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Latino Young Adults' Experiences as Children and Adolescents With Incarcerated Parents

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Anna Julie Garcia

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

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Parents

by

Anna Julie Garcia

MPhil, Walden University, 2023

MS, University of Houston, Clearlake, 2015

BS, University of Houston, Clearlake, 2011

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Developmental Psychology

Walden University

November 2024

Abstract

Parental incarceration has a significant impact on children's and adolescents' lives,

including emotional and mental well-being, which can carry to their adulthood. Although

parental incarceration has been researched, the lived experiences and mental health needs

of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents have not been explored. The

purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand the recollections of

young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and

adolescents with incarcerated parents. Data were collected through semistructured

participant interviews with open-ended questions. Participants were 10 Latino young

adults who had experienced having at least one biological parent incarcerated when they

were younger. Data were analyzed using the interpretative phenomenological analysis

method to gain a better understanding of individuals' personal experiences and how they

interpret them in the context of their social and personal lives. Analysis of the data

revealed the following themes: (a) social and cultural adjustment, (b) mental health

struggles, and (c) behavioral struggles. The research findings help to fill a gap in the

literature regarding the experiences and mental health needs specific to Latino children

and adolescents with an incarcerated parent. These results may have implications for

positive social change by increasing awareness and improving the policies for growth and

development that help to improve support services for Latino young people.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate my dissertation to the participants who made this study possible. Their openness in sharing the details of their personal journeys was essential to completing this research. I am deeply humbled by their resilience and honored to have had the opportunity to explore and share the experiences of these young Latino adults who had incarcerated parents when they were children and adolescents.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I want to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for placing this goal in my heart and enabling me to achieve it. During times when I felt like giving up, I found strength in the verse, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

Second, I am deeply grateful to my husband and soulmate, Ryan Garcia, who inspired my research topic and understands it personally. Your life and resilience have been a source of inspiration for me and our children. Thank you for being my greatest supporter, especially during times when I wanted to quit. Your constant reminder, "If it was easy, everyone would do it!" kept me on track every day. I can never repay you for the countless sacrifices you made to help me stay focused. We did it, Babe!

I also want to express my love and appreciation to my children—Marc, Ryan Jr., Ileana, Juliana, and Baby Garcia—who have been my guiding light. In moments of doubt, I remembered that you were watching. I hope I have made you all proud. Remember to never give up on your dreams; your mom has faced obstacles repeatedly, and I have overcome them all. Thank you, my loves, for understanding when I needed to focus on my work and for the sacrifices each of you made along the way.

Additionally, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my parents, Jose and Maria Membreno, for their unwavering love and support throughout this journey. Your favorite phrase for me, "¡Sí se puede, sí se puede!" has always encouraged me. Now I say to my parents ¡Sí se pudo, mami y papi! To my brothers, John, Ricky, and Juan Membreno, and their families, I appreciate the encouraging words and prayers that kept me going. I also

want to thank my father-in-law, Randall Garcia, who played a significant role in inspiring my topic. Thank you for watching over me from heaven and sending those sweet cardinals during my mental health runs.

I am also immensely grateful to my chair, Dr. Sally Zengaro, and my committee member, Dr. Carl Valdez. Thank you for your unwavering guidance and support throughout this challenging journey. Your continuous encouragement, patience, and expert insights helped me to refine my ideas and deepen my understanding of my research. This dissertation would not have been possible without your support during the tough times. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

This doctorate is the outcome of many late nights, early mornings, and countless weekends filled with hard work, dedication, and deep reflection on my research topic. Along the way, I have developed a deep respect for the nature of research and for those who contribute to it. I am immensely grateful for this journey and will forever cherish the personal growth and transformation it has inspired within me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world (Walmsley, 2019). Mass incarceration has a significant impact on poor, disadvantaged, and minority families, and it also affects family members who are not directly incarcerated (Wildeman et al., 2019). Because of this, it is important to understand how having an incarcerated parent impacts minority children and adolescents. By gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents, it is possible to better prepare for their mental health needs as young adults. There is a gap in the literature in understanding the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs from the perspective of young adults.

The current study will give deeper insight based on the human experience of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents. The social problem is the lack of necessary support services for Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents. Understanding the findings may lead to positive social change by improving the policies for growth and development that help to improve support services for Latinos. Information provided in this study will involve the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents including mental health needs from the perspectives of young adults. This chapter includes the background of the problem, purpose of the study, and social and theoretical contexts that contribute to challenges and mental health obstacles faced by Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents. In Chapter 1, I define and explain the mental health problems experienced by Latino

children and adolescents of incarcerated parents. Furthermore, in this chapter, I describe the nature of the study and provide vocabulary definitions used throughout the study. Additional sections will include assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations, as well as the significance of the study. This chapter concludes with a summary.

Background

Forster et al. (2019) found a correlation between familial incarceration and suicide, with ethnic identity a potential moderator. Research has shown that parental incarceration at various stages of child and adolescent development leads to various negative outcomes (Luk et al., 2023). Ryan et al. (2023) found that childhood parental incarceration significantly affects young adulthood, but its effects have not been studied in the Latino community as extensively. According to Ryan et al. (2023), Black children and Hispanic children are much more likely than White children to have a parent in prison. The research further indicates there are significant racial disparities between the incarceration experiences of Black and Latino groups and those of White populations (Ryan et al., 2023). However, there is a gap in the literature in understanding the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs from the perspectives of young adults.

Mogro-Wilson et al. (2019) conducted a study on the significance of fathers in children's well-being, particularly exploring the effects of a fatherhood intervention program on young African American, Puerto Rican, and non-Puerto Rican Hispanic fathers. However, the study did not address the gap in the literature regarding the lived experiences of mental health needs among Latino children and adolescents of

incarcerated parents from the perspective of young adults. Gifford et al. (2019) found that a higher incidence of childhood psychiatric diagnoses (such as depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and conduct disorder) was associated with parental incarceration. Therefore, this study was conducted to bridge the gap in knowledge and understanding the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs from the perspective of young adults. Through this study, light will be shed on their experiences and provide insights that can help improve the mental health and overall well-being of Latinos.

Problem Statement

There is a lack of understanding regarding the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents and the mental health needs from the perspectives of young adults. The problem that will be addressed through this study is how Latino young adults perceive and describe their lived experiences and mental health needs as children during the time their parent was incarcerated. The focus of this study is on the mental health needs of Latino young adults with incarcerated parents. Data will be collected from the perspectives of these young adults on their experiences as children.

Luk et al. (2023) referred to the physical health and behavioral and emotional problems faced by children but also their social relationships, academic performance, and transition impact into emerging adulthood in response to parental incarceration. Furthermore, children and adolescents with incarcerated parents suffer from emotional and behavioral hardship (Luk et al., 2023). Young and Jefferson Smith (2019) emphasized the importance of creating opportunities for adolescents and young adults

impacted by parental incarceration to share their experiences and be heard. To gain a better understanding of the challenges these individuals face will provide them with the necessary support to move forward and thrive. A lack of understanding the lived experiences and mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents from the perspectives of young adults is a current problem in developmental psychology.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. Through semistructured interviews, I explored the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. The phenomenon of interest I sought to understand is the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. Furthermore, from the perspective of the participants involved, the credibility of the results can only be judged by the participants themselves (Shenton, 2004).

Research Question

The following research question was developed to guide this study:

RQ: How do Latino young adults perceive and describe their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents during the time their parent was incarcerated?

Theoretical Framework

This study used the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which

identifies five systems within an environment: microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem,

macrosystem, and chronosystem. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the microsystem

encompasses a child's family, school, peers, and community, whereas the mesosystem is

a collection of either the child's family or school. The ecosystem is the third level and

includes surroundings or events a child does not engage in but that have a significant

impact on the child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The macrosystem includes

cultural influences on the child directly, and lastly, the chronosystem is shaped by

environmental events and transitions that occur throughout a child's life (Bronfenbrenner,

1979). These systems play a crucial role in shaping an individual's psychological

development. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory provides an explanation for a

child's characteristics and their relationship with the environmental factors that contribute

to their overall development. The development of a child is influenced by their

interactions with the environment they are exposed to and the duration and frequency of

these interactions (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). This perspective is especially

relevant in the case of families with incarcerated parents, where contextual factors can

significantly impact a child's development (Kjellstrand et al., 2018). Research sheds light

on how the imprisonment of a parent affects the mental health needs, behavior, and

emotional well-being of children and adolescents.

I recognized Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory as the most suitable theoretical

foundation for this research. Unlike other theories, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory

offers a comprehensive understanding of the multiple aspects of a child's environment and how they impact the child's development (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasized that various environmental factors interact and influence a child's development. This theory aided this research in comprehending the recollections of young Latino adults about their experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with parents who were incarcerated. This research expands on Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory by recognizing the impact of incarcerated parents on a child's environment and their lives. In this study, I explored the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs. I will cover Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory in more detail in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

To address the research question in this qualitative study, the specific research design included phenomenological research (Smith & Nizza, 2022). This research included the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs. The methodology was qualitative, and the research design was phenomenological. The phenomenological approach allows for the analysis of shared experiences around the phenomenon of interest. The phenomenon of interest that I sought to understand was the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. The aim of this qualitative phenomenological study was to gain insight into the recollections of young Latino adults regarding their experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. This approach provided an opportunity to better

understand the difficulties and psychological distress that these individuals experienced during their childhood. By exploring their lived experiences in depth, this research can provide valuable insights into the impact of parental incarceration on the mental health of children and adolescents, particularly within the Latino community.

To explore the phenomenon and examine the research questions, I used interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith & Nizza, 2022). This method of analysis provides the opportunity to gain a deep understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives, providing valuable insights into the topic at hand. IPA is a technique specifically designed to comprehend people's lived experiences, including how they perceive and interpret their experiences on both an individual and social level (Smith & Nizza, 2022). IPA delves into the core of people's thoughts and emotions and examines the complex interplay between their personal and social environments (Smith & Nizza, 2022). The study was a phenomenological qualitative study as this method allowed me to explore the experiences of the participants and gain a better understanding of the lived experiences and mental health needs of participants as children during the time their parent was incarcerated. The data were collected from a sample of 10 young Latino adults ages 18 to 29 who had at least one biological parent incarcerated when they were a child or adolescent. Data were collected through semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. The research question was focused on how Latino young adults perceive and describe their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents during the time their parent was incarcerated.

Definitions

Throughout this research, I adhered to a set of defined terms, each with a specific meaning, to ensure the study maintains clarity and precision. The following terms were used throughout this research.

Ecological systems theory: Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory includes child development as a complex system of relationships that are influenced by several levels of the surrounding environment. These environment layers range from the immediate family and school settings to more general cultural values, laws, and practices. The five different systems include the microsystem, which is the direct contact they have with interpersonal connections, family, school, peer group, and locations that frequently serve as their immediate environment; the mesosystem is the relationships between two or more settings containing the developing individual; the exosystem describes the relationships between two or more settings, at least one that does not contain the developing person but situations that indirectly affect the individual; the macrosystem consists of the overarching pattern of microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture or subculture, with reference to the belief systems, customs, and lifestyles embedded in broader systems; and the chronosystem is the life stage an individual goes through (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Incarcerated parents: A parent or guardian who has been incarcerated in prison, jail, or at corrections facilities (Poehlmann-Tynan & Pritzl, 2019).

Latino: People of Latin American descent and from Spanish-speaking countries (García, 2020).

Limitations: The weaknesses a researcher cannot control and how the study is bounded (Leedy & Omrod, 2010). This is often the choices of data sources, data collection, and method of analysis. (Leedy & Omrod, 2010).

Lived experiences: In the context of this study, it is subjectively lived, how people understand an experience (Neubauer et al., 2019)

Mental health: The way people interact with others, manage stress arising from life situations, navigate through problems, and handle day-to-day living in an appropriate manner (Edens, 2023).

Assumptions

Qualitative research is essential for understanding complex social phenomena and is carried out to ensure its reliability and validity. The research is conducted with assumptions about the circumstances in which data are collected (Wargo, 2015). These assumptions serve as the foundation of the study, providing essential context to frame the research problem and establish its significance (Wargo, 2015). Qualitative research gains insights into the complexities of the social world, and informed decisions are made based on the findings (Leedy & Omrod, 2010).

In this study, I assumed that all participants would provide truthful responses during the interviews and that they had personal experience with the phenomenon being studied. Additionally, I assumed that participants would understand the questions and would not intentionally withhold or misstate information during the interviews. Open-ended questions were used during the interviews to avoid leading or influencing participants' responses. The informed consent procedure stressed the importance of

confidentiality and privacy, ensuring that all information disclosed by participants would be kept confidential. Participants were also encouraged to be as honest and open as possible during the interviews. During the interviews, I made sure not to influence the participants' responses in any way.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study was the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. I did not seek the experiences of older Latino adults, nor I did not seek ethnicities other than Latinos in this study. The research sought to fill a gap in the need to understand the lived experiences and mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents from the perspectives of young adults.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) referred to delimitations as the boundaries of a study a researcher has established and can control but has chosen not to include in the study. This study was delimited by the population studied, specifically young Latino adults who as children had incarcerated parents and are living in urban Southeast Texas. This study was focused on a qualitative approach over a quantitative one to provide a more detailed account and examination of the lived experiences of the participants. To delve into the experiences and perspectives of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents, I relied on ecological systems theory as the foundation for this research.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the transferability of qualitative research findings is limited. Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985), stated that the findings of

qualitative research may only be explicitly applicable to the population used in the study. The focus of this study was on the experiences and perspectives of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents; however, the results may not be generalizable to other settings. I aimed to gain insight into the viewpoints of the participants. I anticipated that the findings would encourage researchers, educators, the prison system, criminal justice system, and other related institutions to introduce new initiatives for providing support and resources to children and adolescents with incarcerated parents, both during and after the period of incarceration.

Limitations

Limitations refers to how a study is bounded. This is often the choices of data sources, data collection, and method of analysis. The limitations of a study refer to the weaknesses a researcher cannot control (Leedy & Omrod, 2010). The results of this study were limited by the fact that this was a qualitative investigation; therefore, I was unable to provide measurable indicators of how young Latino adults experienced having an incarcerated parent as a child or adolescent and how it affects their mental health. My aim was to unveil patterns and theories that could explain the phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants themselves. I decided not to use quantitative research methods for my study because I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the topic and participants' experiences, as there is little information available on this subject. Qualitative research was a better fit for my study and allowed me to explore the issue in a

more complex and detailed way and gain an understanding of the perspectives and lived experiences of the participants involved.

There is a possibility that participants may have provided flawed information during interviews, which could lead to mistaken conclusions during data analysis. It is important to acknowledge and address any potential research bias that may arise from this. One challenge for me was keeping my personal bias in check because I have worked in the mental health field for many years. I also have had close family members incarcerated and have seen the challenges their children have faced. It is common to be influenced by one's personal experiences and background, which may impact the way in which questions are posed and answered. However, it is important to acknowledge such biases and approach new information with an open mind and willingness to learn. In this particular instance, I demonstrated the ability to manage any preconceived notions and remain receptive to the perspectives of experts. I also used this skill in considering varying viewpoints without judgment. I remained open to diverse ideas and perspectives and facilitated without bias. To minimize the risk of incorrect information, I used member checking of interview data to ensure the accuracy and validity of my research results. I also utilized bracketing to minimize researcher bias and maintain a clear distinction between my personal opinions and the collected data (see Gearing, 2004).

Significance

This study is significant in that it will contribute to filling a meaningful gap in the literature in the need to understand the lived experiences and mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents from the perspectives of young

adults. The current study will give deeper insight into the human experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents. The findings may be used to better understand the phenomena and how to address challenges when it comes to the mental health experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents.

Furthermore, identifying resiliency and protective factors may lead to successful life outcomes for individuals after experiencing parental incarceration. This current study sought to understand the experiences and mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents and the impact this has on their lives. The social problem is the lack of necessary support services for Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents. Understanding the findings may lead to positive social change by changing policies for growth and development to improve necessary support services to support Latino children and adolescents who have incarcerated parents. Policies that include counseling and assisting Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents may be implemented and may lead to improved mental health and growth in development. Additionally, results of this study should aid in policy changes and force for social change by addressing inequalities experienced by Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents.

This research was conducted to fill in a gap and to understand the lived experiences and mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents from the perspective of young adults. This research used a phenomenological approach, enabling the participants to describe their experiences from their own unique perspectives. The study's contribution to the literature is distinctive in that it offers an

extensive and inclusive account of the phenomena by exploring the real-life experiences and attitudes of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents.

The current study will give deeper insight based on the human experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents. The findings may be used to better understand the phenomena and how to address challenges when it comes to the mental health experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents. This study will seek to understand the experiences and mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents and the impact this has on their lives. The social problem is the lack of necessary support services for Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents. Understanding the findings may lead to positive social change by changing policies for growth and development to improve support services to support Latino children and adolescents who have incarcerated parents. Policies that include counseling and assisting Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents may be implemented and may lead to improved mental health and growth in development.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented an overview of the study and provide details about different fundamental aspects of the research. In this chapter, I described the problem, which is the need to understand the lived experiences and mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents from the perspectives of young adults. Additionally, I described the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study to

understand the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents.

Forster et al. (2019) identified a link between familial incarceration and suicide, using ethnicity as a mediator. Ryan et al. (2023) discovered that childhood parental incarceration greatly affects young adulthood, but Latinos have not received as much focus in the existing research. Additionally Black and Hispanic children are more likely than White children to have a parent in prison (Ryan et al., 2023). Black, Latino, and White incarceration rates differ significantly (Ryan et al., 2023). The lived experiences and mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents of jailed parents from the perspectives of young adults are understudied. Mogro-Wilson et al. (2019) examined how a fatherhood intervention program affected young African American, Puerto Rican, and non-Puerto Rican Hispanic fathers and their children's well-being.

The theoretical framework that guided this research was the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which identifies five systems within an environment: microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The assumptions in this study included that all participants would answer questions truthfully and would have personal experience with the phenomenon. Participants were considered to understand the questions and not intentionally withhold or misstate facts during interviews.

The scope of the study was to address the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. This study will be delimited by the population studied, specifically

young Latino adults who as children had incarcerated parents and are living in urban

Southeast Texas. The limitations of the study include the possibility that participants may

have provided flawed information during interviews, which could lead to mistaken

conclusions during data analysis.

In Chapter 2, I review the research that has been conducted to provide a detailed

discussion of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs

as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents and the consequences it has on

them. Topics and themes that Chapter 2 will cover include parental influences in culture,

social/emotional mental health effects, behavioral development, health consequences,

effects on young children, effects in adolescents, effects on young adults, support systems

and resiliency. Chapter 2 will also cover the framework in detail, which includes

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, which will also be used to explain the results of

the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Parental incarceration can lead to increased behavioral and emotional difficulties in children and adolescents (Domzalska et al., 2022). While research has been conducted on this topic for other groups, there is a lack of literature focused on the lived experiences and mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents from the perspectives of young adults. This issue is complex and often overlooked but deserves closer attention and consideration for Latino youth. The problem that will be addressed through this study is the lack of literature focused on the recollections of young Latino adults and their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents who had incarcerated parents.

The social problem in this study is the lack of necessary support services for Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents. I gathered data from the perspectives of young Latino adults on their experiences as children. Dwyer Emory (2018) stated that identifying relevant mechanisms linking incarceration and behavior is an important step for both focusing future research and developing policies to address the issue. Young and Jefferson Smith (2019) described that researchers should create opportunities to encourage adolescents and young adults impacted by parental incarceration and its challenges to be heard and share their experiences. By better understanding the challenges these individuals face, work can be done to provide them with the support they need to move forward and thrive. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand the recollections of young Latino

adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents.

This chapter is divided into multiple sections. I begin with the literature search strategy followed by a discussion of the theoretical foundation used for this study, and the chapter concludes with the literature review related to key concepts. The major themes of the review of literature are parental influences in culture, social/emotional mental effects, behavioral development, and health consequences. I reviewed the literature on parental incarceration and its parental influences in culture, effects on mental health needs, as well as its behavioral and health difficulties of Latino children and adolescents.

The impact of cultural influences on parenting will be explored, as well as the social and emotional effects of mental health on Latino children and adolescents. The behavioral development and the health consequences will also be explored during these crucial years evaluating the impact on young Latino children, adolescents, and young adults. Throughout this exploration, the importance of support systems and resiliency in overcoming challenges and thriving despite adversity will be emphasized.

The chapter also contains the framework for this study grounded in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, which will also be used to explain the results of the study. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development focuses on explaining individual development experiences (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). Bronfenbrenner addressed focusing on the person, context, and developmental outcome, as these processes vary and affect people differently (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). The ecological perspective highlights the importance of understanding the broader context

that surrounds a child. This includes the various environments the child is embedded in,

such as the family, schools, community, and society. The model addresses that many

factors within these environments influence the development of a child and that it is

difficult to predict the future of an individual without taking these factors into account

(Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). Moreover, a child's development is affected by their

interactions with the immediate environments they are exposed to and the frequency and

length of these interactions (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). In the case of families

experiencing parental incarceration, this perspective is particularly useful in

understanding the impact of contextual factors on the development of children

(Kjellstrand et al., 2018). The literature provides insight into how the imprisonment of a

parental figure affects children and adolescents' mental health needs and behavioral and

emotional difficulties.

