2019

Secondary School Educators' Perspectives on Strategies to Support Acculturation of Haitian Students

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2019

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MEd, Wilmington University, 2008

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Fulfillment

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Abstract

Adjusting socially and emotionally to a new cultural environment can be challenging for immigrants. Yet, the academic and behavioral performance of immigrant children can be enhanced when acculturative strategies are implemented in schools to address their unique cultural differences and needs. However, a scarcity of information exists pertaining to educational strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students, particularly those with disabilities. A qualitative case study was conducted to explore strategies that support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities and the link between the use of acculturation strategies and student achievement from the perspectives of 3 regular education educators, 2 special education educators, 2 transition specialists, a school counselor, and a school psychologist at a high school in the northeastern United States. The bidimensional theory of acculturation provided the conceptual framework for this study. Qualitative data were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with 9 secondary school educators. Purposeful sampling was used in this study as part of the qualitative approach. Data from interviews were coded and themes were developed consistent with the conceptual framework. Results were that most participants felt positively about cultural maintenance but expressed concern with their ability to meet the acculturative needs of Haitian students with disabilities. In addition, most participants were unable to identify specific acculturation strategies that they used to support Haitian students with disabilities beyond language acquisition resources. The findings of this study may be instrumental in the creation of school-based systems of support for educators and students to increase the social integration and academic achievement of immigrant children with and without disabilities.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my greatest supporters, my mother, Ms. Maisie Clarke and my wife, Dr. Katina Clarke.

Acknowledgements

To my Lord and savior Jesus Christ, I give you all the thanks for your grace, mercy and the strength to complete this doctoral journey. My sincerest appreciation goes to Dr. Jonah Eleweke, Dr. Christopher Khoury, and Dr. Karen Hunt for sharing their knowledge and wisdom that helped to guide me through this arduous educational process. To my wife, family, friends and co-workers, I thank you for your prayers, well-wishes, patience, support and encouragement. This accomplishment would not have been possible without each of you. Thank you is not enough to express how grateful I am to each of you for helping me achieve this life-long goal.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Nearly 41 million immigrants reside in the United States (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). Approximately 25% of school-aged children have immigrant parents (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). Approximately 6% of all persons in the United States under the age of 18 are immigrants (Department of Homeland Security, 2017). According to the Migration Policy Institute (2013), 20% of the world's migration is to the United States. Consequently, the United States is the number one global destination for all immigrants (Migration Policy Institute, 2013). Haitian immigrants are the fourth largest group of immigrants from the Caribbean who reside in the United States (Migration Policy Institute, 2017), of which, 70% either reside in the southeastern or northeastern United States (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). The social and emotional adjustment process associated with immigrating to a new host country is challenging for all immigrants, but particularly for immigrant children (Civitillo et al., 2017).

How effectively immigrant children incorporate themselves into their new school and culture determines whether they will experience a healthy or diminished sense of social and emotional well-being (Schwartz et al., 2013). For example, immersing immigrant adolescents into culturally different educational environments has been positively correlated with higher rates of mental health symptoms that include "anger, depression, and alienation" (Sirin, Ryce, Gupta, & Rogers-Sirin, 2013, p. 739). Research also suggests that accommodating for cultural differences among adolescents with unique educational needs (e.g., students with disabilities, English learners) supports improved

academic and behavioral performance and post-secondary outcomes (Rogers, Cartwright, & Skinner, 2016; Schwartz et al., 2013; Sirin et al., 2013).

Background

Immigration to the United States has steadily increased since 1990 (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). Immigrants' unique cultural and linguistic assets contribute to the diverse mix of customs and traditions that make up the United States. However, how effectively immigrants integrate into a new culture continues to be an area of social and emotional concern to both educational and noneducational advocates and policy makers (Rogers, Cartwright, & Skinner, 2016; Schwartz et al., 2013; Sirin et al., 2013). Efforts to integrate immigrant adults into the United States' labor market and immigrant adolescents from Latino and Asian backgrounds into public education have increased (Alba & Foner, 2015; Bhachu, 2017; Yoon, 2017). However, a scarcity of information exists pertaining to educational strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students, particularly Haitian students with disabilities. A qualitative exploratory case study may provide a clearer perspective of school processes and practices that bolster or inhibit implementation of academic and behavioral acculturation strategies. In addition, qualitative data from such a study may reveal school processes and practices that support or constrain integration of Haitian students with disabilities.

