and that participants perceived a positive influence on their children and families by encouraging community engagement and utilizing services within the MSHS program, meeting other families within the program, and learning English. There were no discrepant data; data were consistent with families being satisfied with the program and services they and their children received.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To ensure credibility and accuracy of responses for internal credibility, I audio-recorded interviews when possible and when not possible due to participant request, I wrote verbatim what participants were saying. I provided each participant with a transcript of their audio recording or a copy of the transcribed interview in a sealed envelope for them to review. Participants did not request any corrections and assured their answers were accurate in content. For those that spoke Spanish during interviews, the translator reviewer confirmed my translations were correct as well. The translator reviewer also reviewed the materials I had translated into Spanish and confirmed the translation was correct.

I analyzed the data from observations, teacher interviews, and parent interviews using the MPR coding tool and open coding, looking for repeating words, phrases, patterns of behavior, participants' perceptions, and any events that may stand out. I then

went back through interview data and observational logs and identified recurring words and patterns. These codes, recurring words, and patterns allowed me to identify codes, categories, then themes throughout the data. The MPR interview and coding tool included specific steps and protocol for administering the interview which adds to the interview and coding tool's credibility. The MPR interview tool allowed for open-ended questions, allowing me to explore culturally responsive practice without leading the participant. The expert reviewer I utilized reviewed the coding protocols and reviewed my analysis for potential bias. The expert reviewer asked for some clarifications and ensured that I did not interject my biases or opinions into the analysis.

Based on information provided, readers can determine transferability of the results of this study to their specific program or situation. This study was limited in size due to the local rural MSHS program's low enrollment rate. There were two teacher participants and five families participating; in one family, both parents participated, making six family participants. The total participants for the study were eight with both teaching staff and family participants. I did not intend for this study to generalize the data to the total population. Although limited in size, I provided thick, rich descriptions of the data collection process and direct quotes from participants to support themes found. I also clearly described the context to allow administrators and other early childhood programs serving diverse populations to transfer results to their own programs. These results can be useful for other administrators and directors of MSHS programs and diverse populations. The parent/family participants' responses indicated the importance of consistently communicating effectively with their child's teacher which led to building strong

relationships with teaching staff. Other programs, which serve diverse populations, can implement these strategies in their programs.

For dependability of the findings, I triangulated the data from the three forms of data collection (parent interviews, teacher interviews, and observations) to ensure the study's validity and reliability of the findings. I used direct quotes from interviews (parents and teachers) and examples from my observational notes. To avoid bias, I utilized an expert reviewer. The expert reviewer is an individual with a PhD in Education and has over ten years in education from elementary through high school. This individual reviewed the data and asked questions for clarification. The expert reviewer did not find any biases and gave suggestions ensuring that I clearly articulated my findings.

To establish conformability and objectivity, during observations, I logged my factual observations in detail and put any perceptions I had out to the side to ensure that I did not input my perceptions into the findings. I have not worked with any of the study participants and acknowledge that while I have had experience in the HS and EHS programs, I did not previously have any experiences with Migrant and Seasonal HS.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I reviewed the purpose of this qualitative case study which explored how the local MSHS program incorporated family engagement through home and school experiences by examining how migrant family participants and teaching staff define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement within the local program. The following is a summary of key findings. For RQ1, teachers and

families defined/perceived family engagement as daily bilingual communication through a culturally responsive lens and working together to extend classroom learning at home. Consistently communicating through a cultural responsive lens with each other is an essential part of working together. Both parents and teachers indicated that being bilingual and speaking both English and Spanish within the program was a huge part of feeling comfortable with each other and working together. Communicating through a cultural responsive lens was essential to making families and young children feel welcomed into the program and assisted the program in building strong culturally respectful relationships with families.

For RQ2, participants believed their relationships (parent/teacher, home/school) encouraged them to become engaged within the MSHS program by participating in family events, helping within the classroom, and completing home activities. The data reflected parents were engaged in the classroom and program because they felt a connection with teachers, staff, and the program. Families and teachers indicated that they have great relationships with one another, making them want to see the other successful. Both parents and teachers felt that they have been positively influenced by the other. When parents are involved in the classroom teachers feel that they have a successful classroom environment. Parents want to assist teachers so that their child can be successful academically. Parents also discussed ways in which the program and teachers have helped them successfully navigate their new community. By working together families and teachers built positive, culturally respectful relationships with each other.

For RQ3, participants (families) perceived that family engagement (daily bilingual communication with staff and extending learning at home) in the program had a positive influence on their children and families by encouraging community engagement and utilizing services within the MSHS program, meeting other families within the program, and learning English. By connecting home-school experiences through family engagement the program created culturally responsive partnerships with families by providing family support, parent education, connecting families with community resources, and assisting young children in achieving academic success. Chapter 5 includes interpretations of findings, ways the data confirmed previous knowledge discussed in Chapter 2, limitations of the study, recommendations from the data, and implications of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose and nature of this qualitative case study was to explore how the local MSHS program incorporated family engagement through home and school experiences, how migrant family participants and teaching staff define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement within the local program. This study is important in terms of understanding how family engagement can influence families and classroom environments. When families feel welcomed by a program, they are more likely to engage in their child's learning. Parents engaging in the classroom helps teachers build successful learning environments for young children. When teachers and parents can work together, educators see positive outcomes for young children.