Literature Search Strategy

The Walden University Library was the primary resource used to locate literature

pertinent to the research topic. Using the library's resources, I searched various

databases, including PsycInfo, EBSCO, ABI/INFORM, and Pro Quest. I also completed

searches on Google Scholar and obtained many journal articles. I utilized various search

engines to access and review professional journals, edited books, and other peer-reviewed

sources to gather and present the research for this literature review. All these searches

found in the above databases were also located in the EBSCO Walden University

Library. I used a comprehensive search using the EBSCO Walden University Library

database and using the advanced search feature to locate the literature. Because little

research has been conducted on this topic specific to Latino youth, I used other ethnic minorities to thoroughly make sure that I located everything related to this topic. This helped me identify where the literature is lacking because I was unable to locate anything specific to my group during my search. The process of using the terms below in my iterative search helped me to identify relevant literature.

Certain key search terms, combinations of search terms, words and phrases were used to locate the literature described in this review. I added filters by subject and/or classification to the search term groups. These included *young adult, incarcerated parents, parental incarceration* (187 results)*; Hispanic, Latin, incarcerated parents, parental incarceration* (65 results)*; child, adolescent, youth, teen, incarcerated parents, parental incarceration, academic achievement, academic performance, academic success* (73 results)*; child, adolescent, youth, teen, incarcerated parents, parental incarceration, mental health, well-being* (164 results)*; child, adolescent, youth, teen, incarcerated parents, parental incarceration, narrative (6 results); child, adolescent, youth, teen, incarcerated parents, parental incarceration, mental illness, mental disorder, psychiatric illness, anxiety, depression, distress* (545 results)*; Hispanic, Mexican, Central America, South American, Argentinian, Honduran, Costa Rican, Salvadorian, incarcerated parents, incarcerated mother, incarcerated father, child, adolescent, youth, teen; Hispanic, Latin, , incarcerated parents, incarcerated mother, incarcerated father* (10 results)*; Hispanic, Latin, Mexican, Central America, South American, Argentinian, Honduran, Costa Rican, Salvadorian, incarcerated parents, incarcerated mother, incarcerated father, young adult* (11 results)*; Mexican, Central America, South*

American, Argentinian, Honduran, Costa Rican, Salvadorian, incarcerated parents,

incarcerated mother, incarcerated father (11 results)*; and *children of prisoners,*

incarcerated parents, minority, Black , Hispanic, person of color, race, ethnicity (994

results)*.

During my research, I also used some of the references in the articles to locate

additional articles. Additionally, my review was limited to sources published in the last 5

years. I found six studies that focused entirely on the combined terms *parental*

incarceration, *mental health*, *social-emotional*, *behavioral*, and *Hispanic or Latin*. This is

important because it demonstrates a gap in the literature in understanding the lived

experiences and mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated

parents from the perspective of young adults.

Theoretical Foundation

The framework that was applied to this research was Bronfenbrenner's

bioecological theory. Bronfenbrenner (1977) addressed that a child's environment is a

nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next. Bronfenbrenner

organized the structures based on their impact on a child and named these structures the

microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner,

1977). This theoretical framework was used to explain the results of the study.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development aligns with this study,

focusing on explaining individual development experiences. The microsystem refers to

the complex interactions and immediate environment surrounding the developing

individual at a given moment in time (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The mesosystem, the

second level of Bronfenbrenner's model, is an important concept in the ecology of human

development. Mesosystem refers to the connections and interactions between different

microsystems in a person's life (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Essentially, the mesosystem is a

system of microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The third level of Bronfenbrenner's

model is the exosystem. In the exosystem, there are microsystems that interact with each

other, just like in the mesosystem; however, in the exosystem, there is at least one

microsystem that cannot include the person at the center of the system (Bronfenbrenner,

1994). The fourth level is macrosystem and this encompasses the cultural and ideological

factors that can impact an individual's behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The fifth and

final system is the chronosystem. This system is essential in explaining what happens and

when something happens (Keating et al., 2019). This system also consists of all the

environmental changes that occur throughout a person's lifespan and impact their

development, including significant life transitions and historical events (Keating et al.,

2019).

Bronfenbrenner saw that many parts of a child's life connect with and affect the

child's development (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). His work looked at more than just

the development of a single person as it also considered the larger factors that affect

growth and the environment in which it happens (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). The

logical connections between the framework presented and the nature of this study utilize

Bronfenbrenner's (1994) development theory, which occurs through progressively more

complex reciprocal interactions between an active, evolving biopsychological human

organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment. Bronfenbrenner emphasized the need to consider the individual, the environment, and the developmental outcome when studying the impact of proximal processes on development; these processes might differ and have varying effects on individuals (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000).

The model investigates various environmental factors, their complexities, and how they may influence child development or response to various situations (Keating et al., 2019). The model developed by Bronfenbrenner offers a multilevel structure that is ideally suited for use in institutional settings such as prisons. This model is appropriate to use for this study as it aims to gain greater understanding of the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs.

The rationale for using Bronfenbrenner's model for this study includes the importance of understanding the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents' mental health needs. This study will extend this theory by understanding the individual factors of each individual and recognizing the environmental factors and context that took place in their lives. Bronfenbrenner's theory brings a model that focuses on individual factors in understanding growth and development processes; it also recognizes the importance of environmental factors and context (Stux Veiga et al., 2023).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory is the best theoretical foundation for this study as other theories do not offer the multiple aspects of a child's environment and how it influences a child's development. Bronfenbrenner's theory will guide the analysis for

this research and look at the children's and adolescents' experiences regarding their parent's incarceration and how it affected them depending on their age, when it happened, and their environment. Bronfenbrenner's theory will help the researcher understand the participants' experience depending on how the individuals' systems were affected. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory views child development as a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment, from immediate family and school settings to broad cultural values, laws, and customs (Keating et al., 2019). Bronfenbrenner recognized that multiple aspects of a child's environment interact with and influence the child's development (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory helps to understand the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. This study builds on this theory by understanding the impact and recognizing the child's environment and the influence of incarcerated parents on their lives.

Microsystem

The microsystem in Bronfenbrenner's ecological system includes direct contact with whom they have interpersonal connections, family, school, peer group, and locations that frequently serve as their immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Children and adolescents' immediate surroundings are important to their development, their experience day by day, and immediate socialization (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Latino families play a crucial role in shaping their children's destiny and provide a positive, strong, and nurturing relationship (Cox & Paley, 2003). Parents that are distant and

unaffectionate may be detrimental to the child (Cox & Paley, 2003). Family provides a

foundation for children to navigate society. According to family theorists, immigrant

families are open, dynamic systems prone to changes, much like non-immigrant families

(Cox & Paley, 2003). There is a constant link between healthy levels of family

functioning and positive psychological adjustment when there is a balanced level of

family cohesion. (Cox & Paley, 2003; Henry et al., 2006; Horwitz & Kazak, 1990).

Mesosystem

The mesosystem describes the relationships between two or more settings

containing the developing individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Bronfenbrenner explained

that the mesosystem is a system of microsystems; it is the relationship between

microsystems. Examples of the mesosystem in this research are how the family is getting

along while having a parent incarcerated or how the teacher is getting along with the

current guardians of the student. Family, school, and peers are included in this system

and play an important role in children's and adolescents' development. In the family and

peer mesosystem, protective parents may constantly supervise their children's

interpersonal relationships or impose demanding boundaries that prevent free

involvement with mainstream society (Paat, 2013). For example, immigrant children

raised in close-knit and cohesive households may prefer immigrant peers who share

similar family values. On the other hand, immigrant parents may encourage their

children's socialization with other immigrant classmates to maintain strong family values

associated with their immigration status (Paat, 2013).

Exosystem

The exosystem describes relationships between two or more settings, at least one that does not contain the developing person but situations that indirectly affect the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Paat (2013) explained that neighborhoods represent an exosystem that provides the context in which schooling and socialization take place. Children of immigrants will adapt better in the larger society when there is public support for cultural diversity (Paat, 2013). Reinforcement of household values and beliefs reduces the probability of behavioral problems and moderates negative influences from a conflicting mainstream subculture (Gorman, 1998; Portes & Zhou, 1993). If the child has a parent who is incarcerated, that can influence the development of that child. The needed cultural diversity, values, and beliefs can be affected if a parent is not present in the child's development (Paat, 2013).

Macrosystem

The macrosystem consists of the overarching pattern of microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem characteristic of a given culture or subculture, with reference to the belief systems, customs, and lifestyles embedded in broader systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Bronfenbrenner (1994) described the macrosystem as the societal blueprint for the culture or subculture of an individual. Latino families face many hurdles and balancing two cultures can be challenging. Learning a new language, adjusting to a new culture, and letting go of old ties can significantly influence the physical and psychological well-being of immigrant families (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Children of immigrants confront unique difficulties and complex life experiences in their

acculturative process in the United States, which differs significantly from their parents (Abouguendia & Noels, 2001). Foreign-born children of immigrants work to establish permanent residency and adjust to a new culture in a new country and the added pressure of rapid acculturation to mainstream society can harm their family dynamics, school adjustment, and occupational outcomes (Birman & Taylor-Ritzler, 2007; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). However, immigrant families may provide a safe environment for their children in many circumstances (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Being Latino and having an absent parent due to incarceration can lead to attitudes and ideologies of the culture being affected (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

Chronosystem

The chronosystem is the life stage an individual goes through, and Bronfenbrenner explained that it is the individual situations that happen throughout life (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). For immigrant children, the transition from adolescence to young adulthood is a crucial period (Paat, 2013). In addition to the physiological, cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal changes associated with puberty, immigrant children undergo social transformations because of their family's cross-country relocation (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Sociohistorical conditions and time since life events, such as parental incarceration, can make a difference regarding its impact on an individual (Fox et al., 2023). If the parent is incarcerated when the child is 5 years old compared to being incarcerated when the adolescent is a teenager, can make a difference regarding an individual's physiological, cognitive, and emotional state.

Wildeman et al. (2018a) analyzed a similar study dealing with future interdisciplinary research and interventions for children with incarcerated parents. Wildeman et al. (2018a) used steps for future interdisciplinary research and interventions for children with incarcerated parents. He described the steps that could be taken to help maximize the strengths of each of these groups of scholars and practitioners and to minimize their weaknesses in order to achieve the sort of interdisciplinary, policy-engaged translational research conceptualized by Uri Bronfenbrenner across the course of his career (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1992).

Rudd et al. (2019) analyzed another similar study that dealt with conflict, parenting communication style, and attitudes regarding the parent-child relationship for a marginalized special population: incarcerated mothers and their children. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective served as a guiding framework, based on its ability to consider family interactions across ecological contexts, both proximal and distal to the developing child's home setting (Rudd et al., 2019). Fifty incarcerated mothers in the central U.S. provided in-depth interviews and individual self-report surveys (Rudd et al., 2019). Authoritative parenting was associated with incarcerated mothers' reports of greater satisfaction with parenting (Rudd et al., 2019). Study findings suggest that parenting communication style can help support efforts to reduce recidivism (Rudd et al., 2019). Contextualizing these findings within Bronfenbrenner's model, Rudd's study affirms the role of proximal as well as distal factors governing relational communication between incarcerated mothers and their children (Rudd et al., 2019).

The theory relates to my study in exploring the experiences of young Latino adults about their experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. This framework is appropriate and helps to understand the experiences of these individuals by the data that are collected. The ecological systems theory can provide a context of the young Latino adults lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. This study helps to establish the relevance and significance of the research and provide a clear justification for the study. This study will expand the research and demonstrate how it can contribute to the broader field of the study.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

This section will cover the related key concepts for this literature review. The themes in this study include the parental influences in culture, the social/emotional mental health effects, behavioral development, and health consequences. This section will go in depth on the reasons why these themes are important in this study. Furthermore Mogro-Wilson et al. (2019) addressed the importance of family, respect, and individual characteristics of immigration status, as well as the acculturation process, can serve as either risk or protective factors for fatherhood. Additionally parental influence in customs, attitudes, and expectations of a culture can be negatively affected by parental incarceration (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2019). Walker et al. (2020), addressed that one way to boost resiliency is by linking people with their communities through culturally relevant books. Bomysoad and Francis (2022) addressed that certain behaviors can help reduce the likelihood of experiencing mental health conditions in youth whose parents have been

incarcerated; the study found that being resilient, participating in activities, and getting enough sleep can be helpful in this regard.

Background

According to research, significant racial disparities exist between the incarceration experiences of Black and Latino groups and those of White populations (McCormick et al., 2021). There are approximately 2.2 million individuals in correctional systems nationally, 60% of whom are Black or Hispanic (Carson, 2020; Zeng, 2020). Scholars argue that these inequalities are systemic and rooted in a long history of policies and practices that have disadvantaged people of color and created a system in which Black and Latino individuals are disproportionately more likely to be arrested, convicted, and imprisoned (McCormick et al., 2021). Almost twice as many Black children (11.5%) have had a parent in prison, compared to 6.4% of Hispanic children and 6% of White children (McCormick et al., 2021). Additionally, Bruns and Lee (2019) addressed that Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Native American men and women are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, including arrests, convictions, and incarceration, which means their children are also disproportionately affected.

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world (Walmsley, 2019). As the number of people incarcerated in the United States has increased, so too has interest in the collateral consequences of mass incarceration for children and families. As the number of individuals who are incarcerated in the United States has increased there has been a growing concern about the effects of mass incarceration on children and families (Shlafer et al., 2020). It is important to recognize that a disproportionate number

of children from racial minority backgrounds are affected by parental incarceration (Shlafer et al., 2019). The imprisonment of a parent can profoundly affect the development of many children. Considering the high numbers of parental incarceration in the United States, the influence of parental incarceration on children has emerged as a significant area of study in recent years.

The incarceration of parents has significant implications for the social and emotional well-being of their children. Based on health surveillance data collected from young people in Minnesota, whose average age was 14.9 years, it was discovered that having a parent who has been incarcerated in jail or prison, either currently or in the past, is significantly linked to higher rates of mental health issues (Arditti & Johnson, 2022). These issues include suicidal tendencies, self-harm, and internalizing problems (Arditti & Johnson, 2022). The negative effects are amplified for those young people whose parents are currently incarcerated at the time of the survey (Arditti & Johnson, 2022). The impact of having an incarcerated parent can have a lasting effect on children and adolescents.

Children who have parents incarcerated often experience a wide range of negative health consequences that can have long-lasting effects, including an impact on behavioral development. Positive childhood experiences also offer protective benefits, like preventing and moderating the effects of childhood trauma; the role of positive childhood experiences during childhood has been well documented (Bethell et al., 2019; Crouch, Brown et al., 2021; Crouch, Hung et al., 2021). To this end, Kremer et al. (2020) present a typology based on 1,088 youth (median age of 11.5 years) with incarcerated parents; the majority (61%) being well-adjusted with low behavioral problems at school and less

affiliation with antisocial peers, followed by overactive children (20%) who exhibit disruptive and hyperactive behaviors, isolated youth (14%) who exhibit high loneliness and depression, and an aggressive profile (7%) of youth who repeatedly engage in aggression, school behavioral programs, and affiliation with antisocial friends. There was clear evidence that youth with incarcerated parents who were exposed to the positive experiences of caregiver support, school connectedness, and positive teacher relationships, were more likely to be well-adjusted when compared to their peers (Kremer et al., 2020). Furthermore, positive childhood experiences play a significant role in preventing and mitigating the effects of childhood trauma (Bethell et al., 2019; Crouch, Brown et al., 2021; Crouch, Hung et al., 2021).

Incarcerated parents add "parenting strain" and may impede a caregiver's ability to assist a child with daily habits, such as healthy eating or obtaining a good night's sleep (Hiolski et al., 2019). Growing up with a parent who is incarcerated can be a challenging experience for children, adolescents, and young adults. Depending on the stage of life, the effects of parental incarceration can vary greatly. It is important to note that support systems and resiliency can play a crucial role in helping children of incarcerated parents.

According to Jacobsen et al. (2019) the impact of paternal incarceration on children's educational outcomes, such as suspension and expulsion during elementary school, can be largely explained by the children's behavioral problems. Children of incarcerated parents suffer physical, mental, social, and economic repercussions, including migraines, asthma, melancholy, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, school dropout, and homelessness (Nosek et al., 2019). Previous research has also examined the

association between familial incarceration and suicide behaviors and examined ethnic

identity as a potential moderator (Forster et al., 2019). Research continued to demonstrate

the effects of childhood parental incarceration into young adulthood; however, there is a

lack of this research for the Latino community (Young & Jefferson Smith, 2019).

In recent literature primarily in the fields of sociology and criminology,

implications of parental incarceration for children's development have been examined,

including their behavior, mental health, delinquency, and educational outcomes (Eddy &

Poehlmann-Tynan, 2019; Foster & Hagan, 2015; Johnson & Easterling, 2012; Wildeman,

2020). Research on the wide impact of incarceration, particularly the effects on children,

developed slowly at first. The topic of children with incarcerated parents was taken as

being of small importance to the social science community and this is reflected on the

early reviews on the subject (Wildeman et al., 2018a).

As the number of children with incarcerated parents continues to rise,

interventions and stronger evidence regarding resilience among children of incarcerated

parents are crucial (Wildeman et al., 2018b). Wildeman et al. (2018b) explained that

researchers have a limited understanding of the interventions that may be effective with

children of incarcerated parents. As time has passed, research has been completed on the

effects of children of incarcerated parents, but there has not been importance placed on

specifically the Latino population. This past research has helped for comparison purposes

but not to understand the experiences of young Latino adults about their lived

experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated

parents.

Cultural Impacts of Parental Incarceration

This section focuses on the cultural impacts of parental incarceration on children and adolescents. It is important to consider the cultural context when examining the impact of parental incarceration on adolescents and families of color. This section will cover studies that highlight the cultural impacts of children with incarcerated parents. Mogro-Wilson et al. (2019) addressed the factors such as the importance of family, respect, individual characteristics of immigration status, and the acculturation process can either pose a risk or provide protection for fatherhood. Turney (2018) addressed the experiences of Latinos that were analyzed to guide social change and interventions aimed at improving their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Due to the greater impact of incarceration on U.S. born minority men, children of incarcerated parents are significantly more likely to be members of racial and ethnic minorities (Ryabov, 2020). Hispanic children are twice as likely to experience parental incarceration than non-Hispanic White children (Ryabov, 2020). Parental incarceration can have significant cultural impacts on children and adolescents. Because parental incarceration occurs 2.5 times more often for Black and Latino youth than for White youth, it is important to identify the potential effects of this experience among Latino youth, who may experience culturally specific differences (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Jennings et al., 2010; Pérez et al., 2008).

The impact of incarceration is felt by more than 5 million children today, with low-income and rural children, Black and Latinx children being disproportionately affected (Heard-Garris et al., 2021). Children with incarcerated parents are more likely to

become involved with the criminal justice system themselves (Heard-Garris et al., 2021). However, it is also important to note that when Latino adolescents are included in research studies, they are often a small proportion of the sample. It is crucial to continue studying this issue with a diverse range of participants to fully understand the impact of parental incarceration on different cultural groups.

Mass incarceration disproportionately impacts poor, disadvantaged, and minority families, with effects on family members who are not directly incarcerated (Wildeman et al., 2019). Having a parent incarcerated can be detrimental for bringing up children and adolescents with the same customs and expectations of the family. Thoroughly comprehending the cultural influence on parenting is crucial. It is also crucial to understand cultural constructs such as *machismo* (male dominance), *caballerismo* (positive masculine traits)*, familismo* (importance of family), respect, and individual characteristics of immigration status, as well as the acculturation process (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2019). Mogro-Wilson et al. (2019) analyzed the importance of fathers to children's well-being and exploring the impact of a fatherhood intervention program on young African American, Puerto Rican, and non-Puerto Rican Hispanic fathers over a 15-week period. This study used a quantitative study to obtain disaggregated data from a longitudinal evaluation of a fatherhood program conducted with low-income, young ethnic minority fathers to explore the impact of the intervention on parenting attitudes (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2019).

The study involved 312 fathers between ages 15 and 24 (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2019). Data were gathered at different intervals, including post-intervention and at 8, 12,

and 16-months post-baseline follow-up (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2019). The study utilized

latent growth models to analyze the differential changes in parenting attitudes among the

three groups (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2019). Findings revealed that African American

fathers exhibited more risky parenting attitudes than their Hispanic and Puerto Rican

counterparts (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2019). Latino children and adolescents with

incarcerated parents may feel more pressured growing up with hard expectations (Mogro-

Wilson et al., 2019). Latino families may feel that children and adolescents need to grow

up and act more mature due to the incarcerated parent (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2019).

Mogro-Wilson et al. (2019) addressed the issue of the limitations and weaknesses of their

study which relied on self-reported race/ethnicity of Hispanic fathers in their research

discipline.

NeMoyer et al. (2020) explained that factors such as acculturation, enculturation,

and cultural stress primarily applies to Latino youth whereas other factors may apply to

all youth in general but appear to have a relatively greater impact on Latino youth such as

familial conflict). NeMoyer et al. (2020) addressed that Puerto Rican adolescents with a

history of parental incarceration may benefit from programs aimed at preventing future

delinquency. These findings suggest the importance of addressing the needs of this

vulnerable population through targeted interventions.