Problem Statement

Research studies have focused primarily on the effect that acculturation has on Latino and Asian immigrant adolescents (Katsiaficas, Suárez-Orozco, Sirin, & Gupta, 2013). The problem is that acculturation research has largely overlooked an immigrant

population which the Migration Policy Institute (2013) noted has risen by nearly 25%

between 1993 and 2013: Haitian immigrants in the United States. Moreover, Haitian

children born in the United States with unique educational needs and parents who

immigrated to the United States are seldom discussed in literature. This dearth of

information has led to educational strategies for Haitian students with specific social,

emotional, or academic needs that are targeted primarily towards English language

acquisition and English-immersion (Gast, Okamoto, & Feldman, 2017). Consequently, a

void exists regarding educational strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students

with disabilities that extends beyond language or immersion-focused programming.

Educators are an integral part of the acculturation process for immigrant

adolescents (Bakhov, 2014). Educators have the ability to provide opportunities and

learning environments that allow immigrant adolescents to immerse themselves in the

American culture while maintaining their culture of origin (Alvarez Valdivia, Schneider,

& Carrasco, 2016). In addition, educators can provide instruction and curriculum tailored

to address the unique academic and behavior needs of immigrant adolescents and other

culturally diverse students (Alvarez Valdivia et al., 2016). For example, inclusive

teaching practices that recognize the value of diversity in cultures can be used to develop

lessons that are relevant to immigrant adolescents and other culturally diverse students

(Alvarez Valdivia et al., 2016). In addition, as pointed out by Berry, Kim, Power, Young,

and Bujaki (1989), the social and emotional angst associated with acculturation can be

minimized when strategies and systems are developed to integrate one's native culture

with their newly adopted majority culture. Moreover, the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act (IDEA, 2004) stresses the duty of educational professionals to support the unique characteristics of students by ensuring their full participation in educational experiences, and promoting their independence and self-sufficiency, in and out of school. Consequently, Berry's (1997) acculturation strategy of integration was the single aspect of acculturation used in this study to explore secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities at the high school level.

The northeastern region of the United States is home to the second largest population of Haitian immigrants (Migration Policy Institute, 2013). In addition, the influx of Haitian immigrants to this specific region of the United States continues to grow (Migration Policy Institute, 2013). Thus, the northeastern region of the United States provides an ideal setting for this study. Moreover, a study that focuses on this region and secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities serves to undergird federal law that promotes the full participation and contribution of all students with disabilities in society.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory case study was to explore secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities at a high school in the northeastern region of the United States. At this stage in the research, strategies that support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities will generally be defined as acculturation strategies. It should also be noted that the phrase *Haitian students with disabilitie*s used throughout this study pertains to

Haitian students who have been found eligible to receive special education services under any of the 13 disability classifications identified in IDEA (2004).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are secondary school educators' perspectives on acculturation?

2. What acculturation strategies do secondary school educators use to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities and enhance their achievement?

Conceptual Framework

Berry's (1997) bidimensional theory of acculturation was used to ground this study. Berry posited that the acculturation process is heavily dependent on one's desire to maintain her or his cultural identity and adapt to the host country's cultural practices, traditions, and norms. Berry emphasized four acculturation strategies that individuals immigrating to a new society undergo: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Of Berry's (1997) four acculturation strategies, acculturation research focused on immigrant adolescents supports integration as the most adaptive acculturation strategy (Antonio & Monteiro, 2015, Berry & Hou, 2016; Ferguson & Bornstein, 2014; Sanchez & Awad, 2016). Thus, for immigrants like Haitian students with disabilities, integration into school may be more successful with school processes that promote the interrelationship between maintenance of native cultural identity and American identity. Moreover, as pointed out by Makarova and Birman (2015), the social and emotional angst associated with acculturation can be minimized when strategies and systems are developed to integrate one's native culture with their newly adopted majority culture.