The conceptual framework for this qualitative study is culturally responsive teaching/practice. According to Gay (2015), cultural responsive practice goes beyond just incorporating language and traditions into classrooms and programs, but also involves bridging the gap between home and school connections by incorporating families' cultures into young children's learning experiences and environment. This conceptual framework allowed me to focus on how programs connect home-school experiences, how parents and teachers define family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families are influenced by culturally responsive family engagement within the program.

Participants defined and perceived family engagement via daily bilingual communication using a culturally responsive lens and working together to extend

classroom learning at home. They believed parent/teacher and home/school relationships encouraged them to become engaged within the MSHS program by participating in family events, helping within the classroom, and completing home activities. Family participants believed that family engagement (daily bilingual communication with staff and extending learning at home) in the program had a positive influence on their children and families by encouraging community engagement and using services within the MSHS program, meeting other families within the program, and learning English. Data showed that each of these themes overlapped and built on one another. Both parents and teachers defined family engagement as involving communicating bilingually daily and working together at home and school to promote learning. By consistently communicating through a culturally responsive lens, staff and parents built a culturally respectful relationship that encouraged engagement in the program and positive outcomes for the program, families, and children. Both teachers and families identified the importance of communicating daily; parents said being able to communicate in their first language (Spanish) was an important part of this communication.

Smith (2019) said when schools or education programs can use resources to build partnerships with families, this can bridge the gap between families who have high-quality resources and experiences and those who do not. While most parents could speak English, they felt more comfortable speaking Spanish with their child's teacher. While parents identified enjoying helping in the classroom, they felt their priority was to communicate daily with teachers. Both teacher participants also identified the importance of communicating daily with all parents. By communicating daily, both parents and

teachers felt they could extend children's learning from school to home. Both identified a positive influence on each other. Teachers felt their classrooms were more successful due to parents' involvement and assistance when needed. Throughout interviews, it was clear there was a strong relationship between teachers and parents that encouraged parents to become engaged within the program through family events, helping in the classroom, and completing home activities. Parents were connected to community resources through the culturally responsive outreach within the MSHS program. By offering these community resources, the MSHS program encouraged community engagement and assisted families in meeting each other and learning English.

Interpretation of the Findings

This study focused on how the local MSHS program incorporated family engagement through home and school experiences by examining how migrant family participants and teaching staff define and perceive family engagement, the role family engagement has on parent-teacher relationships, and how families enrolled in the MSHS program are influenced by family engagement within the local program. The foundation of cultural responsive teaching is to incorporate children's home experience into learning experiences and bridge the gap between home and school (Gay, 2015). The MSHS program attempts to bridge the gap between home and school by providing home activities that extend children's classroom learning, inviting families into the classroom and family events as well as bringing community members and programs into the center, the classroom, and MSHS program family events. Families identified the MSHS program

as connecting them to community resources through culturally responsive outreach programs offered within the program.

The MSHS program ensures that teachers and staff are bilingual so that families can communicate in their first language and provide materials in multiple languages. When dual language learners or families whose first language is not English can communicate in their home language, it can assist in closing academic gaps (Fehrer, et al., 2018; Smith, 2019). There are no defined guidelines for culturally responsive classrooms. Addressing the areas of culturally responsive classroom community and family engagement can contribute to creating culturally responsive practices in early childhood environments. Culturally responsive classrooms can have a lasting effect on families and young children (Bennett, et al., 2018).

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers face many challenges for themselves and their families. Risks for migrant and seasonal farm workers include health and safety hazards on the job, lack of accessibility to healthcare and educational services, language barriers, severe poverty, and cultural isolation (BLS, 2020; McLaurin et al., 2012). These barriers were identified by study participants. Many participants discussed that they were connected to community resources through their involvement with the MSHS program and obtained assistance with learning English to obtain better jobs and to bridge the language barrier. P3 said, “I wanted to learn more English so I can get a better job. The teachers and staff helped me with this.” T1 stated, “We provide referrals when families request it and when we see there might be a need.”

Epstein (2010) described family, school, and community partnerships as overlapping spheres. Epstein (2010) described six types of caring: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. The HS Family Engagement initiative incorporated Epstein's (2010) six types of caring (OHS, 2018). Epstein also identified that for these partnerships to work they must be built on trust and mutual respect. Parents and teachers identified relationships built on trust and mutual respect. Epstein's types of caring could be seen throughout the program with participants identifying assistance with parenting issues, communicating with each other daily, volunteering within the classroom and program, making decisions within the program through parent meetings, and collaborating and connecting with community resources. P6 described their child as making significant progress in their behavior, "My child does not curse anymore and will listen to me and follow the rules now." During my observations I observed a child running up to their teacher and reciting the alphabet, another child named the color of their boots.