Turney (2018) analyzed data from a quantitative study from the 2016 National

Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) to examine the relationship between parental

incarceration and exposure to six additional adverse childhood experiences (ACEs):

parental divorce or separation, parental death, household member abuse, violence

exposure, household member mental illness, and household member substance problems. Turney (2018) found that the discipline had approached the problem and the strengths in this study revealed that ACEs are relatively common, with almost one third (32.5%) of children having exposure to at least one ACE (including parental incarceration; Turney, 2018). Furthermore, children of incarcerated parents are exposed to nearly five times as many other ACEs as their counterparts without incarcerated parents (2.06 compared to 0.41, on average; Turney, 2018). These statistically significant differences persist after adjusting for demographic and socioeconomic characteristics (Turney, 2018).

During childhood and adolescence, an important proportion of Hispanic children are exposed to parental incarceration (Turney, 2018). Due to the prevalence of parental incarceration among historically marginalized racial/ethnic minority children, impoverished children, and children living in neighborhoods with concentrated disadvantage, children exposed to parental incarceration are a particularly vulnerable group (Turney, 2018). Children exposed to parental incarceration are more likely than their peers to be exposed to a variety of other adverse childhood experiences, such as household member maltreatment, substance abuse, and mental illness (Turney, 2018). According Turney and Goodsell (2018), the negative effects of parental incarceration can increase inequality and intergenerational consequences for children.

Children and adolescents can go through several challenges prior to their parents being incarcerated. Many parents of young children with incarceration histories also reported significant arrest histories, indicating that the child may have experienced multiple parental incarcerations (Burnson & Weymouth, 2019). Muentner et al. (2021)

found that when children witnessed their father's arrest, they had higher cumulative stress hormone concentrations. Children who witnessed their father's arrest and had high levels of ongoing behavioral stress symptoms showed evidence of a blunted stress reaction, similar to findings in posttraumatic stress disorder studies (Muentner et al., 2021).

Other trauma examples include communication barriers and economic adversity (Turney, 2018). Interventions designed for children of incarcerated parents may need to include services to aid children in coping with these additional adversities (Turney, 2018). Turney (2018) established that all age groups and racial/ethnic groups of children may benefit from services or interventions. Past research addressed that children from racial/ethnic minority groups are more likely to be exposed to all types of ACEs (including parental incarceration) than their White counterparts, these findings addressed that the concentration of ACEs among racial/ethnic minority groups may be particularly detrimental (Turney, 2018).

Furthermore, this includes the cross-sectional design, coupled with no retrospective information about the timing of ACEs, cross-sectional design includes contemporaneously measured dependent, independent, and control variables; therefore, some control variables (e.g., household income; Turney, 2018). These are likely endogenous to parental incarceration, which may mean that these estimates of the association between parental incarceration and other ACEs are conservative, and the measurement of key variables include some limitations (Turney, 2018). Furthermore, the details of parental incarceration including when in the life course it occurred, whether the

child experienced maternal or paternal incarceration, and the chronicity or duration of the incarceration, remain unobserved in the literature (Turney, 2018).

Summary of Parental Influences in Culture

Mogro-Wilson et al. (2019) referred to the need for more research using disaggregated data to explore best practices within intervention research with fathers and broadly when working with minority sub-groups. Mogro-Wilson et al. (2019) analyzed that as research continues to expand our understanding of the importance of fathers to children's development and outcomes, it is critical to understand cultural differences in fatherhood. Mogro-Wilson et al. (2019) found the importance of fathers to children's well-being and exploring the impact of a fatherhood intervention program on young African American, Puerto Rican, and non-Puerto Rican Hispanic fathers but did not focus on the gap to understand the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs from the perspective of young adults.

Turney (2018) analyzed that children exposed to parental incarceration are more likely than their peers to be exposed to a variety of other adverse childhood experiences, such as household member maltreatment, substance abuse, and mental illness. Turney (2018) analyzed the experiences that will help guide social change and interventions that can be done to help Latinos succeed physically, mentally, and emotionally. This will provide more focused research on this population that lacks this important information using a qualitative study. Through my study, I aim to shed light on the community and cultural experiences of Latino youth who have had incarcerated parents. My research will help bridge the gap in the need to understand the lived experiences of Latino children and

adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs from the perspective of young adults.

Social/Emotional Mental Health Effects and Resiliency

The impact of parental incarceration on young people can be profoundly challenging. It can have a significant effect on their emotional and social well-being, leading to feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and uncertainty (Luk et al., 2023). These emotions may be compounded by shame, guilt, or anger, making it difficult for them to establish healthy relationships and prioritize their mental health (Luk et al., 2023). Children that experience parental incarceration exhibit negative outcomes in several behavioral, emotional, and health-related dimensions compared to children without this history (Johnson & Arditti, 2023). Research has shown that parental incarceration at various stages of child and adolescent development leads to various negative outcomes (Luk et al., 2023).

Gifford et al. (2019) addressed whether parental incarceration is associated with increased levels of psychiatric diagnosis and poor outcomes in health, legal, financial, and social domains in adulthood. The study included children and their parents from a longitudinal Great Smoky Mountains study (Gifford et al., 2019). They were interviewed up to 8 times from January 1993 to December 2000 (ages 9-16 years; 6674 observations of 1420 participants) using the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Assessment, which assessed parental incarceration, childhood psychiatric diagnoses, and other adversities (Gifford et al., 2019). Young adults were followed up at ages 19, 21, 25, and 30 years from January 1999 to December 2015 (4556 observations of 1334 participants) to assess

psychiatric diagnoses and functional outcomes indicative of a disrupted transition to adulthood (Gifford et al., 2019). Data analysis was conducted from June 2018 to June 2019 (Gifford et al., 2019). Gifford et al. (2019) found that a higher incidence of childhood psychiatric diagnoses (such as depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and conduct disorder) was associated with parental incarceration. Additionally, even after accounting for childhood psychiatric diagnoses and adversity exposure, parental incarceration was associated with an increased likelihood of having an anxiety disorder, an illicit drug use disorder, a felony charge, incarceration, not completing high school, early parenthood, and being socially isolated as an adult (Gifford et al., 2019).

Research has stated that the absence of the father due to incarceration produced stronger effects for aggressive behaviors compared to father absences for other reasons (Burnson & Weymouth, 2019). The incarceration of a family member can pave the way for exclusion from important organizations and have lasting effects on the mental health of adults (Forster et al., 2019). Promoting a positive ethnic identity may be a promising prevention strategy that could strengthen the resilience of urban minority adolescents who are at risk (Forster et al., 2019). Children of incarcerated parents have frequently experienced relationships marked by betrayal, desertion, and invalidation (Skinner-Osei & Levenson, 2018). Parental issues, such as incarceration and substance and alcohol abuse, are significant determinants of adolescent outcomes, including suicidal behavior (Quinn et al., 2022). Furthermore, they can inhibit parental capacity, availability, and the ability to provide a nurturing environment for children (Quinn et al., 2022).

Effects on Young Children

Parental incarceration can alter the environment of a child's well-being, restrict their access to prosocial opportunities, and produce negative outcomes that accumulate from early young adulthood to later adulthood (Mears & Siennick, 2016; Turney & Goodsell, 2018). On the other hand, research indicates that parental incarceration may be advantageous for children whose parents are involved in intimate partner violence, substance abuse, or mental health issues (Noel & Hoeben, 2022). Children who are separated from a parent who is incarcerated may experience feelings of confusion regarding the incarcerated parent's love and affection for them as a result of the separation (Finkeldey et al., 2020).

Ryabov (2020) found that Hispanics who experienced parental incarceration as children or adolescents are expected to have lower educational attainment, lower wages, and lower quality jobs than their counterparts who did not. Giordano et al. (2019) found that children whose parents were incarcerated for longer periods will not only experience more intense feelings of loss/stigma in accordance with previous theories, but they will also frequently have dealt with family realities such as more extensive criminal and drug-use histories. According to a nationwide cohort study, parental incarceration was related with greater levels of child-reported anxiety at age nine and a medium-term association with lower levels of child-reported happiness and higher levels of primary caregiver-reported emotional issues (Brad et al., 2020). When a parent is incarcerated, it can cause significant disruption in the lives of their children. These children may exhibit altered behavior and experience a range of emotions, which can adversely affect their learning

and overall health and development (Wildeman et al., 2018c). These shifts can have lasting repercussions, underscoring the importance of providing support and resources to help children cope during this challenging period (Wildeman et al., 2018c). Studies have shown that children's emotional difficulties, such as grief, anxiety, and trust issues, may persist even after the release of a parent from prison (Muentner & Eddy, 2023). Furthermore, some research addressed that these challenges could worsen and become more complex over time (Muentner & Eddy, 2023). This highlights the need for continued support and resources for families impacted by incarceration.

The impact of parental incarceration on children's educational success is often evident at school (Muentner & Eddy, 2023). It is important to examine how school counselors understand these needs since these influences how they respond to mental health and academic concerns (Brown, 2020). Research has shown that when a parent is incarcerated during middle childhood, it can have a stronger effect on externalizing behavior problems than internalizing ones (Poehlmann-Tynan & Turney, 2021). This is especially true for boys and for children whose father is the one incarcerated (Poehlmann-Tynan & Turney, 2021) It is important to be aware of these potential effects and provide support to children and families affected by parental incarceration.

There is a positive correlation between a child's frequency of visits with their incarcerated parent and the overall quality of their relationship (Milavetz et al., 2021). This, in turn, has a significant impact on the child's overall sense of purpose in life, as well as their levels of depression and loneliness (Kremer et al., 2022). It is important to recognize the value of maintaining a strong connection between children and their

incarcerated parents, as it can have a profound impact on their mental and emotional

well-being (Kremer et al., 2022). Muentner et al. (2021) found that the stress hormone

concentrations in children were significantly higher when they witnessed their father's

arrest. Additionally, there was a noticeable blunted stress reaction in kids who witnessed

the arrest and had high levels of ongoing behavioral stress symptoms, which is similar to

what has been found in studies on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Muentner et al.,

2021). It is important to note that long-term exposure to stress can have negative effects

on children's brain development, which can further increase the risk for developmental

psychopathology (Muentner et al., 2021).

Crouch et al. (2022) analyzed 2017-2018 data from the National Survey of

Children's Health to examine the relationship between caregiver incarceration and low

academic outcomes, repeating a grade and school absenteeism, controlling for child and

caregiver characteristics, and to examine the relationship between caregiver incarceration

and positive childhood experiences (PCE). Children exposed to household incarceration

had higher odds of repeating a grade than children not exposed to household

incarceration (aOR 1.62; 95% CI 1.23–2.13) (Crouch et al., 2022). Children with

exposure to household incarceration had lower odds of residing in a supportive

neighborhood than children without exposure to household incarceration (aOR 0.77; 95%

CI 0.64–0.93) (Crouch et al., 2022).

Crouch et al. (2022) found that the impact of adverse childhood experiences

(ACEs) on the educational outcomes of children of incarcerated caregivers is significant,

but less is known about the availability of positive childhood experiences (PCEs) for

these children. Furthermore, the findings revealed that although most children of incarcerated caregivers have access to PCEs and achieve academic success, their success rates are significantly lower than those of their peers with non-incarcerated caregivers (Crouch et al., 2022). This addressed that PCEs could be a valuable tool in policy interventions, as they can build on existing community resources, such as mentoring programs, to increase protective factors (Crouch et al., 2022).

Benninger et al. (2023) found that children seeing their parents and close relatives being carried away by the police can built a negative perception towards police officers. Sometimes children see their family member being arrested violently, especially if the family member was resisting apprehension. This created a perception of police distrust and dread of police brutality (Benninger et al., 2023). It is crucial to acknowledge the vital role that parental support plays in the lives of incarcerated individuals by properly educating their children about police officers and law enforcement. Providing opportunities for incarcerated parents to learn parenting skills can significantly improve the well-being of their children (Kremer et al., 2020). Recent research conducted by Armstrong et al. (2018) highlights the effectiveness of parenting interventions in an incarceration setting, which can enhance the quality of parent-child relationships. It is important to prioritize the well-being of both parents and their children during the incarceration process.

Effects on Adolescents

Ryan et al. (2023) aimed to assess racial and ethnic disparities in access to mental health services for youth with incarcerated parents. Secondary data analysis of

longitudinal data from 2016 to 2019 from the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development

Study was used. Logistic regression models assessed the relationships among

incarceration, cumulative childhood experiences, DSM-5 diagnoses, and mental health

services. Additional analyses stratified these models by race and ethnicity (Ryan et al.,

2023).

All analyses were performed in 2022 (Ryan et al., 2023). The results found that

youth with incarcerated parents were more likely to report 4 or more childhood

experiences (51% vs. 14%; AOR = 3.92; 95% CI = 3.3, 4.65; $p < 0.001$) and to have

received mental health services (25% vs. 15%; AOR = 1.89; 95% CI = 1.6, 2.21;

$p < 0.001$) than unexposed youth (Ryan et al., 2023). However, Black youth with

incarcerated parents (19% vs. 34%; AOR = 0.38; 95% CI = 0.27, 0.52; $p < 0.001$) and

Latinx youth with incarcerated parents (10% vs. 17%; AOR = 0.5; 95% CI = 0.33, 0.76;

$p < 0.001$) were significantly less likely to report receiving mental health services than

White youth with incarcerated parents and non-Latinx youth with incarcerated parents,

respectively (Ryan et al., 2023).

One in nine Black youth and one in 28 Latino youth have incarcerated parents,

compared to one in 57 White youth (Ryan et al., 2023). Nonetheless, Black and Latino

adolescents receive significantly fewer mental health services than non-minority youth

(Ryan et al., 2023). Youth with incarcerated parents were more likely to report using

mental health services, but there were substantial racial and ethnic disparities between

Black and Latino youth with incarcerated parents and White and non-Latino youth with

incarcerated parents (Ryan et al., 2023). There is an ongoing need to expand mental

health services for children with incarcerated parents and to address racial and ethnic disparities in care access (Ryan et al., 2023).

Family factors, such as a history of parental incarceration, a large family size, family structures that do not include two biological parents, a lack of parental supervision, parental difficulties or conflict, and child maltreatment, are known to contribute to the offending risk of youths (Barnert et al., 2021). Although literature provides insight into incarceration-related outcomes such as delinquent behavior, juvenile offending, and arrest, it is essential to consider incarceration as a distinct outcome. It remains uncertain whether adolescent risk factors for incarceration across the life course differ from youth delinquency and offending risk factors (Barnert et al., 2021). A growing body of research indicates that juvenile incarceration is a traumatic experience and threshold event that is associated with subsequent financial hardship, disrupted social networks, social isolation, and stigma (Barnert et al., 2021).

Education, mental and behavioral health, and child welfare systems, as well as community-based family support agencies, are potential intervention targets for children of incarcerated parents (Barnert et al., 2021). Targeting resources to develop and refine interventions that promote academic achievement and educational aspirations may be effective in reducing the lifetime likelihood of juvenile incarceration (Barnert et al., 2021). By assisting socially vulnerable adolescents in mitigating the effects of incarceration risk factors and enhancing protective factors, educators, mental health professionals, and health care providers have the potential to improve the life trajectories and health outcomes of individual youth and communities over the life course (Barnert et

al., 2021). The effects of a parent's incarceration can be devastating for children, and the additional stigma and bullying that may come with it can make matters even worse (Kjellstrand et al., 2018). This can lead to an increased risk of externalizing behaviors during adolescence, especially for those who have experienced multiple risks over time (Kjellstrand et al., 2018). Working to address and overcome these challenges is important to help children in these situations thrive (Kjellstrand et al., 2018).

Research has shown that there is a positive association between paternal incarceration and early sexual onset (Turney & Goldberg, 2019). It was found that this relationship was stronger among boys who lived with their fathers prior to incarceration compared to girls (Turney & Goldberg, 2019). These findings highlight the need for better support for children who experience incarceration of a parent, particularly boys who lived with their fathers before incarceration (Turney & Goldberg, 2019).

Effects on Young Adults

According to Noel and Hoeben (2022) both accelerated and delayed transitions to adulthood can have positive and negative effects on the individual. Acceleration is viewed as positive when young adults leave home to attend college in a distant location, but as negative when they leave home to raise a child independently at a young age (Noel & Hoeben, 2022). Delay is viewed as positive when it is a transition to pursue higher education by completing a degree program or trade (Noel & Hoeben, 2022). Delay can be negative if it begins to impede development in postponing the search for a stable job after completing schooling or engaging in conflict with a partner due to a hesitancy to live independently (Noel & Hoeben, 2022).

Gifford et al. (2019) found that parental incarceration, when controlling for adversity and childhood psychiatric diagnoses using linked administrative data, had a significant impact on the adult life of the children. The study showed that individuals who had a parent incarcerated were more likely to be charged with a felony, become parents at an early age, and experience social isolation in adulthood (Gifford et al., 2019). This study addressed that the negative effects of parental incarceration can have long-lasting consequences, particularly for adolescents and young adults (Poehlmann-Tynan & Turney, 2021). While the impact of parental incarceration may be less severe for young children, the consequences become more pronounced as they grow older (Poehlmann-Tynan & Turney, 2021). This highlights the need for effective interventions and support systems for children and families affected by parental incarceration (Poehlmann-Tynan & Turney, 2021).

The secrecy surrounding parental incarceration, which is typically implemented through deception, avoidance of the subject, and separation via foster care or adoption, may cause long-lasting emotional trauma and prevent healing in adulthood (Shaw, 2022a). This secrecy generates inquiry that is frequently satisfied by online resources (Shaw, 2022a). In many of these instances, minors become adults and Google a parent's name to learn more about the separation. However, receiving this information from a third party, especially a non-family member, was generally a negative experience for the offspring of incarcerated parents (Shaw, 2022a). Individuals who have encountered parental incarceration are frequently disengaged from social institutions (Lanuza & Turney, 2020). Limiting institutional engagement may be detrimental for disadvantaged

young adults, as these individuals are more reliant on social institutions to provide resources and social mobility ladders (Lanuza & Turney, 2020). Lanuza and Turney (2020) found that parental incarceration can exacerbate existing social inequalities via institutional disengagement. Furthermore, the impact of parental incarceration can become even more pronounced in adulthood than it was during childhood (Poehlmann-Tynan & Turney, 2021). It is important to recognize the ongoing challenges that individuals with incarcerated parents face as they navigate through life. Support and resources can make a significant difference in helping them overcome these obstacles and achieve their goals.

According to Shaw (2022b), the transfer of stigma of having an incarcerated parent is an emerging field of research that needs to be explored further. This transfer of this stigma has a significant impact on mobility, and it can manifest in various ways. For instance, individuals may be denied employment opportunities because of their parent's criminal history (Shaw, 2022b). Despite demonstrating resilience and academic excellence, children of incarcerated parents may be prevented from accessing career opportunities and mobility pathways (Shaw, 2022b). The transfer of stigma, in these cases, means that individuals are not judged based on their own merit but rather on the actions of people around them, such as their parent's criminal record (Shaw, 2022b).

Muftić and Smith (2018) found that it is crucial to provide incarcerated parents with the necessary resources and support during their time in prison and after their release. With the right tools and programs, they can better manage the many challenges that come with reintegrating into society and help them establish a relationship with their

adult children (Muftić & Smith, 2018). Investing in these efforts will ultimately lead to more successful outcomes for these individuals and their families.

Support Systems

Domzalska et al. (2022) analyzed the relations between incarceration and the levels of behavioral and emotional problems in children of fathers serving prison sentences based on the children's self-report. Domzalska et al. (2022) found that having a positive support system in place for children of incarcerated parents can lead to resiliency (Domzalska et al., 2022). Having a support system can also be beneficial to help children solve their emotional, behavioral, and social problems and cope (Domzalska et al., 2022). Social workers practice skills for implementing trauma-informed responses to this vulnerable population and these skills are crucial for mental health and resilience. Social workers utilizing trauma-informed integrative approaches can aid in the development of resilience, the restoration of hope, the promotion of healthy relational skills, and the interruption of the intergenerational transmission of lost potential for children of incarcerated parents (Skinner-Osei & Levenson, 2018).

The finding of NeMoyer et al. (2020) indicate that Puerto Rican adolescents with a history of parental incarceration may benefit from programs designed to prevent future delinquency. Children can acquire a feeling of self-efficacy when they have access to adults who validate their experiences while also modeling and coaching good problem-solving skills (Skinner-Osei & Levenson, 2018). Confidence will be restored as a result of successful self-management experiences, and they will be able to apply newly gained

problem-solving and self-correction skills to unfamiliar situations (Skinner-Osei &

Levenson, 2018).

Research has found that physical separation and increased financial load can

result in significant financial and emotional strain and stigma for the parenting partner

(Tadros et al., 2020). Even though jailed fathers constitute a sizable proportion of the

correctional population, their coparenting interactions have received little attention

(Tadros & Ogden, 2020). Tadros et al. (2022) explained that Black and Latino individuals

are disproportionately incarcerated and may experience the effects of incarceration more

than White families, and the difficulties of communication and visitation may cause

Black children and partners to experience additional familial strains, such as coparenting

issues. Having strong familial ties before incarceration may be more crucial for Black and

Latino fathers in mitigating the negative effects of incarceration on the family and the

difficulties of coparenting (Tadros et al., 2022). Improving access to relational therapy

for families of color while navigating one parent's incarceration and developing

culturally responsive treatment approaches can also address the unique challenges of

incarcerated co-parenting (Tadros, 2019; Tadros & Owens, 2020).