This research used Berry's (1997) bidimensional theory of acculturation to better understand the perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation strategies that support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative exploratory case study methodology was employed to gain a fuller understanding of the perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation strategies that support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. According to Yin (2017), case studies are appropriate when the research is exploratory in nature and the aim of the study is to analyze the context and processes of the phenomenon. Yin (2017) noted that case studies are a particularly valuable investigative method when a phenomenon is not well understood or supported by previous literature.

To address the research questions and obtain differing perspectives, semistructured interviews were conducted with nine educators: (a) three secondary school administrators, (b) three secondary school teachers, and (c) three specialists. Secondary school educators and specialists who met the selection criteria and agreed to participate in the study were interviewed and audiotaped to reveal each participant's perspectives on acculturation strategies that support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Thematic coding was used to analyze the three areas of inquiry identified in the research questions that relate to secondary school educators' perspectives on acculturation strategies that support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities.

Definitions

Acculturation: The transition and adaptation process individuals and groups undergo as they come into contact with a dominant culture different than their own (Berry, 2005).

Culturally responsive teaching: "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for students" (Gay, p. 4, 2010).

Educators' perspectives: "Educators' views on the acceptability, feasibility and usefulness of a strategy (Baker-Henningham & Walker, p. 632, 2009).

Immigrant adolescents: "adolescents who immigrated to a new host country or were born in the host country to at least one immigrant parent or were born in the host country to parents who were born in the host country" (Pottie, Dahal, Georgiades, Premji, & Hassan, p. 1558, 2015).

Strategy: a combination of program elements or approaches designed to facilitate a targeted change (Sallis, Owen, & Fisher, 2015).

Assumptions

As the researcher, I assumed that participants would respond truthfully to interview questions. I assumed that the purposeful sample selected for this study would provide a rich supply of qualitative data regarding the phenomena being investigated. In addition, I assumed that participants in this study would have some knowledge of school systems of support, such as English language programming, Response to Intervention

(RtI), Positive Behavioral Strategies and Supports (PBSS), and culturally responsive teaching.

Scope and Delimitations

The purpose of this study was to explore secondary school educators' perspectives on acculturation strategies to support Haitian students with disabilities. This focus was chosen due to the absence of current scholarly literature on this topic with this population. The sample in this study satisfied two criteria for participation: (a) a currently licensed and practicing secondary school educator or specialist, and (b) a secondary school educator or specialist currently providing educational services that support Haitian immigrant students with disabilities who are currently enrolled in secondary school. All other secondary school educators and specialists were excluded from participation in the study. In addition to exclusions of study participants, theories most related to the study were not investigated. For example, social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978), stress and coping theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977), and social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) were excluded since they went beyond the scope of the study. Finally, it should be noted that given the unique cultural identity of Haitian students with disabilities, the perspectives on secondary school educators' regarding acculturation strategies to support acculturation of this population may not be applicable to adolescents with other immigrant backgrounds.

Limitations

Five limitations were identified in the study. First, case studies are useful to investigate the interactions of individuals in relation to some phenomenon; however, they are difficult to replicate (Yin, 2017). While this study cannot be replicated, the results of this study may provide greater information for subsequent studies regarding the phenomenon being investigated.

Second, given the voluntary nature of participation in this study, participants may have elected not to answer some of the questions posed to them. The absence of this qualitative data may have affected the richness of data and the depth of insight into secondary school educators' perspectives on acculturation strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Establishing rapport and trust with the participants proved to be an effective means to support fuller discloser of individual experiences regarding the phenomenon being explored and the meaning they constructed from those experiences. In addition, as emphasized by Yin (2017), participants were made aware of the steps that would be taken to ensure their privacy and confidentiality.

Third, purposeful sampling was used to select participants for this study. The use of purposeful sampling can pose issues related to the transferability of findings to similar settings or populations. For example, the subjective and judgmental nature of selecting study participants may have increased researcher bias and may call into question the appropriateness of the sample selected (Yin, 2017). In addition, the small sample selected using purposeful sampling may not have adequately answered the research questions (Yin, 2017). To address the limitations associated with purposeful sampling, efforts were

taken to select participants who could provide rich, detailed information that covered the range of variation in high school educators that support Haitian students with disabilities.