The local program connects home and school through their home activity calendars and family events. All participants identified an increase in their child's academic, language, and social skills and identified positive influences on their families (learning English, meeting other families, etc.). Smith (2019) also identified the importance of connecting home and school experiences and its influence on families and young children. Gay (2015) identified the foundation of cultural responsive practice as incorporating young children's home experience into learning experiences and bridging the gap between home and school. It was clear that the family engagement policy in the

MSSH program focused on connecting home and school experiences and bringing the children's culture into the program. During my observations a child came into the room and went directly to the Family Wall to place their family picture on the wall and jumped up and down pointing to it to show the other children and teacher yelling, "My family!" in Spanish.

Fehrer and Tognozzi (2018) found that when early childhood learning programs implement strategies that are culturally and linguistically responsive and engage families in their child's learning they can provide a quality learning experience for dual language learners. The local MSSH program brought the children's and family's culture into the classroom and the lessons and experiences they shared. The NHSA created the OHS NCPFCE to identify, educate, and distribute information to early childhood programs, families, and communities on best practices for strengthening partnerships that support the positive growth and development of young children (OHS Centers, 2013). The local MSSH program incorporated the best practices identified by the NCPFCE into the program's family engagement practices.

Children Now (2019) researched the ways California schools are addressing the education of their diverse student population. Researchers found in order to improve outcomes for students, programs must improve the ways they support young children and their families from the very start. Grace, Bowes, et al. (2014) found that families were more likely to utilize services when families felt connected to programs, were assured of their children's safety, and when families were connected to other social services.

Families in the study felt a strong connection to the program and utilized services recommended by the local program staff. Families reached out to the local program when in need of services. This could be seen in the local program; families felt a strong connection to the program and were more apt to utilize services recommended by the local program staff. The foundation of cultural responsive practice is incorporating young children's home experience into learning experiences and bridging the gap between home and school (Gay, 2015). T2 stated, "We send calendars home with activities that families can do with their children, so we communicate in writing and verbally. Some parents may have difficulty reading so we always try to tell them about the activities and go over the calendar with them." These are some of the same activities the teachers do in the classroom with the children.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations that arose from the execution of this qualitative case study included the small number of participants. The number of participants was lower than anticipated due to the local MSHS program's low-enrollment year. While the number of participants was small the information obtained was very informative. It can be useful for other programs, teachers, administrators, and directors of MSHS programs who serve diverse populations. To ensure credibility responses were audio-recorded when possible and transcribed verbatim when participants were adamant, they did not want to be audio-recorded. Participants reviewed the transcripts of their interviews to ensure the accuracy and context of their responses.

The language barrier was also a limitation since I am not fluent in Spanish and concepts can be lost or misunderstood even with good translation of materials. The translator reviewer was useful in this area as he was able to review the translated materials and advised the translation of materials was good. With my conversational Spanish skills, I overcame the language barriers with parents since they also could speak a little English. They gave their answers in the language they felt comfortable in and I could translate when they spoke in Spanish. My limited ability to read Spanish fluently was also a limitation since I could not read Spanish research materials.

Migrant and seasonal workers also have very long work hours which was a potential limitation to families participating within the study. To address this limitation, I allowed families to select the time and location of their interview. This flexibility addressed this limitation allowing all those who wanted to participate to be able to do so. Building trust with families was also a limitation. During my data collection, many immigration and deportation issues that caused families to be wary of participating and being audio-recorded during interviews. I accommodated families who did not want to be audio recorded by writing down their answers. Making accommodations for participants made them more trustful and more at ease with participating in the study. The long work hours of families were also a limitation. To address this limitation, I allowed families to pick a time and location of their choice and adjusted my schedule to meet with them when it was convenient for them.

I collected data from observations (family event, drop-off, and pick-up times), teacher interviews, and parent interviews. I triangulated the data from these three forms

of data collection to ensure the study's validity and verify the findings. I included direct quotes from interviews (parents and teachers) and examples from my observational notes in my findings. To avoid bias I utilized an expert reviewer. The expert reviewer was an individual with a PhD in Education and over ten years of experience in education from elementary through high school. This individual reviewed the data and asked questions for clarification. The expert reviewer did not find any biases and suggested that I clearly articulate my findings. Other MSHS programs and programs that serve a diverse population can utilize these findings to enhance their programs and ensure they utilize family engagement to communicate effectively, build relationships, and connect individuals enrolled in their programs to community resources.

Recommendations

Recommendations from this study include that further study on early childhood programs serving diverse populations be conducted to address the literature gap and the gap in practice regarding diverse populations. By conducting further study into the early childhood programs that serve the migrant and seasonal workers and their families we can bridge educational and community gaps for diverse families. It is important to identify any potential barriers diverse families face. Programs face many challenges from socioeconomic status, language barriers, cultural differences, to rural locations (MCN, 2019; Moyce, 2018).