Studies have shown that children's emotional difficulties, such as grief, anxiety,

and trust issues, may persist even after the release of a parent from prison (Gordon et al.,

2018). In fact, some research suggests that these challenges could worsen and become

more complex over time (Gordon et al., 2018). Bates et al. (2018) found that it is crucial

to provide convicted fathers with the necessary resources and support during their time in

prison and after their release. With the right tools and programs, they can better manage

the many challenges that come with reintegrating into society (Bates et al., 2018). These efforts will ultimately lead to more successful outcomes for these individuals and their families including their children. With my study I plan to fill in the gap on the need to understand the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs from the perspective of young adults.

Craigie et al. (2018) described the detrimental effects of incarceration on both those who are incarcerated and their children, even long after the incarceration experience has ended. Craigie et al. (2018) found that previous research links paternal incarceration and reentry with negative outcomes for boys, particularly for black and Hispanic children. Continuing to delve deeper into this issue and work toward solutions can help to mitigate these harmful effects. This highlights the need for continued support and resources for families impacted by incarceration.

Walker et al. (2020) explained that resiliency can be enhanced by connecting individuals with their communities while using books that connect with their culture. Making connections while doing literature circles can help support children of incarcerated parents (Walker et al., 2020). Supportive adults play a crucial role in facilitating resilience among young individuals (Johnson & Arditti, 2023). They help by providing access to activities, assisting them in envisioning and working towards a better life, and encouraging turning points, they can help young people overcome difficult situations and thrive despite adversity (Johnson & Arditti, 2023).

School-level services and characteristics also promote resilience among children with incarcerated parents (Johnson & Arditti, 2023). According to Finkeldey and

Dennison's (2020) school-based counseling and nursing services can mitigate the effects of parental incarceration on later depressive symptoms for children. Additionally, attending schools with more highly educated teachers can also have a positive impact on the well-being of these children (Finkeldey & Dennison, 2020). These findings highlight the importance of formal services and programs in supporting and promoting resilience among children who have experienced parental incarceration (Johnson & Arditti, 2023). Bomysoad and Francis (2022) found that resilience, participating in activities, and getting enough sleep can reduce the likelihood of experiencing certain mental health conditions in youth whose parents have been incarcerated. These findings have important implications for public health and may address the need for additional programming to help support these vulnerable youth and help them cope with the challenges they face (Bomysoad & Francis, 2022).

Summary on Social/Emotional Mental Health Effects and Resiliency

Social/emotional mental health effects can have negative effects on children of incarcerated parents. As stated previously, parental incarceration can have detrimental effects on children, including increased likelihood of anxiety disorders, drug use disorders, felony charges, incarceration, not completing high school, early parenthood, and social isolation in adulthood (Gifford et al., 2019). Furthermore, the impact of adverse childhood experiences on children of incarcerated caregivers has been studied, less is known about positive childhood experiences for these children (Crouch et al., 2022). Additionally, it is concerning that Black and Latino adolescents receive fewer mental health services compared to non-minority youth (Ryan et al., 2023). Research

lacks important information, and there is little known about the lived experiences and mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents from the perspectives of young adults.

It is important to provide support for children with incarcerated parents to help them build resilience. There are specialized intervention programs and practices that have been designed specifically with these children and their parents in mind. These interventions typically fall into one of three categories: parenting programs for incarcerated mothers and fathers, programs for children with incarcerated parents, or policies and practices in prisons and jails designed to support family connection (Johnson & Arditti, 2023). In addition to more general services like school-based counseling, these interventions can help mitigate the risks associated with parental incarceration (Johnson & Arditti, 2023). One way to help children with parents who are incarcerated is to improve the knowledge, skills, and behavior of their parents and caregivers (Johnson & Arditti, 2023). The implementation of these programs is crucial to the success of parents and their children. Implementing evidence-based practices caused by parental incarceration is crucial to reduce future harm. This research touched on how children of incarcerated parents can overcome the odds, but it did not discuss how culture can impact the results of success.

Behavioral Development

Having incarcerated parents can have a significant impact on the behavioral development of children and adolescents. Research on children with incarcerated fathers and mothers commonly considers behavior problems, mental health, and delinquency as

outcomes (Poehlmann-Tynan & Turney, 2021). Positive associations between paternal incarceration and children's externalizing problems but not internalizing problems have been found in studies on early childhood (from birth through age 5; Poehlmann-Tynan & Turney, 2021).

The negative effects of parental incarceration on children's behavioral development cannot be overlooked. The research that has been conducted on behavioral development demonstrates the potential consequences for children and adolescents who have parents that are incarcerated. Children of incarcerated parents may experience so much shame and stigma that they try to conceal their parents' incarceration history from peers and teachers and refrain from expressing their emotions or seeking assistance (Conway & Jones, 2015). The stigma associated with having an incarcerated parent can impact the social and academic development of a child (Skinner-Osei & Levenson, 2018). Stigma is one of the most damaging outcomes of parental incarceration for children. Ruhland et al. (2020) found that youth with a currently incarcerated parent displayed a greater number of externalizing behaviors than those with a previously incarcerated parent. Damage to property, theft, driving under the influence, and physical fighting are behaviors that place youth at risk of becoming involved in the justice system and perpetuating the cycle of intergenerational imprisonment (Ruhland et al., 2020). The findings of the study look to contribute to the identification of strategies for preventing intergenerational incarceration (Ruhland et al., 2020). By understanding that adolescents whose parents are incarcerated are at an increased risk for these externalizing behaviors, it may be possible to implement interventions to prevent them.

Finkeldey et al. (2020) analyzed data from the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS; $n = 965$), a sample of men and women interviewed five times over a period of 10 years (2001, 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2011), and publicly available official incarceration records. Finkeldey et al. (2020) examined how parental incarceration influenced identity endorsement and the association between parental incarceration and young adult children's deviant self-identities. Finkeldey et al. (2020) found that encouraging and facilitating high emotional independence among those exposed to parental incarceration, or the development of freedom from the excessive need for parental approval, closeness, togetherness, and emotional support, may help to combat the commonly observed intergenerational transmission of antisocial identities and behavior.

Only recently have researchers started to investigate the ways in which behavioral challenges persist after a parent is released from prison. Most of the evidence documenting internalizing problems comes from qualitative research, such as a study of college students who reflected on emotional difficulties like grief, anxiety, and worry following their parents' incarceration during their childhood (Zhang & Flynn, 2020). Another study addressed that damaged trust and low confidence in relationships with others are particularly significant internalizing behavioral consequences that occur after the parent's release (Young & Jefferson Smith, 2019). These consequences could also involve increased self-doubt, anger, regret, and sadness, which are often associated with stigma (Young & Jefferson Smith, 2019).

Domzalska et al. (2022) found that children and adolescents from families in which a parent was in prison or had been in prison in the past showed a higher level of behaviors such as aggression, driving under the influence of psychoactive substances, or delinquent behavior than children of parents with no prison record. Furthermore, children of currently imprisoned parents reported a considerably higher level of externalizing behavior than those of formerly imprisoned ones (Domzalska et al., 2022). These findings have been supported by numerous studies using a range of different methodological approaches.

Summary on Behavioral Development

A child's behavioral development can be significantly impacted if their parent is incarcerated. Studies demonstrate that children and adolescents of incarcerated parents can have negative attitudes toward the criminal justice system and can have hostility toward authority figures (Murray & Murray, 2010). Domzalska et al. (2022) found that children and adolescents from families in which a parent was in prison or had been in prison in the past showed a higher level of behaviors such as aggression. Finkeldey et al. (2020) addressed that promoting emotional independence in children with incarcerated parents may help prevent the intergenerational transmission of antisocial behavior. My research will bridge this gap by understanding the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs from the perspective of young adults. Additional knowledge is needed of the effects that a parent's incarceration has on Latino children and adolescents' behavioral development.

Health Consequences

Having incarcerated parents can have a negative impact on the health consequences of children and adolescents. Niño et al. (2022) conducted research that focused primarily on two groups of children of incarcerated parents and partners of incarcerated individuals and revealed widespread health consequences in addition to economic and social harm. Data were drawn from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, a longitudinal, stratified multistage probability sample of couples and children in 20 large U.S. cities (Niño et al., 2022). The final analytic sample consisted of 2174 mothers that were followed from pregnancy to age 9 of the focal child (Niño et al., 2022). In the study, it was found that the impact of paternal incarceration on mothers' health varied based on their racial and ethnic backgrounds (Niño et al., 2022). The research showed that there were negative physiological effects for some mothers, highlighting the need for further exploration and support for affected families (Niño et al., 2022).

Additionally, adolescents whose parents have been incarcerated are more likely to develop hyperactivity disorder, speech, or language difficulties, learning disabilities, developmental delays, and physiological dysregulation (Niño & Cai, 2020; Turney & Hernandez, 2019). Using cross-sectional data from the 2016 Minnesota Student Survey (MSS), secondary data analysis examined behavioral indicators of physical health among 8th, 9th, and 11th grade students ($N = 119,029$; Hiolski et al., 2019). Self-reported behavioral indicators of physical activity, fruit and vegetable consumption, fast food consumption, sugar-sweetened beverage consumption, and sleep were assessed and

included a measure of perceived overall health (Hiolski et al., 2019). Logistic regression models controlling for demographic characteristics compared youth with currently and formerly incarcerated parents to youth with no history of parental incarceration (Hiolski et al., 2019). Hiolski et al. (2019) found that parental incarceration is substantially associated with decreased levels of healthy behaviors and increased levels of unhealthy behaviors. Even if their parent is no longer incarcerated, the results indicate that adolescents with incarcerated parents engage in poorer physical health behaviors than their peers (Hiolski et al., 2019). Findings highlight the need for practitioners and policymakers to prioritize interventions for this high-risk population of children and their families (Hiolski et al., 2019).

Summary on Health Consequences

Studies that were addressed previously demonstrated that children and adolescents of incarcerated parents can experience negative health consequences. Niño et al. (2022) revealed widespread health consequences in addition to economic and social harm. Hiolski et al. (2019) found that parental incarceration is substantially associated with decreased levels of healthy behaviors and increased levels of unhealthy behaviors. This research revealed the health consequences on the general population but lacks the impact on specifically the Latino population. My research will focus on the effects that parent's incarceration has on the health consequences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter provided an analysis of the effects that parental incarceration has on children and adolescent mental health, behavioral development, and health consequences. This chapter highlighted Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory that will be used the analysis to understand the recollections of young Latino adults about their experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. Bronfenbrenner's model is a useful tool for understanding why different individuals have unique experiences and reactions to certain situations. In the case of children and adolescents whose parents are incarcerated, their reactions can vary depending on several factors, such as their age, the timing of the incarceration, and their environment. Consequently, research shows that it is important to be aware of children and adolescents that have experienced trauma such as having an incarcerated parent (Shaw, 2022a). Many of these children and adolescents can display feelings of depression, anger, helplessness, and separation trauma (Shaw, 2022a). These challenges follow children and adolescents throughout their adulthood (Poehlmann-Tynan & Turney, 2021).

Furthermore, research and analysis has found that there is an association between familial incarceration and suicide with ethnic identity being considered as a potential moderator (Forster et al., 2019). It has also been found that childhood parental incarceration significantly affects young adulthood but has not necessarily been studied in the Latino community (Ryan et al., 2023). Additionally, it has also been observed that Black children and Hispanic children are much more likely than White children to have a parent in prison but gaps in literature have not further researched this area (Ryan et al.,

2023). The research further indicates that there are significant racial disparities between the incarceration experiences of Black and Latino groups and those of White populations (Ryan et al., 2023).

Additionally, this chapter provided an analysis on the reality that these children and adolescents face when they are underserved and understudied (Ryan et al., 2023). Furthermore, it is known that Black and Latino adults are disproportionately represented in jails and prisons, and their children are disproportionately affected by parental incarceration because of research by (Ryan et al., 20023). The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. This study will investigate how young Latino adults interpret this experience in relation culture, socioemotional mental health effects, behavioral development, and health consequences. By using Bronfenbrenner's theory to guide the analysis, this study will explore the mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents with incarcerated parents, by examining the lived experiences of these young Latino individuals, I hope to gain a deeper understanding of how best to support them.

There is currently still a gap in literature regarding the need to understand the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs from the perspective of young adults. This research will focus on filling this gap in literature and making recommendations based on the findings. In Chapter 3, I will be discussing the research methodology used for this study, as well as providing a justification for why this approach was chosen. Additionally, I will delve into the

important topics of trustworthiness and ethical procedures as they relate to the chosen

method. It is important to address these issues to ensure that the study is conducted in a

fair and responsible manner.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. This research will add to the comprehension of the difficulties and psychological distress experienced by these individuals in their childhood. In this chapter, I examine the approach employed in the execution of this study. In the initial section, I provide an overview of the research design and explain the reasoning behind its suitability. Next is an outline of the methodological protocols employed in the investigation. Following that is a section that entails an in-depth analysis of trustworthiness concerns, encompassing the ethical factors pertinent to the present study. Finally, the chapter concludes with a concise overview of the fundamental key elements and procedures of the methodology used in this research.

The research design utilized for this study was a phenomenological approach. This approach allowed for an analysis of the shared experiences around the phenomenon of interest. Through interviews and extended conversations, the phenomenological approach reveals the collective meaning of what individuals experience (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). This research included the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question that guided this study was:

RQ: How do Latino young adults perceive and describe their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents during the time their parent was incarcerated?

The phenomenon of interest that I sought to understand was the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. To truly understand this phenomenon, it was important to choose the most effective research approach. Quantitative research does not allow for direct interaction with participants, which is necessary to comprehend the impact of parental incarceration on individuals during their years as children and adolescents. A qualitative study was more effective in this research because it involves interviewing and observing participants and their reactions to specific questions. This type of research cannot be conducted through a quantitative study. I gathered information from adults who were children or adolescents of incarcerated parents for this phenomenological study.

To explore the phenomenon and examine the research question, I utilized the research design of phenomenology. This approach allowed me to delve deeply into the experiences and perspectives of the participants, providing valuable insights into the topic at hand. Through careful analysis of the data collected, I was able to uncover key themes and patterns, shedding light on the underlying processes and dynamics at work. Overall, the phenomenological approach proved to be an effective and insightful way to investigate this complex phenomenon. I did not use the other qualitative designs because they were not suitable for this research. A biographical design was not appropriate

because the aim of this study was not to describe detailed information about the life of a single participant. A case study was not appropriate because a description of the behavior was not the focus of the study. An ethnographic design was not appropriate because the aim was not to understand symbols in culture and traditions. Furthermore, a grounded theory approach was not chosen for the study because the purpose of the research was not to develop or discover a theory.

The qualitative research methodology is rooted in the philosophy of phenomenology and hermeneutics, which seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon and how it is experienced by individuals (Smith & Nizza, 2022). When conducting a quantitative approach, clear understanding of both the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the population is important (Stadtlander, 2015). The primary aspect to consider in this area was the target demographic, the population the study's findings can be applied to. The collection of numerical data takes place during quantitative research, and the research is focused on specific variables and statistical analysis.

The qualitative research design allowed me to collect and analyze data while also developing and modifying theory, refining research questions, and addressing validity concerns. This type of research gathered data via themes, allowing the researcher to interpret data in a more fluid manner. Qualitative research is more interpretive than quantitative research, which typically relies on surveys or other prestructured means of collecting data. Qualitative research offers insights into the reasons people engage in certain actions or behaviors, which is not always possible with quantitative research.

There are other qualitative designs that were not used for this study as they would not have accomplished the goal of this research. This includes the narrative design, which looks at lived storied experiences and the structure of the stories as narratives (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Narrative study emphasizes individuals' lived experiences through their stories. A case study is a study that uses multiple data sources, such as observations, interviews, focus groups, documents, and artifacts (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). A case study involves studying a case or multiple cases in significant depth and in a real-world context (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Grounded theory is a qualitative research approach used to develop theories based on data or field observations (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Grounded theory research can use data from several sources, including interviews, observations, and documents (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Ethnography emphasizes in-person field studies, as researchers spend extensive time with participants (known as *immersion*; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Ethnography's primary method is participant observation, which includes direct observation, fieldnotes, informal interviews, group activities, immersion in a setting, identifying and reviewing relevant sources of information, and engaging in discussions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The phenomenology design was used in this research as I aimed to capture and characterize the core of an experience, including both what and how participants experienced it (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Role of the Researcher

My main role was an observer who asked probing questions to gain deeper insights into the topic. By engaging with the participants and listening to their experiences and perspectives, I gathered valuable information and formed a more

comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. To remain impartial and fair

throughout the research process, I maintained a safe and respectful environment for all

involved.

In qualitative research, the researcher plays a central role in the research and is the

main instrument for collecting the data (Walker et al., 2013). The researcher is the analyst

of the data (Smith & Nizza, 2022). IPA researchers focus on lived experiences and how

people make sense of these experiences within the context of their personal and social

worlds (Smith & Nizza, 2022). IPA researchers aim to gather rich, detailed accounts from

people about those experiences and then describe, interpret, and convey what the

experience was like and how people made sense of it (Smith et al., 2009).

As the researcher and the main instrument of the study, I was responsible for the

recruitment of participants for the study, interviewing the participants, data collection,

data analysis and results, and dissemination of the findings (Smith et al., 2009). I

completed semistructured interviews with the participants. Semistructured interviews are

used to obtain data collection from participants' real-life experience. Using

semistructured interviews with open-ended questions helps a researcher obtain the

necessary data to understand each participant's experience. Furthermore, as the

researcher, I developed and facilitated an interview protocol and included video, Zoom,

and audio recordings. As stated by Smith et al. (2009), researchers describe the purpose

of the study, state the central features of IPA, and provide a rationale for employing IPA

for the study. A researcher must be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the

experience of one's research participants, and committed to accurately and adequately

representing their experience (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). This allows the researcher the ability to be accurate with what participants said during interviews (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). This also increases the validity of the research and reduces bias.

Researcher biases and/or power relationships were managed. I did not have a personal or professional relationship with the participants. There were no personal or professional relationships or supervisory or instructor relationships involving power over any of the participants. As a qualitative researcher, I stayed mindful of the potential impact that my background and personal perspectives could have on my research. I remained open-minded and was willing to set aside or adjust perspectives to ensure the research is as unbiased and objective as possible. Ultimately, this helped me to achieve a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of my subject matter and to produce more reliable and trustworthy research results. There were no other ethical issues in this study; the conducted interviews were in locations selected by my participants to help maintain a level of confidentiality and trustworthiness. I also used objective language to prevent biases. Additionally, during the reanalysis of data, I used bracketing as a technique to minimize the impact of my personal opinions, biases, and assumptions. To further minimize my biases, I maintained a journal to keep track of my thoughts. I found it helpful to engage with and listen to the study participants without any assumptions, labels, or biases. This approach helped me maintain my focus and gain a clear understanding of the experiences they shared. I did not have any conflicts of interest or other ethical issues.

Methodology

In this research, I employed the phenomenology method to investigate the qualitative aspects of how young Latino adults perceive their experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. The focus was on exploring and understanding individuals' lived experiences from their own perspectives. The criteria on which participant selection was based on a survey that stated the target population for this study.

Participant Selection Logic

The general population included Latino young adults on social media including professional groups. The target population refers to the specific group of persons within the general population who have been identified as fitting the study's requirements (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Twelve participants were recruited for this study; however, only 10 participants were needed to reach data saturation. Participants were given informed consent forms to sign to participate in the research.

Convenience sampling was the sampling strategy included participants from the population who agreed to take part in this study. Participants met the specific criteria for convenience sampling to be used. Convenience sampling is a method that includes selecting participants who are readily available to participate in a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Snowball sampling, which is the process of finding individuals who fit the criteria via referral from other participants, was also used in the study to assist in the collection of data relevant to the goal of the investigation (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The inclusion criteria on which participant selection was based was Latino young adults ages 18 to 29 who had at least one biological parent incarcerated when they were a child or adolescent. Excluded from the study were individuals who did not have at least one biological parent incarcerated when they were a child or adolescent or individuals who were not Latinos. According to Fink (2000), inclusion criteria allow a researcher to recognize connections among the experiences of participants that could help to explain the phenomenon. It is important to gather this type of information to help narrow down the participants for this research and to better understand the experiences and challenges of those affected by parental incarceration. Furthermore, this allowed for a more targeted data collection instrument. Participants who met the criterion/a were asked to volunteer to participate as I used convenience sampling.

The recruitment of volunteers to participate in this study took place on social media pages including my personal page, friends' and colleagues' personal pages, and counseling professional pages. Contact information were placed on the flyer and social media post. Interested volunteers were asked to scan the QR code to proceed. The QR code took volunteers to a Google Form where informed consent explained the risks and benefits of participating. They were asked to complete questions about their demographic information including the inclusion criteria. Additionally, participants added their contact information and signed up for a time frame for an interview. Interviews were scheduled based on researcher and participant availability.

If this plan did not work, I intended to use snowball sampling strategy and have participants contact people who met the inclusion criteria to participate. Additionally, if

more volunteers were needed, I would have shared flyers with counselors to recruit.

Participants were selected based on their willingness to participate in the study. The

study's information was shared with all individuals who expressed interest. An informed

consent form, with all necessary information, was electronically transmitted to those who

began contact. Consent was obtained prior to participation. The informed consent form

stated that participation was voluntary and each participant had the right to withdraw

from participation without penalty at any time during the study. As part of the informed

consent, participants were notified that their participation is confidential and to ensure

confidentiality, fictitious names were given for all participants and all collected data are

stored in an electronic password-secured file.

Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study,

when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained, and when further

coding is no longer feasible (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation refers to the point at

which no new information can be gained from additional participants as the data become

repetitive (Fusch & Ness, 2015). This means that adding more participants is not

necessary to gain insights into the experiences or perceptions of the sample (Fusch &

Ness, 2015). Furthermore, one should choose the sample size with the best opportunity

for the researcher to reach data saturation (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012). A large sample

size does not guarantee one will reach data saturation, nor does a small sample size;

rather, it constitutes the sample size (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012). Ten to 12 participants

were recruited to interview who met the inclusion criteria; however, as detailed

interviews were conducted, 10 participants may have been considered sufficient to reach

saturation (Creswell, 2014). Data saturation is not solely dependent on the number of participants in the study but rather on the depth of information obtained from them.

Instrumentation

The main instrument to collect research data sources for this study was an approximately 60-minute semistructured interview that was recorded to the cloud and produced transcripts. Questions were asked using Zoom Pro, and the interviews were audio recorded) for collecting data. The research data instruments were researcher-produced.

The researcher conducted semistructured interviews with the participants to gather research data sources on their real-life experiences. The use of open-ended questions in these interviews enabled the researcher to obtain the necessary information to gain a better understanding of the participants' experiences. The interviews were valuable as researchers are unable to directly observe all aspects that contribute to individuals' experiences.

Volunteer participants completed the eligibility criteria, informed consent and then the demographic questionnaire. Furthermore after informed consent was received I collected additional research data sources which included demographics, this included collecting ethnicity, race and gender. As part of the demographic survey, participants were asked to provide information regarding their gender, age, ethnicity/race, and whether they had a parent who was incarcerated during their childhood or adolescence. According to Fink (2000), collecting this information will enable the researcher to identify connections among the participants' experiences that could help explain the

phenomenon being studied. This information is critical in narrowing down the

participants for the research and gaining a better understanding of the challenges faced by

those impacted by parental incarceration. Additionally, this will aid in developing a more

targeted research data sources collection instrument.

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), semistructured interviews involve the use

of an interview instrument to guide and organize the discussion while also allowing for

specific, tailored follow-up questions across interviews. This approach provides

flexibility for the researcher to explore topics in greater depth and adapt to the unique

experiences and perspectives of each participant. When each participant was interviewed,

I introduced myself and provided some background information. I also expressed

gratitude for their willingness to join the interview session and participate in the study

and will ask how they were feeling, according to Ravitch and Carl (2016).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The recruitment of volunteers to participate in this study took place on social

media pages including my personal page, friends'/colleagues' personal pages, and

counseling professional pages. Contact information was placed on the flyer and social

media post. Interested volunteers were asked to scan the QR code to proceed. The QR

code took volunteers to the Google Form where informed consent was read and accepted

which explains the risks and benefits of participating. Furthermore, they were asked to

complete questions about their demographic information including the inclusion criteria.

Additionally, participants added their contact information, and signed up for a time for an

interview. Interviews were scheduled based on the researchers' and participants'

availability. Furthermore, participants were able to select the dates and times that work for the interview. The participants who met the inclusion criteria were invited to be a part of the study through email or phone contact.

The interviews were collected and recorded; participants were interviewed on a password-protected online platform Zoom Pro. Closed captioning was turned on for each interview. Each interview was approximately 60 minutes. Data collection was finalized by June 2024. All data collection took place during the IRB approval year. The recordings are stored in Walden's Microsoft Outlook cloud. The audio recordings are also stored in the same cloud. No real names were utilized during the interviews and additionally each participant was given a number to go by (ex. P1, P2, etc.). All the transcripts are stored in a password protected cloud account.

After asking the questions, I followed up with probing questions to encourage respondents to elaborate on their answers. Sampling sufficiency was obtained by using enough questions and probing questions. For research-developed instruments, I made sure the volunteers understood the wording and it answered the research question. I used prior research studies to come up with the questions. I did a field test of the semistructured interview questions to make sure that the interviews would be long enough to ensure sufficiency of data. I did not have follow-up interviews. All interviews were collected by May 2024. Participants were given community resources after the interview to address any concerns or any triggers that may have appeared during or after the interview.

Furthermore, resources were provided at the end of the interview to all participants, including the participants who withdrew from participation. Participants were provided with additional resources for follow-up due to the matter of the study and the potential psychological distress that the interview questions might cause. These resources include local mental health agencies and health district facilities that offer educational materials and referrals. After analyzing and organizing the data, it was categorized and labeled based on its importance and relevance to gain a deeper understanding of the experience. Any expressions that did not meet these criteria will be removed, as well as any that were repetitive, vague, or overlapping (Moustakas, 1994). Everything was presented in descriptive terms to ensure clarity and accuracy.

Data Analysis Plan

The method of data analysis was IPA. IPA will offer a distinct and valuable approach to better understand the individual experiences of young Latino adults who had an incarcerated parent as a child or adolescent. The IPA method was used to gain a better understanding of individuals' personal experiences and how they interpret them in the context of their social and personal lives (Smith et al., 2009). The approach of IPA distinguishes itself from traditional phenomenological approaches by not only recognizing but also utilizing both convergent and divergent themes (Pringle et al., 2011). This approach often emphasizes the significance of such differences rather than just focusing on similarities, which is the usual practice in more conventional phenomenological approaches (Pringle et al., 2011).

The first step included the process of IPA which is detailed in Smith and Nizza (2022), I used IPA to analyze and code the data. To begin the process, I transcribed the audio zoom recordings. This process will take time, as I made sure to read through the transcripts and relisten to the recordings (Smith & Nizza, 2022). During this noting phase, I took notes on the transcripts, commenting on first impressions and reflecting on the participant's words (Smith & Nizza, 2022). As I took notes, I looked at similarities and differences in the text and participant's words, focusing on sentences and phrases and attempting to understand (Smith & Nizza, 2022). I used a yellow highlighter when a notable word or phrase is spoken. I reviewed the transcripts multiple times to ensure that important keywords are not missed.

The interviews were transcribed by hand using Zoom Pro and they will be recorded to the cloud. This approach, as described by Saldana (2016), can help ensure that their perspectives are accurately represented and given due consideration. Participants received a copy of the transcript via email. Participants were provided with a week to respond. No further action was needed if everything looked correct on the transcript. The demographic data was analyzed by totaling it up. Discrepant cases pertain to perspectives that differ from the primary themes found in the data. No discrepant cases were detected during the study.

When conducting a qualitative descriptive study, transcription plays a crucial role in simplifying the interpretation of data. It enables interviewers to easily read, analyze, and interpret the information gathered during the interviews. Transcription involves transforming spoken words, such as recorded data from an interview, into written form.

This allows for an easier analysis of data and a more accurate interpretation of the results. Overall, transcription is an essential tool that helps researchers to effectively gather and analyze data.

The next step included experiential statements, which included an analytic effort. This step included identifying one or more experiential statements for each participant (Smith & Nizza, 2022). These statements provided a summary of what is essential in the corresponding portion of the transcript. The statements were specific enough and based on the data while also being conceptual enough to capture the psychological substance of the text (Smith & Nizza, 2022). They highlighted both the significant psychological process and the context or content of that process invoked by the participant's response (Smith & Nizza, 2022). I used an excel sheet to type and code the words to help manage the data effectively.

Furthermore, the next step consisted finding connections and clustering experiential statements. I created categories on an excel sheet from identified code words and group them looking for similarities, patterns, and overall comprehension of the phenomenon. The cluster analysis method helps identify similarities and differences between experiential statements by bringing them together and clustering them (Smith & Nizza, 2022). This allowed a better understanding of patterns and relationships in the data.

Once the clustering process is completed, the next step was to compile the table of personal experiential themes. This table will showcase all the experiential themes identified during the clustering process, along with the corresponding identifying

information and all the experiential statements contained within each theme. It is an

essential step towards gaining a comprehensive understanding of the data set (Smith &

Nizza, 2022).

Data analysis in qualitative research involves a systematic approach to examining

the interview transcripts, observation notes, and non-textual materials gathered by the

researcher (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). This process aims to improve the researcher's

understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). By

organizing and reviewing the data, the researcher can identify patterns, themes, and

insights that would have otherwise been missed (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Overall, data

analysis is a crucial step in qualitative research that helps to ensure that the results

obtained are accurate and reliable (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

The method of data analysis was IPA. This approach will allow me to delve

deeply into the experiences and perspectives of the participants, providing valuable

insights into the topic at hand. IPA is a method designed to understand people's lived

experiences, comprehending how individuals perceive and interpret their experiences,

both on an individual and social level (Smith & Nizza, 2022). It delves into the core of

people's thoughts and emotions and examines the intricate interplay between their

personal and social environments (Smith & Nizza, 2022).

Additionally, by using IPA, research methodology was designed to delve into the

subjective experiences of people. IPA is based on the idea that everyone has a unique

perspective on the world, and our experiences are influenced by our social and cultural

context (Smith & Nizza, 2022). By using this methodology, insight was gained into the

intricate and complex nature of human experience, which ultimately will help in understanding how Latino young adults perceive and describe their lived experiences and mental health needs as children during the time their parent was incarcerated.

Furthermore, IPA helped to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a specific phenomenon. Additionally, this involved analyzing the personal perceptions and experiences of a group of people who have encountered this phenomenon directly. Through exploring these viewpoints, valuable insights into the phenomenon will be obtained.

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, trustworthiness plays an important role. It was ensured in this study by using various measures like credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. It is important to evaluate the data accurately and establish the truthfulness of the findings to make them reliable. To achieve trustworthiness, the study employed different techniques, such as member checking and reflexive journaling.

Credibility

After understanding what makes a study credible and trustworthy, I carefully evaluated and determined which strategies would be most effective for my study. It was important to have confidence in the methods and procedures used in research, and I feel that my approach yielded reliable and valuable results. When conducting research, it was crucial to prioritize credibility and ensure that the interpretation accurately reflects the views of participants. As Korstjens and Moser (2018) noted, credibility is directly related to the truth value of a study. In my own qualitative study, I made sure to carefully

evaluate and select strategies that would lead to reliable and valuable results. This approach gave me confidence that my findings accurately reflected the perspectives of those involved.

I used member checking to ensure credibility in this study. According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), it is recommended to use member checks to establish credibility and ensure the validity of research findings. To ensure an accurate interpretation of the data analysis, member checking took place during the original transcript to verify participants' accuracy. Participants were asked if the transcript was accurate. Furthermore, participants were emailed the transcripts and were asked to return them within a week if they noted any errors that needed correcting. Otherwise, if I did not hear from them in a week, I assumed the transcripts were accurate. This was an important step in ensuring that the perspectives and views of participants were accurately reflected in the final interpretation of the data. Doing member checking in this study lead to clarifying responses by participants.

Transferability

The concept of transferability in qualitative research implies that the conclusions drawn from the study can be extended to different settings or groups of people (Daniel, 2019). Ravitch and Carl (2016) describe transferability as a way a qualitative study can apply to broader contexts while still maintaining context-specific research. This concept is important in ensuring that the findings of a study can be extended to different communities or scenarios. Transferability includes having detailed descriptions of the data, also called "thick descriptions," for the readers to compare to other contacts based

on the information obtained (Guba, 1981). For my research, I employed thick

descriptions to provide vivid and detailed accounts of the participants' contexts and

experiences. Volunteers were able to participate as long as they met the inclusion criteria.

The participants were asked to share information about their gender, age, ethnicity/race,

and whether they had a parent who was incarcerated during their childhood or

adolescence.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Dependability entails that you have a reasoned argument for how you are collecting the

data and that the data are consistent with your argument. One important aspect of

conducting research is ensuring dependability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This means having

a well-thought-out plan for data collection and ensuring that the collected data aligns with

that plan (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). As Miles et al. (2014) note qualitative research studies

are particularly known for their consistency and stability over time, making them

dependable sources of information. I established dependability using constancy,

consistency, and establish an audit trail. It is also crucial to create a well-articulated

rationale for the choices to ensure that your data collection plan is appropriate for your

research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). A solid research design is essential to achieve

dependability, like other validity constructs (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Confirmability

Confirmability is an important concept often compared to objectivity in

quantitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The researcher utilized reflexivity and

coding to ensure confirmability in the research. A comprehensive description of the

coding process with evidence will establish the credibility and reliability of the research

findings. Qualitative researchers recognize that their work is subjective and take

measures to ensure confirmability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This involves being

transparent about the research process and findings and allowing for peer review (Ravitch

& Carl, 2016). Additionally, this will increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the

work (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This research study utilized an audit trail to obtain its

results. The audit trail will explain each step of the study process. The analysis process

described in depth so that the reader understands how the categories and themes will be

identified.

Ethical Procedures

As a researcher, it was my responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of all

the participants involved in the study. I also followed the procedures outlined in the IRB

application to ensure that all participants are protected from any potential harm.

Following IRB review and approval to proceed, advertisements took place on

advertisements on social media outlets which include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn.

Obtaining consent from each participant will be a crucial step in this process.

Participants were asked to review the consent and reply "I consent to the email

they agreed to participate to/ Upon this consent a zoom meeting date and time be

scheduled. Individual zoom meetings per participant will take place. Participants were

told that this study was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any point, if they withdraw

all documentation would be destroyed and would not be included in the study.

Participants were informed of the research type and the possible risks and benefits before giving informed consent to participate in the study. The researcher made sure that everything was understood, and all questions were answered before consent is signed and agreed to take part. It was important for participants to know any potential risks to participation and to feel safe and informed throughout the study. After an initial conversation, I sent the participants a follow-up email with an invitation to participate in the research study the email also included an informed consent document that I recommended reviewing thoroughly. I also sent the informed consent at least five days prior to the interview to ensure that enough time was given to read and understand it. Additionally, I provided participants with my cell number so that they can contact me if they have any further questions or concerns.

To ensure confidentiality, each participant was given a pseudonym to protect their identity. As per the consent agreement, I reminded them that their involvement is voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time. To ensure a safe and secure environment of trust, I enforced confidentiality throughout this study for participants to share their experiences openly and honestly. All the necessary protocols were followed to ensure that the participants' information remained secure and private. Each participant was informed that data will be collected and stored in a secured and password-protected computer. Furthermore, all documents will be deleted and shredded five years after this study for the protection and privacy of everyone. Sensitive information will be secured and will not be left available for potential breaches or unauthorized access.

Prior to conducting this study, I went through the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) process. Using interviews as my data collection method, I was able to gain valuable insights into attitudes, opinions, and experiences related to my study. I used one-to-one qualitative interviews to create a safe space where my participants could openly share their thoughts and engage in dialogue. I conducted semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. All electronic files will be password-protected and saved on an encrypted removable storage drive. Additionally, all data used for this study will be kept in a secure locked cabinet in my home office. Only the researcher will have access to this data. The data will be kept for the allotted time of five years, and then all data will be physically destroyed. As the researcher, I had no conflict of interest, and no incentives were used for participant recruitment.

Summary

This chapter provided a detailed explanation of the research design and rationale. The role of the researcher was also addressed, and the methodological protocols employed. Smith and Nizza (2022) addressed that the researcher is responsible for analyzing the data, and IPA researchers concentrate on the lived experiences of individuals and their interpretation of these experiences. As mentioned, credibility is a crucial factor in the validity of any study. In this upcoming qualitative research, I plan to implement strategies that ensure the reliability and accuracy of my findings. I was able to obtain valuable insights that accurately represent the perspectives of the participants and provide meaningful contributions to the field.

This chapter included an in-depth analysis of trustworthiness concerns, encompassing the ethical factors pertinent to the present study. The chapter concludes by providing a concise overview of the fundamental key elements and procedures of the qualitative methodology used in this research. The phenomenological approach will allow analyzing shared experiences around the phenomenon of interest. This research will include the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs. The selection process for participants, instrumentation used, data collection, data analysis, and confidentiality protocol have been addressed. Chapter 4 will include the study's data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and the results.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. While research has been conducted on this topic for other groups, there is a lack of literature focused on the lived experiences and mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents from the perspectives of young adults. Research has shown that parental incarceration at various stages of child and adolescent development leads to various negative outcomes (Luk et al., 2023). Ryan et al. (2023) found that childhood parental incarceration significantly affects young adulthood, but its effects have not been studied in the Latino community as extensively.

The research question that guided this study was: How do Latino young adults perceive and describe their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents during the time their parent was incarcerated? Chapter 4 includes the research setting, demographics of the participants, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and the results of the research study. The chapter concludes with a summary of the research findings as they relate to the research question and includes a preview of Chapter 5.

Setting

Semistructured interviews were completed virtually for each participant through Zoom Pro. Closed captioning was turned on during each interview. I conducted each

interview in a private, quiet, locked room equipped with a desk to ensure privacy and confidentiality. The setting of the interviews, conducted in a private, quiet, and controlled environment, was designed to make participants feel comfortable and secure, potentially encouraging them to share more openly. However, various factors in their lives could have influenced their responses. These factors might include recent personal experiences, cultural or social backgrounds, current emotional states, or any recent events that could have affected their mood or perspective. Additionally, the virtual nature of the interview (conducted via Zoom) could have impacted their comfort level and willingness to disclose personal information, as virtual settings can sometimes feel less personal or less secure than in-person interactions.

I conducted each interview using the Zoom application on a 17-inch laptop computer. Interviews were recorded to the cloud, Zoom Pro also audio recorded, and the transcripts were also available. Each Zoom meeting invitation had a unique password that was sent by email to each participant. Each participant was given a pseudonym and welcomed into the interview. Participants made the personal decision to have their cameras on or off. Each participant was welcomed and was provided with an explanation of the informed consent and the purpose of the study. The audio recordings were downloaded to my personal Microsoft Outlook file cloud and were password protected.

Demographics

The qualitative study included interviews from participants chosen through convenience sampling and snowball sampling. Participants were obtained through public social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. There was a total number of

10 participants; eight participants met the inclusion criteria, which included being a Latino young adult age 18 to 29, who had at least one biological parent incarcerated when they were a child or adolescent under 18 years of age. One participant was between ages 30 and 40 and had his father incarcerated when he was a child or adolescent. One participant was between 30 and 40 years old, and her father incarcerated when she was a young adult. Four participants ages 18-25 had their father incarcerated, two participants ages 18-25 had their mother incarcerated, one participant age 18-25 had their mother and their father incarcerated, and one participant age 25-29 had their mother and father incarcerated.

Participants were asked demographic questions as part of the interview (Appendix B). These questions included their age, race, and gender. Each participant was allocated a pseudonym starting with the letter P, followed by a number. The sequence began with P1 for the initial participant and concluded with P10 for the final one. Nine participants were located in Texas and one participant was located in Utah. There were six male participants and four female participants. Table 1 presents an overview of their demographic characteristics.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Age range	Gender	State	Mother or father incarcerated
P1	18-25	M	Texas	Father
P2	30-40	M	Utah	Father
P3	18-25	M	Texas	Father
P4	18-25	F	Texas	Father and mother
P5	25-29	F	Texas	Father and mother
P6	18-25	M	Texas	Father
P7	18-25	F	Texas	Mother
P8	18-25	M	Texas	Mother
P9	30-40	F	Texas	Father
P10	18-25	M	Texas	Father

Note. All participants identified their ethnicity/race as Hispanic, Latin, Spanish origin.

Data Collection

Ten participants volunteered to participate in this study. Every participant provided consent via a Google Form where the option "Yes I consent" was selected. Each participant participated in a semistructured interview through a virtual Zoom Pro meeting link that was sent to them through email. The meetings were scheduled for an hour at a time and ranged in duration from 37 minutes to 62 minutes. The interviews took place over the time span of 4 weeks between March and April 2024. Each interview was recorded, and closed captioning was used for each participant. Upon receiving consent from every participant, the interviews were recorded using the Zoom Pro application. Subsequently, audio transcripts were generated from these recordings. The audio transcripts were stored on the Zoom cloud and subsequently downloaded onto a Microsoft Outlook file cloud.

One variation in the data collection from the plan presented in Chapter 3 included recruitment, specifically regarding participants' age criteria. Initially, the study targeted

young adults ages 18 to 29. However, this age restriction posed challenges in recruitment, as two individuals expressing interest in participation through the social media post exceeded the specified age range. Another variation included a participant who was between age 30 and 40 and had at least one biological parent incarcerated when they were a young adult not a child or adolescent.

No unusual circumstances were encountered during the data collection. A total of 143 participants consented on the Google form, but not all individuals who initially consented to participate in the study participated in the study. Of those who consented, 133 participants did not communicate after consenting on the Google form. Despite sending follow-up emails to these individuals, no responses were received. Consequently, no interviews could be scheduled for 133 potential participants.

After interviews were completed, member checking was conducted by sending out the transcripts for participants to review their transcripts, none of them requested any changes. As a result, no additional actions were required. The transcripts were considered accurate and complete, and no further verification was necessary. This indicates that the participants were satisfied with how their words and experiences were represented, so the process could proceed without any revisions or corrections.

Data Analysis

Once the interview data were collected, I used the IPA method of data analysis. IPA offered a distinct and valuable approach to better understand the individual experiences of young Latino adults who had an incarcerated parent as a child or adolescent. The IPA method was used to gain a better understanding of individuals'

personal experiences and how they interpret them in the context of their social and personal lives (Smith et al., 2009).