Fourth, educators who lack acculturation or acculturation strategies training designed to support immigrant adolescents may be unable to provide detailed information related to the topic under investigation. A diverse range of study participants who were believed to be knowledgeable of the phenomenon under investigation were recruited to address this limitation.

Finally, this study was conducted with a population of which I am also a member (i.e. secondary school educator). Sharing a professional identity, language, and experiential base with study participants may have impacted participants' responses to the questions posed to them during semistructured interviews and the depth of qualitative data participants chose to provide. Concerns regarding conducting semistructured interviews with participants who I am familiar with were addressed by reinforcing to them the voluntary nature of participation in this study and the maintenance of confidentiality throughout the research process.

Significance

When individuals are separated from their native country, they leave behind their culture, community, and social systems. While these individuals may possess some of the acculturative attributes that are necessary to acculturate into their new cultural environment, they still face the daunting task of restructuring their lives to adapt to a culture that is foreign to them. For example, some immigrant children experience specific struggles with identity as they attempt to acculturate (Birman & Simon, 2014). Despite

these struggles, when precise systems of psychosocial support are implemented, many of the stresses associated with the acculturation process can be mitigated (Wimmer & Soehl, 2014). Furthermore, research studies have identified the positive relationship between successful acculturation and upward social mobility (Brinkerhoff, 2016), improved relationships between adolescents and parents, and respect for authority (Schwartz et al., 2013). While the sociocultural factors associated with acculturation may be similar for immigrant adolescents of differing ethnicities, it is important to note that distinct cultural elements (e.g., values, traditions, beliefs) distinguish Haitian immigrants from any other American immigrant group.

As the Haitian immigrant population continues to grow and spread throughout the United States, conducting a qualitative study at a high school in a northeastern state may provide useful data regarding acculturation strategies to augment support systems not only for Haitian students with disabilities, but also for other cultural groups in other regions across the nation. An exploration into secondary school educators' perspectives on acculturation strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities could also provide a clearer perspective of the processes and practices that bolster or inhibit implementation of academic and behavioral acculturation strategies to foster acculturation. Furthermore, harnessing insight from secondary educators regarding their perspectives on acculturation strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities could promote integration and accommodation for a growing multicultural population that may require additional levels of psychoeducational support.

Summary

Immigration to the United States has steadily increased since 1990. How effectively immigrants integrate themselves into American society has both a social and emotional impact on individuals' well-being. An abundance of acculturation research has focused on immigrant adults and Latino and Asian adolescents, but there is a dearth in research focused on educational strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students, particularly Haitian students with disabilities. To address the gap in the literature, I conducted a qualitative exploratory case study to explore nine secondary school educators' perspectives on acculturation strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities at a high school in the northeastern region of the United States. The findings of this study may provide a clearer perspective of school processes and practices that bolster or inhibit implementation of academic and behavioral acculturation strategies. In addition, qualitative data from the study may reveal school processes and practices that support or constrain integration of Haitian students with disabilities.

This is first of five chapters. Chapter 2 is a review the current scholarly literature pertaining to the study topic and the theoretical framework that grounded the study. Chapter 3 provides a description of the methodology that was used in this study. Chapter 4 describes the data collection and data analysis processes, and research findings. The final provides an analysis and interpretation of the findings, conclusion and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Since 1965, over 50% of the population growth in the United States can be attributed to immigration of foreign-born nationals (Brown, 2015). The purpose of this study was to explore secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities at a secondary school in the northeastern region of the United States. Immigration in the northeastern region and the southeastern portion of Florida accounts for nearly three-quarters of all Haitian immigrants residing in the United States (Department of Homeland Security, 2016). As Haitian immigration rates continue to rise, it is increasingly important that educators have a clear understanding of acculturation and an awareness of acculturation strategies that support the unique academic and nonacademic needs of Haitian immigrant students with disabilities. Secondary school educators increased understanding and awareness of acculturation strategies that support the unique academic and nonacademic needs of Haitian immigrant students with disabilities satisfies the federal mandate emphasized in IDEA (2004) for educational professionals to support the unique characteristics of students with disabilities, ensure their full participation in educational experiences, and promote their independence and self-sufficiency, in and out of school.