Program providers must also determine how they will implement family engagement and what will work for their programs and families they serve. While there is no defined script or equation to a culturally responsive classroom, family engagement

must be a component of culturally responsive teaching and programs (Fehrere & Tognozzi, 2018). Continued studies can identify areas in which programs could improve family engagement, and how culture can be incorporated to bridge the home-school experiences. Researchers have found family engagement to positively influence families to include closing achievement gaps for young children to connecting families to their local communities (Billings, 2019; Gay, 2015). Programs must implement family engagement in a way that connects home-school experiences (Liang et al., 2020; Zyngier, 2014). Migrant and seasonal families face many challenges and early childhood programs serving this population positively impact families (Kossek & Burke, 2014; Moyce, 2018; Smith, 2019; Underwood & Killoran, 2012). Education of migrant children is a significant policy issue. When programs do not implement culturally responsive family engagement, a higher drop-out rate and lower educational attainment levels for migrant children and cultural and language barriers are found (Hodaway, 2018). Grace and Trudgett (2012) found that when programs and educators utilize cultural responsive practice and meet families in their home environments a strong home-school partnership can be built.

Implications

Implications for this qualitative case study have potential for positive social impact individually on young children and their families, for a community, and for organizations serving diverse populations. Even though the problem of the significantly lower number of MSHS families volunteering within the program than HS families was

not evident in this program, the OHS PIR continue to reflect this problem throughout the state.

The findings provide valuable information to the local program and other programs serving diverse populations in improving school readiness for young children, higher academic success rates, and higher retention rates for migrant students. Other positive implications include language development, increasing retention rates and family engagement within educational programs for children from migrant families, and connecting migrant families to community resources. The study participants stated that they were connected to several community resources while enrolled in the MSHS program. These resources helped them learn English, obtain better employment, and assist with food shortages in the home. The study also identified potentially unique challenges that early childhood programs may face when working with migrant families. Challenges include potential language barriers, local immigration issues impacting parental involvement, transportation, and work schedules. In this study local immigration issues impacted whether parents wanted to be audio recorded during their interviews. Parents in this study also reported positive influences on their children's social-emotional, physical, language, and academic development, as well as a positive influence on their families (attending family events, assisting in the classroom, and meeting other families within the program).

Parents were assisted by being connected to local resources and felt comfortable coming to the program for assistance when needed. Teachers identified that they are aware many of their families face food shortages in the home, so they often send leftovers

home from events and share referrals with families for local food banks when needed. Parents reported they feel connected to the program and other families they have met through the program. In my observations I continually noticed children running up to their teachers in the morning and saying goodbye at the end of the day. Parents also consistently spoke to teaching staff and greeted each other.

The data contribute to the conceptual framework of cultural responsive practice/teaching demonstrating that when family engagement is implemented through a culturally responsive lens, it has a positive influence on early childhood programs and the diverse families they serve. It is recommended for practice that family engagement be implemented through a cultural responsive lens to increase family's engagement in their child's education and the programs serving them. By implementing family engagement with a culturally responsive lens, we can begin to bridge the gap in disparity for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and other diverse populations.

Conclusion

By connecting home and school experiences programs can incorporate young children's culture into the program. Culturally responsive practices need to become the norm for programs so that all families feel welcomed and are encouraged to engage with the program and engage in their child's education. Relationships are built by participants and teachers through cultural responsive communication and environments. These culturally responsive relationships keep families in the program, increases retention rates for young children, and continues family engagement in secondary learning environments. The organizational structure and context of programs influence parents'

perceptions, enrollment, retention, and completion of early intervention services. It is essential programs organize in a way reflective of the families they serve. Cultural responsive practice can increase family engagement by providing significant benefits for young children and their families. Cultural responsive practices are validating, supportive, empowering, and comprehensive (Gay, 2015). Data showed that cultural responsive practice as incorporated through the Family Engagement initiative in the MSHS program builds strong communication between parents and staff, leading to building strong relationships and positive influences on young children and their families. The implications for positive social change include increasing family engagement in early childhood programs as well as increasing academic success for young children.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol: Parent Questionnaire (English & Spanish)

Introduction: Today, I will be asking you some questions about your experiences in your Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program. I will also ask you several questions about the ways the program helps to support your child's learning and development by incorporating your culture into their program and their family engagement initiative. When thinking about your child's development, I'd like for you to consider their learning, behavior, and physical health and well-being, and what role culture and family engagement within the program affect your child's development. This interview will last approximately one hour. All of the information that you share with me will remain private; no one from your child's program will see or hear your responses. During the interview, I will be taking some notes about our discussion. To help me keep track of your responses to the questions, I will audio record our conversation. Again, this information will not be shared with anyone from the program; it is just meant to serve as a record of what you and I discussed. Is that okay? Do you have any questions before we begin the interview?

Module 1: 5 minutes

I would like to begin by asking you about your experiences related to enrolling in the MSHS program.

1. How did you learn about the MSHS program? Did someone suggest enrolling in MSHS program to you, or did you decide to enroll on your own? • When you first decided to enroll in the MSHS program, what did you hope to get from the program? -

PROBE AS NEEDED: Did you hope to gain something for your child? Did you hope to gain something for yourself or for your family? If so, what?

2. Please think back to the time before you were enrolled in the MSHS program.

At that time, did you think it was important for families to do activities with their child to support their learning and development? [PROBE: Why or why not?] • Now that you are enrolled in the program, do you feel the same way? - IF NO, ASK: Why not?