The first step that took place was reading and exploratory notes; I listened to and read the audio-recorded interviews and transcripts (Smith & Nizza, 2022). I followed the steps to code the data. According to Smith and Nizza (2022), one records one's initial reaction to the text in one margin; I commented on anything I thought was of interest or important. I kept an open mind while commenting and looking beyond what I expected to find; I stayed with each participant's words and reflected on them and did not jump to conclusions (see Smith & Nizza, 2022). I made notes by hand on a hard copy of the transcripts on the margins. While there is not a definitive set of exploratory notes for any transcript, some researchers find it helpful to categorize their notes into three types: descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual (Smith et al., 2009). Descriptive coding captures the participants' exact words, linguistic coding explores the possible meanings behind their responses, and conceptual coding considers potential meanings that may not be directly stated by the participants (Smith et al., 2009). In this research, I used different colored highlighters to represent each type of code. Descriptive or explicit language was highlighted in yellow, linguistic or potential meanings of specific language were highlighted in green, and conceptual or non-specific language was highlighted in pink. IPA research aims to explore individual and collective meanings by examining the experiences of participants through semantic coding.

The second step was formulating experiential statements. This step requires developing experiential statements through a condensing effort to allow both the

important aspects of the participant's experience and the analyst's understanding of that experience to emerge (Smith & Nizza, 2022). For each of the participant's responses during the interview, I identified one or more experiential statements. I added experiential statements on each transcript and transferred it to an Excel spreadsheet. Examples include: I always got in trouble, "I felt like I was constantly in trouble"; my behavior got worse when my dad passed away, "after my dad died my anger got worse"; I would get into fights, "fighting was normal for me due to my anger."

The third step was finding connections and clustering experiential statements per individual. This process helps to organize and refine the data, highlighting the key themes and insights that emerge from the participants' experiences (Smith & Nizza, 2022). I created categories on an Excel spreadsheet from identified code words and grouped them looking for similarities, patterns, and overall comprehension of the phenomenon. The cluster analysis method helped me to identify similarities and differences between experiential statements by bringing them together and clustering them (see Smith & Nizza, 2022). This allowed me to have a better understanding of patterns and relationships in the data. Once the clustering process was completed, I compiled the table of personal experiential themes. The Excel spreadsheet showcased the experiential themes identified during the clustering process, along with the corresponding identifying information and experiential statements contained within each theme. Statements from each interview that aligned with the criteria were deemed essential for understanding the phenomenon to understand the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated

parents. The fourth step is compiling the table of personal experiential themes. Once the clustering was completed, it was converted into a table of personal experiential themes where each cluster was named as a personal experiential theme and identifying information for all the experiential statements contained within each theme was given (see Smith & Nizza, 2022).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

During the planning, data collection, and analysis phases of this study, I adhered to the guidelines outlined in Chapter 3 to ensure and maintain the study's trustworthiness. This study used the measures of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to ensure trustworthiness. To achieve trustworthiness, this study employed different techniques, such as member checking and reflexive journaling.

Credibility

Credibility in the study, along with accuracy of its data, findings and interpretations, was ensured by implementing measures during the planning phase to ensure reliable and valuable results. When conducting the research it was crucial to prioritize credibility and ensure that the interpretation accurately reflected the views of the participants. As Korstjens and Moser (2018) noted, credibility is directly related to the truth value of a study. Select strategies were carefully evaluated and lead to reliable and valuable results. Member checking was used to ensure credibility in this study. According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), it is recommended to use member checks to establish credibility and ensure the validity of research findings. To ensure an accurate interpretation of the data analysis, member checking took place with the transcript to

verify participants' accuracy. Participants were asked if the transcript was accurate.

Furthermore, participants were emailed the transcripts and asked to return them within a

week if they noted any errors that need correcting. Out of the ten participants no

participants emailed back, participants did not request any revisions to their original

statements. This ensured that the perspectives and views of participants were accurately

reflected in the final interpretation of the data.

Transferability

Transferability, or external validity, refers to the extent to which the findings of a

study can be applied to other contexts or studies. The concept of transferability in

qualitative research implies that the conclusions drawn from the study can be extended to

different settings or groups of people (Daniel, 2019). Ravitch and Carl (2016) describe

transferability as a way a qualitative study can apply to broader contexts while still

maintaining context-specific research. This concept is important in ensuring that the

findings of a study can be extended to different communities or scenarios. Transferability

includes having detailed descriptions of the data, also called "thick descriptions," for the

readers to compare to other contacts based on the information obtained (Guba, 1981).

Thick descriptions were employed to provide vivid and detailed accounts of the

participants' contexts and experiences. Volunteers were able to participate if they met the

inclusion criteria. Participants were asked to share information about their gender, age,

ethnicity/race, and whether they had a parent who was incarcerated during their

childhood or adolescence. This study's findings could be used to inform policy, practice,

and future research around children and adolescents with incarcerated parents.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Dependability means having a reasoned argument for how the data is being collected and that the data is consistent with the argument. One important aspect of conducting research is ensuring dependability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This means having a well-thought-out plan for data collection and ensuring that the collected data aligns with that plan (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Dependability was established by using constancy, consistency, and establishing an audit trail. A solid research design is essential to achieve dependability, like other validity constructs (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The study's protocols provided a detailed account of the interview procedures, ensuring a standardized approach and enhancing the reliability of the results. Future researchers can use this study as a model for developing methods to assess a similar type of research; Appendix B includes the interview questions that were used which allows transparency for future research.

Confirmability

Confirmability was considered during both the planning and data collection stages of this study. The researcher utilized reflexivity and coding to ensure confirmability in the research. A comprehensive description of the coding process with evidence established the credibility and reliability of the research findings. Qualitative researchers recognize that their work is subjective and take measures to ensure confirmability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This involves being transparent about the research process and findings and allowing for peer review (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Additionally, this will increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the work (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This

research study utilized an audit trail to obtain its results. The audit trail provided an explanation of each step of the research process. The analysis process was described in depth so that the reader understood how the categories and themes were identified.

Results

This qualitative phenomenological study explores the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated Parents. The research question that guided this study was: How do Latino young adults perceive and describe their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents during the time their parent was incarcerated?

The research question and the findings are the foundation of this study. Ten participants were interviewed for this study. The goal for this study was to obtain and explore their lived experiences in depth, this research can provide valuable insights into the impact of parental incarceration on the mental health of children and adolescents, particularly within the Latino community. The major themes of this study consisted of the identification of three themes: social and cultural adjustment, mental health struggles, and behavioral struggles. Table 2 presents an overview of the major themes, theme cluster and participant identifiers.

Table 2

Themes

Major themes	Theme cluster	Participant identifier
Social and cultural adjustment	More responsibilities, not fun anymore, felt abandoned, confusion, grow up fast, mature fast, felt terrible, felt odd, sad, stress, lost our provider, everything changed, felt alone, felt like they had to toughen up, hard, more independence, taking care of younger siblings, being male had more responsibilities; sisters were protected and shielded, being the oldest expected to cook, had to pay bills at a young age, had to start working, care for the house, clean the house, stick together and be there for each other, strict household, grew up fast, was taught to be strong and independent, be the man of the house, be honest, hardworking, be a better person, family is important	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10
Mental health struggles	Men don't cry, taught not to show emotion, respect and protect women, taught to figure it out if you are a male, I can't cry, angry and isolate self, I wouldn't cry, anxiety, panic attacks was told to "snap out of it," On guard always, depressed while growing up (cutting), addiction, sad, lonely, attempted suicide, culture states, "just deal with it: stigma, don't trust, a lot of trauma, overwhelming feelings of sadness, completely low, hospital due to mental health, stress, overthinking, depression, suicidal thoughts, slept a lot, binge eating /food disorder	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10
Behavioral struggles	Would stay out of trouble, would get into fights, better win fights, wasn't allowed to cry, would get whopping if he cried, would be quiet, not cause trouble, more mature than the other kids, best behavior, perfectionist, no discipline issues at school, at home would fight with siblings, bad temper at school and at home, was a loner, would act out in school, would get detention, would get written up, would slip up on and off, I was bad, I was shy and calm, always angry at school and at home, I became a rebel, not listening	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10

Individual Experiences

Within the data collected from Participant 1, I identified four themes: (a) the impact of a father's incarceration, (b) the shift in family dynamics, (c) the influence of cultural expectations on emotions, and (d) the long-term effects on personal development. The father's absence led to increased responsibilities, financial strain, and a loss of privileges, with uncles stepping in to fill the gap. Cultural teachings emphasized male impassivity, resulting in suppressed emotions and a serious demeanor learned from his father, who was psychologically altered after his institutionalization according to the participant. Despite these challenges, the father instilled in his son a strong work ethic, resilience, and a focus on financial literacy, shaping his approach to life and personal growth.

Within the data collected from Participant 2, I identified four themes: (a) the emotional/mental health impact of parental incarceration, (b) the effects of family dysfunction, (c) the role of external support systems, and (d) the journey toward healing. The repeated incarceration of the father led to feelings of abandonment, growing up faster than peers, and a sense of being unloved, while the mother's addiction and abusive stepfathers contributed to an unstable home environment. Despite these challenges, participant 2 maintained academic performance and self-sufficiency. The participant struggled with depression, suicidal thoughts, and distrust of authority. Support from teachers provided some comfort, but the failures of the justice system and lack of resources left a negative impact. Weekly therapy sessions since 2022 have been a crucial step in the ongoing process of healing from trauma for Participant 2.

Within the data collected from Participant 3, I identified four themes: (a) confusion and a sense of abandonment, (b) the burden of early responsibility, (c) differential treatment due to gender roles, and (d) the influence of extended family. With his father in jail from a young age, he was forced to mature quickly, managing household duties and caring for his siblings while his mother worked. The absence of a father figure led to confusion, feelings of abandonment, and a sense of isolation, especially as his sisters were treated differently. His grandmother played an important role in his upbringing, teaching him about their culture and traditions, but her illness added further challenges. Despite these hardships, school became a refuge where he excelled academically and found recognition. Over time, he came to understand his mother's protective instincts, though he resented being kept from his father. Influenced by his uncle and driven by a desire not to repeat the mistakes of his father, he pursued a different path, focusing on education, cooking, and building a stable future while recognizing the value of resources like counseling and parenting classes that could have helped his family.

Within the data collected from Participant 4, I identified three themes: (a) family dynamics and role reversal, (b) cultural stigma and mental health, and (c) emotional and behavioral struggles. With her mother being incarcerated multiple times, the participant faced many challenges. As the eldest sibling, she had to assume significant family responsibilities, maturing quickly due to cultural expectations that discouraged seeking external help. Forgiveness, influenced by her Christian/Catholic upbringing, was difficult to reconcile with the stigma surrounding mental health, making it hard to seek support.

The repeated incarcerations of her mother, coupled with the eventual revelation of sexual abuse, led to profound emotional struggles, including anxiety, guilt, and anger.

Within the data collected from Participant 5, I identified four themes: (a) trauma and loss, (b) family responsibility and support, (c) behavioral struggles, and (d) the need for counseling and support. The Participant experienced significant trauma, primarily due to the incarceration and subsequent death of her mother in jail, as well as her father's brief imprisonment. These events led to major disruptions in her life, including taking on the responsibility of caring for her siblings and her father after he was assaulted by police officers. The participant suffered further trauma, including molestation and domestic violence, leading to trust issues and a bad temper. Despite these hardships, she found strength in her close relationship with her sister, cousin, grandmother, and her children. She advocates for mandatory counseling for families who have lost a parent due to incarceration.

Within the data collected from Participant 6, I identified four themes: (a) anger and behavioral struggles, (b) mental health struggles, (c) cultural adjustment with the positive influence of stepfather, and (d) the need for counseling and support. The participant discusses a life shaped by a father's absence due to repeated incarcerations, beginning when the participant was only two years old. He was raised by his mother, and later, his stepfather came into his life; the participant had a fast-tracked childhood filled with responsibilities. The relationship with his father was non-existent, and that led to deep feelings of depression, anger, and a sense of being uncared for. Despite struggles in school and mental health challenges, the participant credits his mother and stepfather as

positive influences in his life. The participant expressed that the best thing that happened was replacing the absent father with his stepfather, who provided a much-needed father figure. He also expressed a belief that mandatory counseling might have been helpful after his father was incarcerated.

Within the data collected from Participant 7, I identified four themes: (a) social-emotional and cultural adjustment, (b) mental health struggles, (c) struggles with behavior, and (d) academic challenges. The participant reflected on a childhood marked by the absence of her incarcerated mother, who was in and out of prison since she was a baby. Raised primarily by her father, who took on both parental roles, the participant struggled with feelings of sadness, anger, and a sense of abandonment. Despite these challenges, the father, along with other supportive figures including the grandmother, sisters, and a babysitter, provided a sense of stability. Growing up, the participant struggled academically due to ADHD and daydreaming but is now focusing on finishing school and pursuing a career as a teacher. The participant expressed deep resentment and anger toward her mother. She also expressed the feeling that she was never a part of her life and has let her down repeatedly. The participant believed that mandatory counseling and parenting classes could have been beneficial.

Within the data collected from Participant 8, I identified five themes: (a) forced maturity and responsibility, (b) mental health struggles, (c) family support, (d) cultural expectations, and (e) positive relationship development. The participant described his experience after his mother was incarcerated when he was 18, and his father disappeared, leaving him to care for his siblings with the help of his uncles. The situation forced him

to grow up quickly, taking on adult responsibilities, which led to stress, sleeplessness, behavioral struggles, and mental health struggles, including depression and suicidal thoughts. The participant's uncles played a significant role in providing support, and the participant took on the role of a father figure for their younger siblings. Despite these challenges, incarceration pushed the participant to improve academically and finish school. His relationship with his mother improved after her arrest; he now feels closer to her.

Within the data collected from Participant 9, I identified four themes: (a) forced maturity and responsibility, (b) social and cultural adjustment, (c) mental health struggles, and (d) behavioral struggles. The participant described the impact of her father's incarceration; although she was already independent, she had to take on significant responsibilities. The participant was in charge of helping her mother take care of her younger brothers. The experience forced her to grow up quickly, stepping into a parental role, particularly due to cultural expectations as a Latina. The father was a proud Mexican who emphasized hard work, honesty, and avoiding debt. The situation severely affected her mental health, causing depression, anxiety, and difficulty concentrating in beauty school. The participant also expressed having behavioral struggles, including anger and becoming a rebel. The participant's father died in jail from COVID-19, which left a deep emotional impact. The participant now has a successful career and admires her mother's strength and faith. She expressed the want to help more in society to bring awareness and the need for more resources in the community after having a parent incarcerated.

Within the data collected from Participant 10, I identified three themes: (a) cultural identity and expectations, (b) mental health and emotional turmoil, and (c) behavioral and academic struggles. The participant described his experience and the effects of his father's repeated incarcerations. The father's absences caused fear, loneliness, and the need to grow up quickly, taking on responsibilities for his younger siblings. The participant had to navigate cultural expectations within the Latino community, such as taking on family responsibilities and maintaining traditions while dealing with the absence of a father figure. This absence led to significant mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and a sense of abandonment. These emotional struggles also caused behavioral issues, such as fighting, defiance, and academic difficulties, particularly after his father's death when the participant was approximately eleven years old. Although the father provided some good advice when present, the participant largely had to learn how to be a man on his own, with guidance from cousins and eventually his stepfather, who became a significant influence. Despite these challenges, the participant is focused on improving himself, with aspirations to work at the refineries and support future children. He reflects on the potential benefits of mentoring, counseling, and parenting classes that could have helped him and his family.

Cross-Case Analysis

The cross-case analysis revealed several overlapping themes and unique experiences among the participants, all of whom were affected by the incarceration of a parent.

Family dynamics, forced maturity, and responsibility

Across multiple cases (Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10), the absence of a parent due to incarceration resulted in the participant assuming significant responsibilities at a young age. Whether caring for siblings (Participants 3, 8, 9, 10), managing household duties (Participant 3), or dealing with financial strain (Participant 1), these participants were given adult roles prematurely.

Cultural Stigma and Expectations

Many participants (Participants 1, 4, 7, 9, 10) faced cultural pressures that influenced their emotional and behavioral responses to their situations. For example, cultural expectations that men should remain unemotional (Participant 1) and gender roles (Participants 3, 9) shaped how emotions were expressed or suppressed. Additionally, cultural stigma around mental health (Participant 4) made it difficult for some participants to seek help.

Differential Treatment Due to Gender

Gender roles influenced the experiences of some participants, particularly where male family members were expected to assume leadership or provider roles in the absence of their fathers (Participants 1, 3, 9, 10). This often led to a heavier emotional burden and contributed to feelings of isolation and confusion.

Emotional, Mental Health, and Behavioral Struggles

Depression and Anxiety. A common thread among the participants (Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10) was the profound emotional impact of parental incarceration, including depression, anxiety, and feelings of abandonment. These mental health

struggles were often exacerbated by additional trauma, such as domestic violence, molestation (Participants 5), or the death of the incarcerated parent (Participants 9, 10).

Behavioral Struggles. Participants (Participants 1, 5, 6, 7, 10) frequently described acting out as a response to their emotional turmoil. This included anger, fighting, defiance, and academic difficulties, all of which were direct results of the instability and trauma caused by their parents' incarceration.

Theme 1: Social and Cultural Adjustment

The first theme that was identified through analysis of the data was social and cultural adjustment. The individual participants described their experiences and how they felt when they found out their parent was incarcerated. Participants described the toll it took on their lives to have their parent incarcerated. Participants revealed a range of emotional and practical impacts stemming from this experience.

Participant 1 reflected the social and cultural adjustment theme as he highlighted the significant changes he experienced in family dynamics and personal responsibilities after his father's incarceration. The participant discussed how the absence of his father altered his daily life, particularly in terms of increased responsibilities and the expectation to mature quickly, which were culturally tied to his role as a male member of the family. This also touches on the differential treatment based on gender, where the participant, being a boy, was expected to take on more chores and responsibilities than his sisters, reflecting cultural norms around gender roles. Additionally, when his father returned home, it brought a new routine and structure that further influenced the

participant's social and cultural adjustment, demonstrating how the incarceration and subsequent changes in family life affected his development and expectations. P1 stated,

> It was weird not having my dad, we had no money and lots of lawyer fees. I remember thinking "this is boring." My dad was the fun one. I had more privileges when Dad was home; since Dad was not home, I had more chores and more responsibilities. My uncles played a role while my dad was gone; responsibilities were important. I had more chores, more independence. I had to grow up fast because I was a boy. My sisters were treated different; if they didn't do chores, it was okay, but not for me since I was a boy. When Dad came home it was a real like routine, have a structure for everything. My dad had a routine waking up early and then he would make me wake up.

Participant 2 reflected the social and cultural adjustment theme as he expressed his struggle to adapt to the emotional and familial changes brought on by his father's repeated incarceration. The participant's feelings of abandonment and hopelessness highlight the deep emotional impact of the father's absence, leading to a sense of isolation and the need to mature quickly. Furthermore, the participant underscored how cultural expectations around gender roles shaped their experience; as a male member of the family, he was given more responsibilities and was less protected compared to his sister, who was shielded from harm. The experience of physical abuse and the subsequent involvement of law enforcement further describe the participant's challenging adjustment to these harsh realities, influenced by both social and cultural factors. P2 iterated,

I felt like my dad didn't love me; if he did, he would not keep going back to jail. I felt abandoned, hopelessness. If he was home, I feel like I would not have been abused by my stepfathers. I felt alone, and I had to grow up fast. Being a male, I had more responsibilities; my sister, since she was a girl, she was shielded from a lot and protected. I got physically abused by stepfathers and called the cops and they took him to jail. I got kicked out the next day.

Participant 3 reflected the social and cultural adjustment theme as he described his experience of having to navigate significant changes in his family's life and cultural responsibilities due to his father's absence. The participant described the confusion and gradual realization of his father's incarceration, which forced him to mature quickly and take on adult responsibilities. The cultural adjustment is evident as the participant had to learn about his culture and traditions through his grandmother while assuming the role of caretaker for his siblings. The expectations placed on the participant as the oldest child, such as cooking, cleaning, and managing the household, highlight the cultural norms and gender roles that shaped his experience. Furthermore, the participant's realization that his situation was not typical compared to his peers serves as a social adjustment he had to make in coming to terms with his unique family dynamics. P3 stated,

I did not understand what was going on. I would ask, "Where is my dad?" and my mom would hide the truth. I started putting the pieces together because there was no money. I had to grow up and mature fast. I figured it out. I was told my dad was working out of town, but we never got money. I had to learn about my culture through my grandma, traditions, customs. I was the oldest, so I was expected to

cook, clean, and take care of everybody, was in charge of the house since Mom

was always working and taking care of the other six kids. I realized that this was

not normal, having to do everything for my siblings, as I grew up and saw the kids

in school.

The first participant, P1, described having social and cultural adjustment,

including worrying about finances. P1 and P2 described having more responsibilities and

taking care of the sisters in their lives. P1, P2, and P3 described having to grow up fast.

P2 described having social and cultural adjustment, including feeling abandoned and

feeling hopeless.

Participant 4 reflected the social and cultural adjustment theme as she described

how she had to adapt to the recurring incarceration of her mother and the responsibilities

that came with it. The frequent prison visits turned a difficult situation into something

that felt normal for the participant. The emotional toll became clear during the moments

of separation. The participant's upbringing in a Christian/Catholic environment

emphasized forgiveness, with family members reinforcing the idea that the mother

deserved forgiveness despite her actions, reflecting cultural and religious expectations.