3. ALL FAMILIES, EXCLUDING PREGNANT WOMEN/EXPECTANT

FATHERS: Are you satisfied with your experiences in the program so far? • IF YES,

ASK: Please tell me some of the ways that the program has helped your child. Have you

seen changes in your child's learning and development since you first enrolled in the

MSHS program? • IF YES, ASK: What are some of the ways that the program has helped

you and your family? • IF NO, ASK: What could the program do differently to better

help your child and family?

Module 2: Relationships with Program and Staff (15-20 minutes) Now, I would like to talk about your experiences with staff at your MSHS program, including the staff

that you usually talk to and the types of things you talk about. INTERVIEWER NOTE:

WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE FREQUENCY OF INTERACTION WITH PROGRAM

STAFF, RESPONSES MIGHT RANGE FROM SPECIFIC (“WE TALK AT LEAST

TWICE PER WEEK”) TO BROAD (“OFTEN” OR “ALL THE TIME”). WHEN

GENERAL RESPONSES ARE PROVIDED, ASK THE RESPONDENT TO

ELABORATE BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE: “WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY

[FREQUENCY]? ABOUT HOW MANY DAYS PER WEEK OR MONTH WOULD YOU SAY THAT IS?"

INTERVIEWER NOTE: ASK ABOUT EACH STAFF MEMBER THE RESPONDENT MENTIONS. • What are some examples of ways [STAFF MEMBER(S)] has made you feel [comfortable / uncomfortable]?

FOR CENTER-BASED FAMILIES ONLY, EXCLUDING PREGNANT WOMEN/EXPECTANT FATHERS:

4. How often do you meet with or talk to your child's teacher? • What kinds of things do you talk about with your child's teacher? • Do you ever work with the teacher to make plans about ways to support your child's learning and development? - IF YES, ASK: Please tell me about some of the ways that you have worked together.

5. When you meet with or talk to your child's teacher, do you feel comfortable talking about topics related to your child and family? • What are some examples of ways s/he has made you feel [comfortable/uncomfortable]?

FOR ALL FAMILIES:

Thinking of all the staff at your MSHS program, what are some examples of ways they have made you feel welcome? Mathematica Policy Research 4 Revision 1.0_March 2014.

Families with young children sometimes need help of various kinds. Have you ever asked someone in the MSHS program for help getting specific services for your child or family? Some examples may include getting services for your child's special needs, help finding a job, or help with housing.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: ASK ABOUT EACH TYPE OF SERVICE THE RESPONDENT MENTIONS. • IF YES, ASK: Who from the program did you talk to? –

IF RESPONDENT SPOKE TO STAFF: What kinds of things did you talk about with them? Was this staff person able to help you? [IF YES, ASK: How so? IF NO, ASK: Why not?] - IF RESPONDENT DID NOT SPEAK TO STAFF: Who from the program

do you think you would ask for help and why? • IF NO, ASK: Who from the program do you think you would ask for help and why?

IF PARENT HAS NOT MENTIONED FORMAL GOALS FOR THEIR CHILD, ASK:

Many parents have goals and hopes for their child. What are the goals that you would like for your child to reach while they are in the program? • How are staff from your program helping your child reach those goals? • Do you feel that staff from your program understand what's important to you when it comes to the goals that you have for your child?

IF PARENT HAS ALREADY MENTIONED FORMAL GOALS FOR THEIR CHILD, ASK: You mentioned some goals and hopes for your child. How are staff from your program helping your child reach those goals? • Do you feel that staff from your program understands what's important to you when it comes to the goals that you have for your child?

What are your goals and hopes for yourself? • How is staff from your program helping you reach your goals for yourself?

Module 3: Family Engagement in the Program and in children’s learning and development (10 minutes) Next, I would like to talk about the types of activities that you do to help support your child’s learning and development. This includes activities you do at your program, at home, or in your neighborhood or community.

What kinds of things does your program encourage you to do at the program [to support your child’s learning and development]? Some examples may include attending parent meetings, socializations, or volunteering at the program. There may be other activities in your program that you have heard of. •

IF POLICY COUNCIL OR COMMITTEES NOT MENTIONED, ASK: Has the program encouraged you to get involved in program leadership activities like the Policy Council or becoming a member of a Committee? Mathematica Policy Research 5

Revision 1.0_March 2014

INTERVIEWER NOTE: PARTICIPATION IN THE POLICY COUNCIL AND IN PARENT COMMITTEES IS OPEN TO ALL PARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO ARE ENROLLED IN THE PROGRAM. THESE ACTIVITIES PROVIDE PARENTS WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE INVOLVED IN PROGRAM PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING. • Of the activities you just mentioned, which have you or your family gotten involved in? –

IF FAMILY HAS NOT PARTICIPATED: Are there any activities at the program that you wanted to get involved in but could not? [IF YES, ASK: What made it hard for you to get involved?] • What are some of the ways you can let the program know how you’d like to get involved in activities at the program? • Beyond what you have

already mentioned, does the program encourage parents to share their opinions about program policies and procedures in other ways? - IF YES, ASK: What are some examples?

Do you feel that families in the program can turn to each other for friendship or if they need support? • Does the program encourage parents to support one another? - IF YES, ASK: How so?

Closing: We have now reached the end of the interview. Thank you again for sharing your experiences with me.

Cuestionario de Entrevista de los Padres

Introducción: Hoy pediré a usted algunas preguntas acerca de sus experiencias en el programa de migrantes y de temporada. Yo también le haré preguntas varias sobre las formas en que el programa de ayuda para apoyar el aprendizaje y el desarrollo de su hijo mediante la incorporación de la cultura en su programa y su iniciativa de participación de las familias. Al pensar en el desarrollo de su hijo, me gustaría para que considere su aprendizaje, comportamiento y salud física y bienestar, y qué papel, cultura y participación de las familias dentro del programa afectan al desarrollo de su hijo. Esta entrevista va a durar aproximadamente una hora. Toda la información que usted comparte conmigo seguirá siendo privada; nadie del programa de su niño a ver o escuchar sus respuestas. Durante la entrevista, va a tomar algunas notas sobre el debate. Para ayudar a mantener un registro de sus respuestas a las preguntas, voy a expedir del audio nuestra conversación. Otra vez, esta información no se compartirá con nadie del programa; se.

Módulo 1: 5 minutos,

Me gustaría comenzar por preguntarle acerca de sus experiencias relacionadas con inscribirse en el programa MSHS.

1. ¿Cómo se enteró del programa MSHS? ¿Alguien sugiere inscribirse en el programa MSHS, o decidió inscribirse por su cuenta? ¿• Cuando primero decidió inscribirse en el programa MSHS, lo que espera obtener desde el programa? -SONDA como necesarias: ¿esperas obtener algo para su hijo? ¿Espera obtener algo para ti o para tu familia? Si es así, ¿qué?

2. Por favor, piense en el tiempo antes de inscribirse en el programa MSHS. ¿En aquel momento, pensaste que era importante para las familias realizar actividades con su niño para apoyar su aprendizaje y desarrollo? [Sondeo: ¿por qué o por qué no?] • Ahora que usted está inscrito en el programa, ¿se siente de la misma manera? -Si NO, pregunte: ¿por qué no?

3. TODAS LAS FAMILIAS, EXCEPTO EMBARAZADAS
MUJERES/EMBARAZADAS PADRES:

¿Está satisfecho con sus experiencias en el programa hasta ahora? • En caso afirmativo, pregunte: por favor, dime algunas de las formas que el programa ha ayudado a su hijo. ¿Has visto cambios en el aprendizaje y desarrollo de su hijo ya que está primero inscrito en el programa MSHS? • En caso afirmativo, pregunte: ¿Cuáles son algunas de las formas en que el programa ha ayudado a usted y su familia? • Si NO, pregunte: ¿Qué podría el programa de hacer diferente para ayudarle mejor a su hijo y su familia?

Módulo 2: Relaciones con el programa y el personal (15-20 minutos) ahora, me gustaría hablar sobre sus experiencias con el personal en su programa MSHS, incluyendo

el personal que habitualmente hablas con y el tipo de cosas que habla. NOTA DEL ENTREVISTADOR: CUANDO SE LE PREGUNTÓ SOBRE LA FRECUENCIA DE INTERACCIÓN CON EL PROGRAMA, LAS RESPUESTAS PODRÍAN ENTRE ESPECÍFICOS ("NOS HABLA AL MENOS DOS VECES POR SEMANA") Y AMPLIA ("A MENUDO" O "TODO EL TIEMPO"). CUANDO GENERAL LAS RESPUESTAS SON PROPORCIONADAS, PEDIR AL DEMANDADO A ELABORAR DICIENDO, POR EJEMPLO: "¿QUÉ SIGNIFICAS POR [FRECUENCIA]? ¿CUÁNTOS DÍAS POR SEMANA O MES ¿DIRÍAS QUE ES?"

NOTA DEL ENTREVISTADOR: PREGÚNTELE A CADA MIEMBRO DEL PERSONAL DE LAS MENCIONES DEL DEMANDADO. • ¿Cuáles son algunos ejemplos de formas [personal miembro (S)] te ha hecho sentir [cómodo / incómodo]? PARA LOS PADRES DE FAMILIAS BASADOS EN EL CENTRO SOLAMENTE, EXCEPTO EMBARAZADAS MUJERES/EMBARAZADAS:

4. ¿con qué frecuencia usted puede quedar con o hablar con la maestra? • ¿Qué tipo de cosas hablar con la maestra? • ¿Usted alguna vez trabajó con el maestro para hacer planes sobre formas de apoyar el aprendizaje y el desarrollo de su hijo? -En caso sí, pregunta: Por favor dígame acerca de algunas de las formas que han trabajado juntos. 5. al quedar con o hablar con la maestra, ¿te sientes cómodo hablando de temas relacionados con su hijo y su familia? • ¿Cuáles son algunos ejemplos de maneras que te ha hecho sentir [cómodo/incómodo]?