Participant 4's experiences also touch on cultural norms related to gender roles, as the

participant, being the oldest, was expected to take on more responsibilities, such as caring

for siblings, managing household duties, and educating younger sisters about personal

matters. The responsibilities forced the participant to mature quickly, taking on a parental

role in the absence of their mother. P4 iterated,

We would visit my mom in prison; it was normal for us to see her in there because she was always in and out of prison. In the moment it was fine, but at the end, like when they're taking you the separate ways, that was when it was like the hardest, I would say. I grew up in a Christian/Catholic upbringing that talked about forgiveness. Family would tell me that she was still my mother regardless and to forgive. I had to help pay for bills and started working as soon as I could. I was a mom to my sisters. In our culture, we are expected to care for the house, clean the house, and cook, and I was the oldest. I had to grow up really fast, cooking, cleaning. I was expected to teach them how they should act, periods, and stuff. Since Dad was an immigrant, I wouldn't ask for help; and he was not confrontational.

Participant 5 The quote reflects the theme of social and cultural adjustment because it describes the challenges and responsibilities the participant faced, which forced him to mature quickly and adapt to difficult circumstances. The participant had to take on adult responsibilities, such as caring for her father and younger sisters, due to her mother's sudden arrest. The early assumption of adult roles signifies a significant social adjustment, as the participant had to navigate duties that are typically beyond the scope of a child. The participant had to endure the trauma of witnessing her mother's arrest, dealing with her father's seizure, and living in a strict environment that deprived her of a healthy childhood. The lack of normal childhood experiences likely hindered their social development, affecting their ability to connect with peers and experience typical cultural milestones. The strict environment the participant describes, with restrictions on

interactions and social activities, further emphasizes cultural adjustment. The participant

had to adapt to these restrictions, which influenced her social behavior and interactions in

ways that may have been different from those in more relaxed environments. P5 stated,

> Felt terrible; I was actually eleven I had I was with her whenever we got pulled
>
> over and it was an illegal search, and they just took her in. I had to take care of
>
> my dad after my dad had a seizure after being assaulted by an officer; I didn't go
>
> to school due to this and had to take care of him. I took care of my two little
>
> sisters as well. I had to take care of my sister, washing, making sure they ate, had
>
> to grow up fast. We would stick together and be there for each other; we lived
>
> together in a very strict environment, had to stay home, could not talk to boys, etc.
>
> I didn't have a childhood.

Participant 6 reflects on the social and cultural adjustment theme as he describes

having to grow up quickly and taking on more responsibilities. He had to adjust to an

environment where he had to mature faster than his peers. This forces maturity in the

form of social adjustment as he has to take on adult responsibilities. The cultural

adjustment was also highlighted as he described his stepdad as not looking like him. He

had to learn how to embrace a diverse family dynamic. The participant emphasized being

taught respect and reflected the cultural adjustment as the values were important to

socialization and behavior. The strong cultural identity of his mom also helped the

participant adjust to his environment, providing a sense of strength. P6 added,

> I grew up fast and with more responsibilities, but I was very diverse since my
>
> stepdad did not look like me. I was taught to be very respectful by my mom and

stepdad. Mom was a strong and young Latina (independent) woman, and that helped me.

Participant 7 reflects on the social and cultural adjustment theme as she describes how she had to adjust socially and culturally due to her family dynamics. This included the absence of her mother figure and the influences of the close relationship with her babysitter. She took on responsibilities beyond her age and felt different from peers. P7 stated,

Felt odd not having a mom like other kids did. It always made me sad that my dad had to do everything by himself; I always felt different. I realized that you do not have to have two parents. My babysitter was my mother figure, and she's Mexican, so I was able to learn about culture through her. I call her my mom. I would ask her girl questions. She was my role model. My older sister was expected to do the big stuff, but we would split the work sometimes. We had to protect each other, and I was trying to rush and grow up fast.

Participant 8 reflects on the social and cultural adjustment theme as he describes taking on adult responsibilities at a young age due to the absence of his parents. As a Latino male, he felt pressure to fulfill traditional gender roles, such as being the "man of the house," which led to stress and forced maturity. The importance of family support and cultural expectations played a significant role in shaping his behavior and identity. The participant felt like he had to grow up quickly by taking on more responsibility and cultural expectations. P8 iterated,

I should not have been exposed to what I did; I had to grow up quickly and I'm more mature compared to other people. Cause me to have stress, could not sleep, had more responsibilities. I also could not go out at all because I had to take care of my siblings. As a Latino I had to take care of my siblings and be the man of the house. Dad was gone, and Mom was arrested. As a man it was expected for me to work and take care of my siblings. That was the expectation as a Latino. I had to learn how to change my baby brother's diaper; had to provide for my siblings. Family (uncles) played a big role. Family in our culture is important if we stick together.

Participant 9 reflects on the social and cultural adjustment theme by expressing that she had to grow up quickly and took on many responsibilities. After losing her father, she had to take on adult roles by helping with her siblings and helping the family financially. This demonstrates the social adjustment as she had to adapt to challenges beyond her years. The participant also mentioned the cultural expectation of a Latina having to provide the motherly role and support the family. The cultural adjustment was evident as the participant navigated the cultural norm and gender roles that she her responsibilities and identity. The participant also expressed the importance of hard work taught by her father, furthermore expressing the cultural values deeply rooted in Latino culture. The participant emphasized the importance of family, a central value in Latino culture, and the need to support each other. She expressed the expectation of family unity and reinforced the importance of working together and stepping up to help. P9 stated,

I had to grow up faster and step up and help. The first time, financially, it was hard because we didn't have enough income; the second time, it was better, at least the financial part, because we were more stable. We lost our handyman, our provider, and everything changed; became rebellious (questioning; why did this happen to him?), I had to grow up so fast and help. I felt that I had to step up and help. As a Latina, I had to work and help raise my siblings. I was expected to grow up and be like a mother to my siblings. My dad was a "Proud Mexican," and he would say you all need to do better than me; don't make the same mistakes as me and be honest and hard-working. Latinos believe in working hard and being good people; he also said don't have too much debt. Family is important, and we count on them.

Participant 10 reflects on the social and cultural adjustment theme by expressing that he had to "toughen up" and "grow up fast" due to the absence of his father and taking on adult responsibilities. The participant had to grow up fast and adjust to manage his emotions under challenging circumstances. The participant's mother played a significant role in teaching him about his Latino culture, and his stepdad also reinforced the cultural traditions that influenced his behavior and worldview. The participant expressed having to adjust and grow up and had to learn "how to be a man" on his own. Social adjustment was evident as he navigated his development without a primary male role model. P10 added,

When I thought about it, I was scared. I didn't know when he was ganna come home; I was scared and felt alone; I just had to toughen up. I had to grow up fast;

I had to care for my siblings, cook for my siblings, and take care of my little

brothers; dad would also give me good advice when he was out to be a better

person. My mom taught me all about my culture and being Latino. My dad told

me to be a better person, not to be like nobody else; I didn't learn how to be a man

from my father- I had to learn that by myself because he wasn't around. I would

look up to cousins to guide me. They were all teenagers and learning how to be

men together. Stepdad also helped me with the traditions and culture since he is

Latino.

Theme 2: Mental Health Struggles

The second theme that was identified through the transcripts was mental health

struggles. Participants detailed how their parent's incarceration significantly impacted

their emotional well-being. Furthermore, leading to various mental health challenges as

described by the individual participants.

Participant 1 reflects on the mental health struggles theme by expressing his

internal conflict and emotional repression due to cultural and familial expectations. The

participant was raised with the belief that men should not show emotions, especially

crying, and must always be serious and in control. This upbringing led to emotional

struggles that included anger issues, social isolation, sadness, and not being able to be

vulnerable. The participant also expressed the unequal emotional support within the

family, where women were encouraged to express emotions, but men were expected to

"figure it out" on their own. This lack of managing feelings contributed to the

participant's struggles with anger, anxiety, and panic attacks. The participant learned to

cope independently, using mechanisms like cold showers and distraction to deal with his pain. The participant was guided to use physical violence as a way to deal with stress and emotions, which led to a struggle with anger management and emotional regulation throughout his life. The lasting impact of the participant's experience is evident in his hypervigilance, guarded behavior, and emotion-suppressing beliefs passed down from their father. P1 added,

> I was told men don't cry, was taught not to show emotion, men in the family are real serious. Dad would say women are first, don't yell at the women in the family, you protect them, sisters and mom are number one you treat them with respect and protect them, you help the women. If you are a guy then you figure it out, Dad would show no emotion (no crying) would just stand there. It transferred to me, and I wouldn't cry, I knew it was sad, but I wouldn't cry, "I can't cry," I would be angry and isolate self, I would sit there and not talk, I never knew how to control my anger, but I don't let myself get there. If someone presses me than I fight because of what my dad told me I would (black out) and start hitting, boys had to get over it. I can't yell but the girls could I had anxiety, panic attacks and would stress out and was told to figure it out to snap out of it, the girls were told "I'm here for you." In jail you learn how to figure it out, I taught myself coping mechanism (like a cold shower),focus on other things, my dad would tell the girls to figure it out if they had mental health problems because he would get overwhelmed (he wouldn't get mad at them), later on in life dad was soft, when he got out he was on guard-working out he would just stare, I used to be hyper but

dad taught me not to be not to be friendly, on guard always, aware of surroundings , dad taught me if I say I was ganna do something I better finish it.

Participant 2 reflects the theme of mental health struggles by highlighting the participant's long battle with depression, self-harm, and disordered eating, stemming from a unstable household environment. Despite the opportunity to seek help from school counselors, the participant felt a lack of trust and chose to protect his family, which increased the mental health struggles. The participant's depression led to self-destructive behaviors, such as cutting and an addiction to Nyquil, reflecting a deep desire to escape his emotional pain. The binge eating disorder, triggered by food scarcity, further explains how much the circumstances impacted his mental health. Only in 2022 did the participant begin seeing a therapist regularly, marking a significant step towards addressing these struggles and seeking healing. P2 stated,

Only since 2022 I started seeing a therapist every week. They would want me to talk to school counselors, but no trust and I protected my household even though they were toxic. I was depressed while growing up cutting, addicted to Nyquil and I didn't want to wake up. I had binge eating disorder because we didn't have enough food.

Participant 3 reflects the theme of mental health struggles by expressing feelings of sadness, loneliness, and emotional burden. The participant experienced neglect, as he took on the responsibility of caring for others, including his sisters and grandmother, while receiving little emotional support himself. The participant also mentioned the impact of mental health issues within the family, noting that both the participant's mother

and grandmother faced mental health challenges, with the grandmother even being hospitalized. The emotional and caregiving responsibilities the participant faced contributed to his own mental health struggles, making him feel isolated and overwhelmed. P3 iterated,

> I was sad and lonely. The girls were treated differently, they were treated better and had no worries since I made sure everything was done. I would do their hair etc.; mom's mental health was also affected; grandma raised me but when grandma got sick after high school graduation I moved in and cared for her she was also in the mental hospital.

Participant 4 reflects the theme of mental health struggles by expressing her battle with severe emotional distress, which led to a suicide attempt. The participant expressed the cultural stigma surrounding mental health, where the expectation was to "just deal with it." It wasn't until after the participant's suicide attempt and hospitalization that the severity of her mental health struggles were acknowledged by her father, leading to the family seeking help. The participant also received support through school counseling and grief counseling, which provided crucial assistance during a difficult period. The participant mentioned the challenges of overcoming cultural barriers to mental health care and the importance of support systems in addressing these struggles. P4 stated,

> Did attempt suicide, culture states "just deal with it" stigma. I went to a mental health hospital, and Dad finally accepted the reality of the severity. Everyone else got mental health help after that. At school, I would get help with school

counseling- in middle school, I had communities in schools that helped, and grief

counseling when I was in high school after the suicide attempt.

Participant 5 reflects the theme of mental health struggles by revealing the deep

trauma she experienced, including being molested by her brother's friends, which led to

ongoing fear and distrust, even towards family. The participant's trauma contributed to a

range of mental health issues, including bipolar disorder, depression, and abandonment

issues. These experiences described the long-lasting impact of trauma on the participant's

mental health and her continued struggle to cope with these complex emotions and fears.

P5 added,

My mental health was not good. I was molested by my brother's friends; I am

scared for my own kids now; I don't trust even my family; I have a lot of trauma.

I've been diagnosed with bipolar and depression; I also have abandonment issues.

Participant 6 reflects the theme of mental health struggles by expressing the deep

emotional impact of parental abandonment and neglect. The absence of his father in

court, combined with his lack of involvement and failure to provide financial support,

contributed to the participants profound feelings of depression and worthlessness. The

repeated references to "not wanting to be here" signifies the intensity of these struggles,

indicating that the participant battled suicidal thoughts and wanting to escape the pain.

The participant also described having these recurring feelings throughout his life and

having to battle mental health issues long-term. The mention of talk therapy, a

psychiatrist, and hospitalization further emphasizes the severity of the situation, showing

that professional intervention was necessary to manage the participant's mental health.

This demonstrates how unresolved emotional struggles particularly those coming from family dynamics, can lead to significant mental health challenges. P6 stated,

> Dad never showed up to court and proved that he never cared about me at all. I had depression and not wanting to be here; overwhelming feelings of sadness would come and go. I felt completely low not wanting to be here, struggled a lot, and felt like Dad didn't care at all. He was never involved and never paid child support. I did have talk therapy growing up, a psychiatrist, and at one point, was admitted into the hospital due to my mental health.

Participant 7 reflects the theme of mental health struggles by conveying the emotional burden of growing up without a parental figure. The sadness of not having "her" around suggests a deep sense of loss and loneliness due to the absence of her mother, who could have provided support, guidance, and emotional security. This absence forces the participant to "grow up quickly," indicating that she had to take on responsibilities and face challenges earlier than expected, which led to feelings of stress and a loss of childhood. P7 stated, "I would feel sad, not having her around for help; I felt like I'm growing up quickly."

Participant 8 reflects the theme of mental health struggles by describing the overwhelming pressure and emotional distress he experienced. The "stress" and "inability to sleep" point to the intense anxiety he felt. The added responsibilities contributed to his stress, creating a burden that was too difficult to deal with, especially at a young age. The mental toll is evident in the reference to overthinking, depression, and suicidal thoughts, all of which suggest a deep sense of hopelessness. These mental health struggles were

also felt by the siblings, according to the participant. The participant expressed "sleeping a lot" which demonstrated a sign of depression. The participant described severe mental health as he described the profound impact of stress and emotional burden. P8 iterated,

I felt a lot of stress; inability to sleep; I had more responsibilities; and my mental health took a toll on me. I was overthinking, depressed and had suicidal thoughts. Siblings also struggled with mental health. I also slept a lot.

Participant 9 reflects the theme of mental health struggles by emphasizing her experience with depression, trauma, and severe anxiety. The use of the word "traumatic" suggests that the participant endured a significant and distressing event or series of events that deeply affected her emotional state. The combination of depression and "really bad anxiety" indicates a profound and ongoing mental health challenge, where the participant was overwhelmed by both sadness and fear. The participant expressed the deep emotional pain and instability that can arise from traumatic experiences, contributing to severe mental health issues. P9 added, "I was depressed; it was traumatic, and I had really bad anxiety."

Participant 10 reflects the theme of mental health struggles by expressing his deep emotional pain and sense of abandonment due to the absence of parental support. The hurt comes from needing more guidance and advice, which wasn't provided because his father wasn't there when needed due to his incarceration. The lack of support contributed to the participant's depression and anxiety, leaving him feeling lost. The repeated emphasis on needing his father but finding him absent explains the emotional toll and mental health challenges for the participant. P10 added, "Hurt because I needed more

parental advice, and he wasn't there like I needed. I had depression and anxiety, and he was not around sometimes. I didn't know what to do; I needed him, and he wasn't around."

All participants in the study demonstrated mental health struggles in one way or another. P1, P2, P3, P6, P8, P10 were often taught not to show emotion and to figure things out on their own. Avoiding these feelings leads to participants having anger, isolation, anxiety, panic attacks, and depression. Participants experienced being on guard, cutting, addiction, loneliness, and attempted suicide. Participants also felt that cultural stigma enforces the idea of "just deal with it," fostering distrust and overwhelming sadness. Participants experienced stress, overthinking, depression, suicidal thoughts, excessive sleep, and binge eating or food disorders.

Theme 3: Behavioral Struggles

The third theme identified in the transcripts was behavioral struggles, which emerged as a significant aspect of the participants' experiences. These struggles were rooted in the participants' interactions both at home and in school environments. The experiences revealed that their behavior was often influenced by the expectations and pressures placed upon them by their caregivers, as well as the challenges they faced in academic and social settings.

Participant 1 reflects the theme of behavioral struggles by highlighting the conflicting messages the participant received from his father. While being told to "stay out of trouble," the expectation was to win fights and not back down, which created contradictory pressure to engage in aggressive behavior. This mixed messaging likely

contributed to confusion and internal conflict, as the participant was encouraged to use violence while also being told to avoid it. Additionally, the demand to suppress emotions, such as not crying after a punishment, suggests a harsh environment where showing vulnerability was discouraged. These factors led to struggles with behavior, as the participant was caught between following parental orders and managing his own emotions and actions. P1 stated,

> I would stay out of trouble; dad would tell me to stay out of trouble but if I got into a fight I better win or if not, he would be in trouble with dad. I was told don't run away from a fight. I wasn't allowed to cry if I got a whooping I couldn't cry.

Participant 2 reflects the theme of behavioral struggles by showing how the speaker's behavior evolved over time. Initially, the participant tried to avoid trouble by being quiet and not drawing attention to himself. As he got older during his senior year, he internalized the struggle and had more risky behavior, like stealing Nyquil. This shift suggests an underlying emotional struggle or need for escape that wasn't being addressed, leading the participant to cope in unhealthy ways. P2 added, "I would be quiet and not cause any trouble. I would steal Nyquil as I got older during my senior year."

Participant 3 reflects the theme of behavioral struggles by highlighting the contrast between the participants positive behavior at school and the lack of recognition at home. At school, the participant excelled being smart, involved in student council, and well-liked by teachers, who provided the praise and recognition he craved. This positive reinforcement at school likely motivated the participants to continue their good behavior and mature beyond their peers. The lack of recognition at home, where the participant's

mother was often absent due to work, created a gap between his experiences at school and at home. P3 stated,

> Never got in trouble at school; was in student council, smart, loved school; teachers praised me and made me feel good about myself due to the recognition. I would not get praise or recognition at home due to my mom always working, but the school gave me that. I was also more mature than the rest of the kids.

Participant 4 reflects the theme of behavioral struggles by highlighting the difference between her perfect behavior at school and conflicts at home. The participant demonstrated the pressure of growing up quickly and dealing with parental control from her father. This led to tension and acting out within the family. At school, the participant maintained "the best behavior" and was a "perfectionist" with "no discipline issues." In contrast the participant had elevated stress and expectations at home and struggled with her behavior at home due to the different environment. P4 iterated,

> I had the best behavior, perfectionist, no discipline issues at school. At home I would fight with my sisters; cause a lot of issues but then we were good; I had to grow up so fast and Dad would go through our phones.

Participant 5 reflects the theme of behavioral struggles by highlighting how past experiences of trauma and violence influenced her temper and behavior over time. The participant mentioned having a "bad temper" both at school and at home, demonstrating an ongoing struggle with anger management. Her temper led to aggressive behavior at school, where the participant expressed beating up others, indicating difficulties in controlling her emotions. The participant also mentioned having significant trauma,

including being beaten by a brother and experiencing domestic violence from her partner, demonstrating a deep source of behavioral struggles. This trauma likely contributes to the bad temper and the subsequent aggressive actions, as well as to a sense of emotional isolation. Overall, the participant explains how trauma and violence have shaped her behavior, leading to ongoing struggles with temper, aggression, isolation, and unhealthy relationship patterns. P5 added,

> I had a bad temper at school and at home. Even now, I struggle with a bad temper. In school, I would beat up girls, but only if they triggered me. At home I was quiet and was a loner I would stay to myself. I had a lot of trauma; I would get beat up by my brother, and, as an adult, by my child's dad due to domestic violence, I would look for unhealthy relationships.

Participant 6 reflects on the theme of behavioral struggles by highlighting the actions at school influenced by his home environment and parental dynamics. The participant admits to "acting out" in school, resulting in detention, write-ups, and occasional misbehavior. The mention of "slipping up on and off" implies inconsistency in behavior, where the participant struggled to maintain that effort. The mom's stricter approach and greater authority contributed to feelings of pressure, while the stepdad's patience provided a contrasting influence. P6 stated,

> I would act out in school; would get detention, would get written up, would slip up on and off. Mom and stepdad had the greatest impact; mom was stricter. She had greater authority; stepdad was more patient. What mom stated that's what went.

Participant 7 reflects the theme of behavioral struggles by highlighting the challenges of living with an incarcerated parent and having ADHD, the impact on family dynamics, the role of medication in managing behavior, and the changes in behavior over time. The inability to "stay still" reflects the struggle she had to manage symptoms leading to what is described as "bad" behavior. The individual describes a shift in behavior across different stages of schooling, expressing being "more shy and calmer" in middle school and then struggling again in high school. P7 added,

> My behavior was bad, I have ADHD, and I could not stay still, very stressful for my dad, eventually, I was able to control myself. I would also take ADHD meds when I was little to control myself. In Middle school I was more shy and calmer; In high school it was bad too but my dad would talk to me a lot.

Participant 8 reflects the theme of behavioral struggles by expressing his deep emotional distress and its impact. He describes the behavioral struggles rooted in emotional distress, persistent anger, sadness, and isolating himself from others. The participant described "always angry" both at school and at home. His internal emotional struggles led to outbursts, irritability and withdrawal. P8 stated, "I was angry and sad I wanted to be by myself. I was always angry at school and at home. I stayed away from people."