PARA TODAS LAS FAMILIAS:

Pensamiento de todo el personal en su programa MSHS, ¿cuáles son algunos ejemplos de formas que han le hizo sentirse? Política de Mathematica de investigación
revisión 4 1.0_ March 2014

Las familias con niños pequeños a veces necesitan la ayuda de diversos tipos. ¿Ha alguna vez solicitado alguien en el programa MSHS ayuda para servicios específicos para su hijo o familia? Algunos ejemplos pueden obtener servicios para necesidades especiales de su hijo, ayudar a encontrar un trabajo o ayudar con vivienda.

NOTA DEL ENTREVISTADOR: PREGUNTAR ACERCA DE CADA TIPO DE SERVICIO LAS MENCIONES DEL DEMANDADO. ¿• En caso afirmativo, pregunte: que desde el programa hablas con?

IF demandado habló al personal: ¿Qué tipo de cosas hablar con ellos? ¿Pudo ayudarle a esta persona? [IF YES, pregunte: ¿Cómo así? Si NO, pregunte: ¿por qué no?] -

IF demandado no hablar al personal: Desde el programa ¿quién crees te pido ayuda y ¿por qué? ¿• Si NO, pregunte: que desde el programa crees que pedir ayuda y por qué?

SI EL PADRE NO HA MENCIONADO OBJETIVOS FORMALES PARA SU NIÑO, PREGÚNTELE:

Muchos padres tienen metas y esperanzas para sus hijos. ¿Cuáles son los objetivos que desea para que su hijo alcance mientras están en el programa? • ¿Qué personal de su programa ayuda a su niño a alcanzar esas metas? • ¿Sientes que el personal de su programa de entender lo que es importante para usted cuando se trata de los objetivos que usted tiene para su hijo?

IF PADRE TIENE YA MENCIONADO FORMAL METAS PARA SU HIJO,

PREGUNTA: Usted mencionó algunas metas y esperanzas para su hijo. ¿Cómo es personal desde su programa de ayuda su hijo alcanzar esas metas? • ¿Siente usted que el personal de su programa entiende lo que es importante para usted cuando se trata de los objetivos que usted tiene para su hijo?

¿Cuáles son tus metas y esperanzas para ti? • ¿Cómo es el personal de su programa para ayudarle a alcanzar sus metas por sí mismo?

Módulo 3: Participación de familia en el programa y en el aprendizaje y desarrollo (10 minutos) próxima de los niños, me gustaría hablar de los tipos de actividades que haces para ayudar a apoyar el aprendizaje y el desarrollo de su hijo. Esto incluye actividades que hacer en su programa, en casa, o en su barrio o comunidad.

¿Qué tipo de cosas su programa animo a hacer en el programa [para apoyar el aprendizaje y el desarrollo de su hijo]? Algunos ejemplos pueden incluir asistir a reuniones de padres, socializaciones, o voluntariado en el programa. Puede haber otras actividades en su programa que usted ha oído hablar de.

Si política Consejo o comités no mencionados, pregunta: ¿Que programa actividades de liderazgo como el Concilio de pólizas o convertirse en un miembro de un Comité ha alentado el programa? Política de Matemáticas de investigación revisión 5 1.0_ March 2014.

NOTA DEL ENTREVISTADOR: PARTICIPACIÓN EN EL CONSEJO DE POLÍTICA Y EN LOS COMITÉS DE PADRES ESTÁ ABIERTA A TODOS LOS PADRES DE LOS NIÑOS QUE ESTÁN INSCRITOS EN EL PROGRAMA.

ESTAS ACTIVIDADES PROPORCIONAN A LOS PADRES CON LA OPORTUNIDAD DE PARTICIPAR EN LA PLANIFICACIÓN Y TOMA DE DECISIONES. ¿• De las actividades que acabo de mencionar, que con usted o su familia está involucrado?

Si NO tiene familia participación: ¿Hay alguna actividad en el programa que quería participar, pero no podría? [IF YES, pregunta: ¿lo que hace difícil para que usted pueda involucrarse?] • ¿Cuáles son algunas de las formas que puede hacer que el programa sepa cómo gustaría involucrarse en actividades en el programa? • Más allá de lo que usted ya ha mencionado, ¿tiene el programa a los padres a compartir sus opiniones sobre las políticas del programa y los procedimientos de otras maneras? -En caso sí, pregunte: ¿Cuáles son algunos ejemplos?

¿Crees que las familias en el programa pueden convertirse uno al otro para amistad o si necesitan ayuda? • ¿Tiene el programa a los padres para apoyarse el uno con el otro? -En caso sí, pregunte: ¿Cómo así?

CIERRE: Hemos llegado al final de la entrevista. Gracias otra vez por compartir sus experiencias conmigo.

Staff Interview Questionnaire

Introduction: Today, I will be asking you some questions about your experiences related to working with families in your MSHS program. I will also ask you several questions about the ways the program helps to support children's learning and development by incorporating their culture into the learning environment as well as through family engagement. When thinking about development, I'd like for you to

consider children’s learning, behavior, and physical health and well-being and the role that culture and family engagement play. This interview will last approximately one hour. All of the information that you share with me will remain private; no one from your program will see or hear your responses. During the interview, I will be taking some notes about our discussion. To help me keep track of your responses to the questions, I will audio record our conversation. Again, this information will not be shared with anyone from your program; it is just meant to serve as a record of what you and I discussed. Is that okay? Do you have any questions before we begin the interview?