Participant 9 reflects the theme of behavioral struggles by highlighting her rebellious behavior coupled with her mental health struggles. The participant describes becoming "a rebel with anger," indicating that her behavioral struggles were characterized by defiance and anger. The mention of anger suggests a deep emotional

struggle from having an incarcerated parent. The individual may have been grappling with feelings of frustration, resentment, or helplessness. P9 iterated, "I became a rebel with anger, but it was more my mental health that was affected. I had to figure it out how to be strong."

Participant 10 reflects the theme of behavioral struggles by describing defiance, aggression, and emotional turmoil, particularly in response to family dynamics and the loss of a parent. The participant mentioned "always got in trouble" for behaviors such as "not listening," "fights," and "not doing homework," indicating an ongoing struggle with authority and rules. After the participants' father passed away there was further decline in behavior. The worsening of behavior following the father's death led to the individual attending "alternative schools all the time" and having an "ugly attitude towards teachers." This indicates a deepening of the behavioral struggles, P10 added,

> I always got in trouble; not listening; fights; not doing homework; I had to stand
> up for myself so I would get into fights. Dad would always tell me to stand up for
> myself; when dad passed away behavior got worse; alternative schools all the
> time; attitude would be ugly towards teachers.

Essence of the Experience

The essence of the experience is one of enduring resilience in the middle of significant challenges. Each participant navigated the challenges of parental incarceration, which disrupted their childhoods, forced premature maturity, and imposed heavy responsibilities. Cultural expectations and gender roles often compounded their struggles, leading to suppressed emotions, confusion, and behavioral issues. Through the

hardships, they found strength in family support, the guidance of mentors, and their own determination. Their journeys reflect a deep emotional struggle but also a commitment to personal growth, healing, and the pursuit of a better future, emphasizing the crucial role of accessible mental health support in overcoming the trauma of parental incarceration.

Summary

After collecting the interview data, I employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the method of data analysis. IPA provided a distinct and valuable framework for delving into the individual experiences of young Latino adults who had an incarcerated parent during their childhood or adolescence. This method facilitated a nuanced understanding of how these individuals perceive and make sense of their personal experiences within the broader contexts of their social and personal lives (Smith et al., 2009). Smith and Nizza (2022) emphasized that the researcher is responsible for analyzing the data in IPA. IPA researchers focus on the lived experiences of individuals and their interpretations of these experiences. In my qualitative research, I implemented strategies to ensure the reliability and accuracy of my findings. These strategies enabled me to obtain valuable insights that accurately represent the participants' perspectives, thereby capturing the essence of their lived experiences and making meaningful contributions to the field.

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. The research question that guided this study was: How do Latino young adults perceive and describe their lived experiences and mental

health needs as children and adolescents during the time their parent was incarcerated? The information they provided revealed several themes identified through the commonalities in their experiences. The essence of the lived experience of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated Parents revealed commonalities, and a clearer understanding of the overall experiences and challenges faced by the participants was obtained. Chapter 5 provides an interpretation of the findings of the study, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, implications of the study, and conclusions derived from the results of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand the recollections of young Latino adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. Through semistructured interviews I collected data to explore the recollections of Latino young adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. The phenomenon of interest that I sought to understand was the recollections of Latino young adults about their lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. Furthermore, from the perspectives of the participants involved, the credibility of the results can only be judged by the participants themselves (see Shenton, 2004). The themes identified include social and cultural adjustment, mental health struggles, and behavioral struggles. These findings are consistent with themes identified in previous literature and highlighted the contrasting.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of this study contribute to the field of developmental psychology by reinforcing existing literature surrounding mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents. The themes illustrated in Chapter 2 included cultural impacts on parental incarceration, social/emotional mental health effects and resiliency, behavioral development, and health consequences. All these themes were seen through the results of this study, including social/emotional mental health effects and behavioral

development. Additional themes found include social and cultural adjustment, mental health struggles, and behavioral struggles.

Cultural Impacts on Parental Incarceration

Previous literature addressed factors such as the importance of family, respect, individual characteristics of immigration status, and the acculturation process (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2019), which can either pose a risk or provide protection for fatherhood. In this study, numerous participants emphasized the critical role of family and mutual respect in ensuring that family members support one another. Additionally, Turney (2018) addressed the experiences of Latinos that were analyzed to guide social change and interventions aimed at improving their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Participants in this study highlighted the need for more support during their childhood and adolescence, particularly concerning their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Past literature also stated that Latino children and adolescents with incarcerated parents may feel more pressured growing up with hard expectations (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2019). Latino families may feel that children and adolescents need to grow up and act more mature due to the incarcerated parent (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2019). Participants in this study conveyed the pressure they experienced when their parent was incarcerated, feeling the need to mature quickly and take on responsibilities to care for their siblings and manage the household.

Social/Emotional Mental Health Effects and Resiliency

Prior research has described the impact of parental incarceration on young people and how it can be profoundly challenging and can have a significant effect on their emotional and social well-being, leading to feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and uncertainty (Luk et al., 2023). Additionally, these emotions may be compounded by shame, guilt, or anger, making it difficult for them to establish healthy relationships and prioritize their mental health (Luk et al., 2023). During this study, participants shared the difficulties they encountered regarding their emotional and social well-being, describing feelings of loneliness, anxiety, depression, and uncertainty.

Additionally, research has shown that parental incarceration at various stages of child and adolescent development leads to various negative outcomes (Luk et al., 2023). Participants in this study expressed the negative outcomes and challenges they had to endure at various stages of their development due to having an incarcerated parent. Children who are separated from a parent who is incarcerated may experience feelings of confusion regarding the incarcerated parent's love and affection for them as a result of the separation (Finkeldey et al., 2020). Children's emotional difficulties, such as grief, anxiety, and trust issues, may persist even after the release of a parent from prison (Muentner & Eddy, 2023). Furthermore, having a support system can also be beneficial to help children solve their emotional, behavioral, and social problems and cope (Domzalska et al., 2022). In this study some participants shared that having a good support system helped them to stay resilient; it also helped them to solve emotional, behavioral, and social problems to help them cope.

Behavioral Development

Evidence documenting internalizing problems comes from qualitative research, such as a study of college students who reflected on emotional difficulties like grief, anxiety, and worry following their parents' incarceration during their childhood (Zhang & Flynn, 2020). Several participants in this study expressed that they had emotional difficulties and trauma related to seeing their parent arrested and incarcerated. Participants expressed going through grief, having anxiety and worry.

Damaged trust and low confidence in relationships with others are particularly significant internalizing behavioral consequences that occur after a parent's release (Young & Jefferson Smith, 2019). These consequences could also involve increased self-doubt, anger, regret, and sadness, which are often associated with stigma (Young & Jefferson Smith, 2019). Some participants in this study expressed having damaged trust, low confidence in relationships, particularly with their incarcerated parent upon their release.

Additionally, Domzalska et al. (2022) found that children and adolescents from families in which a parent is in prison or had been in prison in the past showed a higher level of behaviors such as aggression, driving under the influence of psychoactive substances, or delinquent behavior than children of parents with no prison record. A few participants in this study expressed having difficulty with aggression due to having an incarcerated parent when they were younger. Some participants explained that some aggression was seen as good by their incarcerated parent if initially triggered by another

individual. Aggression was seen as necessary to survival by their incarcerated parent due to being institutionalized.

Furthermore, children and adolescents of incarcerated parents can have negative attitudes toward the criminal justice system and can have hostility toward authority figures (Murray & Murray, 2010). Some participants in this study expressed not trusting police officers and the justice system due to all their past trauma. They expressed having negative attitudes toward officers and demonstrated hostility toward authority figures.

Health Consequences

Behavioral indicators of physical activity, fruit and vegetable consumption, fast food consumption, sugar-sweetened beverage consumption, and sleep have been assessed and included a measure of perceived overall health (Hiolski et al., 2019). Hiolski et al. (2019) found that parental incarceration is substantially associated with decreased levels of healthy behaviors and increased levels of unhealthy behaviors. In this research, some participants stated that they would eat whatever was available. One participant expressed that he would go to the food pantry to get food and provide for his younger siblings. Even if a parent is no longer incarcerated, adolescents with incarcerated parents have been found to engage in poorer physical health behaviors than their peers (Hiolski et al., 2019). One participant in this study expressed that he still struggles with an eating disorder due to his past and not having enough food to eat.

Most of the themes identified through this qualitative phenomenological study had a lot of commonalities with previous research regarding the experiences of adolescents with incarcerated parents. The information from the participants' interviews

showed the cultural impacts, social/emotional mental health effects and resiliency,

behavioral development and health consequences on children of incarcerated parents and

were identified in the data collected. In addition, other themes were noted by the

participants, including emotional struggles, family responsibility, mental health stigma,

behavioral complexity, parental incarceration and health, academic struggle and

resilience, parental arrest impact, incarcerated parent visits, impact of parent relationship,

support network impact, family-supported resilience and resilient determination.

Additional Themes Found

Social and Cultural Adjustment

During this study, participants expressed confusion regarding the incarcerated

parent's love and affection. Having them absent from their lives caused confusion, and

some did not feel love and affection due to their absence. Participants felt like they had to

grow up faster and take on more responsibilities. They felt abandoned by their

incarcerated parents, which led to a feeling of hopelessness. Participants in this study

shared that they continued to face emotional challenges such as grief, depression, anger,

anxiety, and trust issues even after their parent was released from prison.

Mental Health Struggles

Another theme included the mental health struggles that participants endured.

Participants were told not to cry or to show emotion. They struggled with anger,

depression, anxiety, and panic attacks. Some participants expressed having past suicidal

thoughts and attempts. They experienced overwhelming feelings of sadness, feeling

completely low, and overthinking. Due to the trauma experienced, some participants expressed binge eating and having a food disorder.

Behavioral Struggles

Another theme included behavior struggles in participants. Participants described significant behavioral challenges, including frequent fights, troublemaking, and struggles with anger and temper issues. Participants often engaged in rebellious behavior and acted out. Their rebellious tendencies came from having their parent incarcerated, which compounded their behavioral difficulties. This background likely influenced their interactions with authority figures and peers, shaping their attitudes and behaviors both at home and in school.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations refer to the boundaries of a study, often dictated by the choices of data sources, data collection methods, and analysis techniques. According to Leedy and Omrod (2010), the limitations of a study are weaknesses that a researcher cannot control. The results of this study were limited by the fact that this is a qualitative investigation; therefore, I was unable to provide measurable indicators of how young Latino adults experienced having an incarcerated parent as a child or adolescent and how it affects their mental health. My aim was to unveil patterns and theories that could explain the phenomenon from the perspective of the participants themselves. I decided not to use quantitative research methods for my study because I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the topic and participants' experiences, as there is little information available on this subject. Qualitative research was a better fit for my study. It allowed me

to explore the issue in a more complex and detailed way, and to gain an understanding of the perspectives and lived experiences of the participants involved.

There was a possibility that participants were going to provide flawed information during interviews, which could lead to mistaken conclusions during data analysis. The interview data offered detailed descriptions of Latino young adults lived experiences and mental health needs as children and adolescents during the time their parent was incarcerated. One limitation that I expressed was the challenge of keeping my personal bias in check since I have worked in the mental health field for many years. I have also had close family members incarcerated and have seen the challenges their children have faced. I acknowledged my biases and approached new information with an open mind and willingness to learn. I demonstrated the ability to manage any preconceived notions and remain receptive to the perspectives of experts. I used this skill in considering varying viewpoints without judgment.

I also remained open to diverse ideas and perspectives and facilitated without bias. To minimize the risk of incorrect information, I used member checking of interview data to ensure the accuracy and validity of my research results. I utilized bracketing to minimize researcher bias and maintained a clear distinction between the researcher's personal opinions and the collected data (Gearing, 2004).

Recommendations

The following recommendations for future research were established by evaluating the strengths and limitations of the current study and the existing literature about their lived experiences of how young Latino adults experienced having an

incarcerated parent as a child or adolescent and how it affects their mental health. As I

expressed in my literature review, more research about these experiences would provide

information about how young Latino adults experienced having an incarcerated parent as

a child or adolescent and how it affects their mental health. While this study furthered

research about the lived experiences of young Latino adults experienced having an

incarcerated parent as a child or adolescent and how it affects their mental health, the

focus on the cultural impacts of parental incarceration and resilience provided

information that could be expanded upon in other studies.

Since social and cultural adjustments were a prominent theme in the current study

and it was noted in the literature review, it is recommended that more qualitative research

be conducted to explore this topic. Replicating this study with young children or

adolescents with an incarcerated parent could provide a further understanding of social

and cultural adjustment and how it was handled. Expanding the research in this way

would provide a way to compare results between lived experiences during young

childhood or adolescence and recalled experiences during young adulthood.

Another recommendation I would make is to conduct more qualitative research

regarding cultural impacts on parental incarceration and resiliency. Many participants

expressed their struggle with having to grow up faster due to the expectation of having to

care for the family. As part of their culture and being Latino or Latina, the expectation

was that you care for each other and the family. Some expressed having to work at a

young age and drop out of school to make money to support the family. As stated in my

literature review the impact of incarceration is felt by more than 5 million children today,

with low-income and rural children, Black and Latinx children being disproportionately affected (Heard-Garris et al., 2021). Additionally, the literature states that mass incarceration disproportionately impacts poor, disadvantaged, and minority families, with effects on family members who are not directly incarcerated (Wildeman et al., 2019).

Additionally, participants mentioned their resilience and highlighted the positive influence of community members or family members on their lives. Future research can be established by evaluating the positive impacts individuals or organizations have on children and adolescents of incarcerated parents. As stated in the literature search Walker et al. (2020) explained that resiliency can be enhanced by connecting individuals with their communities while using books that connect with their culture. Making connections while doing literature circles can help support the children of incarcerated parents (Walker et al., 2020). Furthermore, supportive adults play a crucial role in facilitating resilience among young individuals (Johnson & Arditti, 2023). They help by providing access to activities, assisting them in envisioning and working towards a better life, and encouraging turning points; they can help young people overcome difficult situations and thrive despite adversity (Johnson & Arditti, 2023).

Implications

Positive Social Change

The results of this study can bring positive social change at the individual, family, and organizational levels. The significance of this study resides in the data that it contributed to help fill a gap in understanding the experiences and mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents and the impact it had on their

lives. The results validated several themes found in prior literature and offered new insights into these experiences. Participants discussed social and cultural adjustment and how their trauma forced them to mature quickly. They also emphasized the importance of protecting their family and the significant role family played in their lives. The mental health struggles, including not being able to show emotion, added to the participants' trauma and struggles. The need to remain vigilant and cope with behavioral struggles provided deeper insight into the experiences and mental health needs of Latino children and adolescents with incarcerated parents.

As stated in past literature, Forster et al. (2019) identified a link between familial incarceration and suicide, using ethnicity as a mediator. Ryan et al. (2023) discovered that childhood parental incarceration greatly affects young adulthood, but Latinos have not received as much research. Additionally, Black and Hispanic children are more likely than White children to have a parent in prison, according to Ryan et al. (2023). With the findings of this research, more resources can be provided to these individuals.

The participants in this study provided information about how mandatory counseling would've helped them when their parent was incarcerated. Their families would benefit from knowing how much it affected their mental health while they were going through parental incarceration. At an individual level, the purpose of this study was to provide information about positive social development during childhood and adolescence. Participants shared how the impact of resilience helped them to stay focused to handle the next challenges that they encountered going into adulthood.

This study's implications for positive social change at the organizational level involve schools, mental health agencies, and legal systems, including jails and prison settings. The potential impact for positive social change includes changing policies for growth and development to improve necessary support services to support Latino children and adolescents who have incarcerated parents. Additionally, policies that include counseling and assisting Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents may be implemented and may lead to improved mental health and growth in development. Furthermore, the results of this study should aid in policy changes and force social change by addressing inequalities for Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents.

The theoretical framework that guided this research included the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which identifies five systems within an environment: the microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The assumptions in this study included that all participants would answer questions truthfully and have personal experience with the phenomenon. Participants were considered to understand the questions and not intentionally withhold or misstate facts during interviews. This research expanded Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory by recognizing the impact of incarcerated parents on a child's environment and their lives. In this study, I explored the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs.

The research design that was utilized for this study is a phenomenological approach. It allowed an analysis of the shared experiences around the phenomenon of

interest. Through interviews and extended conversations, the phenomenological approach reveals the collective meaning of what individuals experience (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). This research included the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health. The findings of this study indicate that a phenomenological approach enables an exploration of experiences across various settings and individual perspectives.

Participants in this research study offered meaningful insights into their emotional, mental health, and behavioral struggles. Their experiences will provide schools, mental health facilities, and legal systems, including jails and prisons, with awareness of the implications for positive social change. This research can offer guidance for future research to enhance the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs.

Conclusion

The research in this study was conducted to address the problem of the gap in the literature in understanding the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents of incarcerated parents on mental health needs from the perspective of young adults. As stated previously, the United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world (Walmsley, 2019). Mass incarceration has a significant impact on poor, disadvantaged, and minority families, and it also affects family members who are not directly incarcerated (Wildeman et al., 2019). Furthermore, it was important to understand how having an incarcerated parent impacts minority children and adolescents, specifically the Latino population.

Gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of Latino children and adolescents with incarcerated parents can lead to better preparation to address their mental health needs throughout various stages of their development. Tailoring support and interventions to meet their needs as children and adolescents can help to provide a stronger foundation for their emotional and psychological well-being. This comprehensive approach not only aids in their current development but also helps better prepare them for the challenges they may face as young adults, ensuring they receive consistent and effective mental health support.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer

Interview study seeks Latino young adults ages 18 to 29 years old.

There is a new study about the experiences of young Latino adults aged 18 to 29 years old who had at least one biological parent incarcerated when they were a child or adolescent. For this study, you are invited to describe your experiences with having an incarcerated parent.
About this study:

- One 60-minute virtual interview that will be audio recorded.

- The researcher will contact the interviewees by email for the member-checking step after transcription and initial coding. Participants will be asked if the transcript is accurate.

- You would receive a $25 Visa gift card as a thank-you

- To protect your privacy, the published study will not share any names or details that identify you

- Volunteers must meet these requirements:

- 18 to 29 years old

- Latino descent

- Had at least one biological parent incarcerated when they were a child or adolescent.

This interview is part of the doctoral study for Anna Garcia, a Ph.D. student at Walden University. Interviews will take place during March and April 2024.

To confidentially volunteer and/or have questions, please contact me at the number and email below or use the QR code to complete the screening; the QR code will direct you to the informed consent and screening survey.

Anna Garcia
IRB approval # 03-08-24-1066547

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Briefing

[Relay to interviewee]

Thank you for agreeing to discuss your lived experience and mental health needs regarding having a parent incarcerated when you were a child or adolescent. As a reminder, your participation is entirely voluntary. At any time during the process, you may opt out of the interview or decline to answer a question. Each interview has been audio and video recorded as a backup. Through a process researchers call (member checking), I will send a copy of the interview transcription so you can check for the accuracy of the interpretation.

The confidentiality agreement and consent form were put in place to protect participants during the interview and to assure you that the data I collect will only be used for research. As stated in the consent form to ensure confidentiality, each participant will be given a pseudonym to protect their identity. Data will be collected and stored in a secure and password-protected computer. Furthermore, all documents will be deleted and shredded five years after this study for the protection and privacy of everyone. Sensitive information will be secured and will not be left available for potential breaches or unauthorized access.

To protect your confidentiality, you have been assigned an alpha-numeric identifier, and you will only be addressed by the assigned identifier.

During the interview, if you feel tired at any time, please feel free to ask for a break.

Are there any questions for me before we begin the interview?

[Turn on recording and transcription software]

[Remember to remain in the role of a researcher and not as a counselor]

Demographic Data

We will start with some demographic information about you so that we can make comparisons across participants of this study:

What is your age?

What gender do you identify with?

What is your ethnicity/race?

Interview Questions

4. Is your father currently incarcerated? Yes_____ No _____ How long? ____

5. Is your mother currently incarcerated? Yes_____ No _____ How long? ___

6. How old were you when your mother/father was first incarcerated?

7. How long was your parent incarcerated?

8. Who raised you while your mother/father was incarcerated?

9. Tell me about your experience; how did you feel when you found out that your parent was incarcerated? What changed in your life?

10. How did culture affect your upbringing while your parent was incarcerated?

(Tell me about your culture's impact on having a parent incarcerated; what were your responsibilities?)

11. Tell me how your mental health was affected.

12. Describe your behavior in school and at home.

13. How was your health affected?

14. Tell me about your academics. Were they affected?

15. Were you present during the arrest? What was your experience?

16. Would you visit your incarcerated parent? Why or why not?

17. Tell me about your relationship with your parent now; how are your feelings toward them now?

18. Tell me who made the greatest positive impact in your life?

19. What helped you stay hopeful and resilient? Did you have this?

20. Tell me about your present life. How are you doing? What are you working towards?

21. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience?

The researcher reserves the right to adapt interview questions based on responses during the interview and follow-up with the participants.

Debriefing

[Relay to interviewee]

Thank you so much for your time today and for sharing your experience. If you think of anything that might be helpful in the meantime, please feel free to email me that information. I will also be emailing you a copy of the transcript. If you don't agree with something, please email me within that week to make the corrections. Otherwise, my next step is to continue the interviews and analyze all of the information received. Are there any questions or any other information you need?