Module 1: Opportunities for Family Engagement (20 minutes)

I would like to begin by asking you about ways the program encourages families’ involvement in activities that support their child’s learning and development. This includes activities that parents participate in at the program, at home, or in their community.

1. What are some of the activities that your program offers for getting families involved at the program? • **IF POLICY COUNCIL OR COMMITTEES NOT MENTIONED, ASK:** What types of leadership encourages families to get involved? What are some of the way’s families can let the program know how they’d like to get involved in activities at the program? • Beyond what you have already mentioned, does the program encourage parents to share their opinions about program policies and procedures in other ways? - **IF YES, ASK:** How so?

2. What are some types of things that your program suggests families do outside of the program to support their child's learning and development? This includes activities parents can do with their child at home or in their community.

3. Thinking about the activities we have discussed so far, how is information about these opportunities shared with families? Now, I'd like to hear about ways your program tries to work with and engage specific types of parents or families. For each of the groups that I will ask about, I'd like to hear if your program offers information or activities to get parents and families involved in program activities and in their child's learning and development.

4. **FOR EACH ITEM, ASK:** What are some ways that your program tries to engage families? • Families from different cultural and language backgrounds - How successful have these efforts been in getting these families involved? • Families who have a child with a disability - How successful have these efforts been in getting these families involved? • Fathers or father-figures - How successful have these efforts been in getting fathers or father figures involved? • Families who have many risk factors or challenges - How successful have these efforts been in getting these families involved?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: RISK FACTORS ARE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT ARE COMMONLY RELATED TO POOR CHILD AND FAMILY OUTCOMES. SOME EXAMPLES ARE BEING A TEEN MOTHER, LACK OF SOCIAL OR FINANCIAL SUPPORT, PARENT MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS, AND HOMELESSNESS. Mathematica Policy Research 15 Revision 1.0_March 2014 5.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: TRANSITIONS INCLUDE THOSE FROM MSHS TO KINDERGARTEN. •

Module 2: Program Supports for Family Engagement and Service Receipt (15 minutes) – Now, I would like to ask you a few questions about the resources and support staff members receive from the program for working with families and getting them engaged in the program and in their child’s learning and development. We also want to hear about support staff receive for getting families the services that they need.

5. Which staff members are responsible for getting families involved in program activities and in their children’s learning and development? • What are some examples of ways that staff work together to get families involved?

6. What types of resources and support do you receive to help involve families in program activities and in their child’s learning and development?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF RESPONDENT DISCUSSES TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY THE PROGRAM MORE BROADLY (AND THAT DO NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS RESOURCES/SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO STAFF FOR ENGAGING FAMILIES IN PROGRAM ACTIVITIES), REFOCUS THE RESPONDENT BY ASKING: “CAN YOU TELL ME SPECIFICALLY ABOUT RESOURCES AND SUPPORT YOU RECEIVE FOR ENGAGING FAMILIES IN ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT THEIR CHILD’S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT?” • Of the supports you just mentioned, which do you think are most helpful for staff and why? • Are there any

additional supports that would help staff involve families in the program and in their child's learning and development?

7. We've been talking about how staff members involve families in program activities; now let's talk about how staff members help families get the services they need. What staff members are responsible for helping families get needed services? • What are some examples of ways that staff work together to help families get the services they need? Mathematica Policy Research 16 Revision 1.0_March 2014 10. What types of resources and support do you receive to connect families to needed resources and services? **INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF RESPONDENT DISCUSSES TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY THE PROGRAM MORE BROADLY (AND THAT DO NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS RESOURCES/SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO STAFF FOR GETTING FAMILIES THE SERVICES THEY NEED), REFOCUS THE RESPONDENT BY ASKING: "CAN YOU TELL ME SPECIFICALLY ABOUT RESOURCES AND SUPPORT YOU RECEIVE FOR CONNECTING FAMILIES TO THE SERVICES THEY NEED?" •**

Of the supports you just mentioned, which do you think are most helpful for staff and why? • Are there any additional supports that would help staff connect families to needed resources and services?

Module 3: Working with Families (10-15 minutes) – These next questions are about your experiences working with families, including how you work with families to meet their service-related needs and work toward identified goals.

9. How often do you meet with or talk to families one-on-one?

10. What types of things do you talk about with families?

11. Thinking about the families you work with, what are some of the formal goals parents have for their children? • Tell me about some of the formal goals parents have for themselves.

12. How do you work with families to identify specific goals? • Once goals have been identified, how do you work together with families to determine steps to reach those goals?

13. When a family needs resources or services for themselves or their child, how do you involve and work with the family to meet those needs?

14. When there is an issue related to a child's learning and development, how do you involve and work with the family? Mathematica Policy Research 17 Revision

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15. What activities are offered by the program for families to get to know one another? • What opportunities does the program provide for families to get to know other families who are also transitioning from the program to some other early learning center or setting? **Closing:** We have now reached the end of the interview. Thank you again for sharing your experiences with me.