The body of research focused on immigrants' acculturation experiences continues to grow; however, limited research exists regarding secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities and their specific social, emotional, and academic needs (Gast, Okamoto, & Feldman, 2017). A lack of understanding of the concept of acculturation and strategies that support

acculturation could stymie the psychological and academic adjustment, and the overall health and well-being of this population of students (Dimitrova, Chasiotis, & Van de Vijver, 2016). In this chapter, I provide a description of the literature search strategy, conceptual framework, and key concepts of the study.

Literature Search Strategy

To contribute scholarly literature to the study that was relevant to the research topic, the following electronic databases were used: Academic Search Complete, Education Source, Education Resources Information Center, Google Scholar. and Sage. The following keywords and phrases were used: *acculturation, adaptation, assimilation, assimilation of immigrants, acculturation orientation, biculturalism, culturally responsive strategies, cultural attachment, cultural identity, ethnic identity, heritage culture, immigrants' self-perspectives, sociocultural adaptation, social adjustment, Haitian immigrants, Haitian students with disabilities, acculturation of immigrant students, strategies to support students with disabilities, acculturative strategies and strategies, and multitiered system of support*. Searches were limited to scholarly literature with a publication date that ranged from 2013 to 2018. However, some scholarly literature published earlier than 2013 was included to support the study's conceptual framework and add intellectual context.

Conceptual Framework

Acculturation is generally understood to be the transition and adaptation process individuals and groups undergo as they adapt to a dominant culture different than their own (Berry, 2005; Morrice, 2014; Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015; Ward & Geeraert,

2016). The transition and adaptation process involves both psychological changes and cultural changes in the individual or group (i.e., cultural identity, group customs) (Han, Berry, & Zheng, 2016). To better understand secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support the transition and adaptation process of Haitian students with disabilities, Berry's (1997) bidimensional acculturation theory was used as the conceptual framework to ground this study.

Berry's bidimensional acculturation theory has been used widely in research to advance the understanding of acculturation on a diverse range of adolescent immigrant populations to include Latinos (Baldwin-White, Kiehne, Umaña-Taylor, & Marsiglia, 2017), Black Caribbean (Ferguson & Bornstein, 2014), and Asian (Choi, Tan, Yasui, & Hahm, 2016). Berry's (1997) conceptual framework of bidimensional acculturation describes immigrants' maintenance of their native cultural identity and adoption of the host countries cultures' practices, traditions, and norms as the two independent determinants that support the acculturation process. Berry (1997) went on to emphasize four acculturation strategies relevant to these two determinants and the acculturation of immigrants into a society and culture different than their own: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization.

As an acculturation strategy, *integration* occurs when an individual or group maintains their native cultural identity and its practices while not only purposefully interacting with individuals of a culture different than their own, but also adopting that cultures' practices, traditions, and norms (Berry, 1997). Integration requires a willingness from both the minority and majority cultures to cultivate a relationship with one another

(Berry, 1997). Thus, the minority culture must be willing to incorporate themselves and their cultural identity into the majority culture (Berry, 1997). Likewise, the majority culture must be willing to allow the minority culture to incorporate themselves and their cultural identity into the majority culture (Berry, 1997). The integration acculturation strategy emphasizes negotiation and the maintenance of a multicultural ideology. Hence, both the minority and majority culture accommodate for each others' cultural differences (i.e. customs, traditions, preferences) (Berry, 1997).

As an acculturation strategy, *assimilation* occurs when an individual or group from the minority culture purposefully abandons their native cultural identity and its practices. Moreover, the individual or group seeks to interact with individuals of a culture different than their own (Berry, 1997). During the assimilation acculturation strategy, individuals and groups from the minority culture experience high levels of cultural contact with the majority culture (Berry, 1997).

As an acculturation strategy, *separation* occurs when an individual or group from the minority culture maintains their native cultural identity and purposefully avoids interacting with individuals of a culture different than their own (Berry, 1997). Consequently, the individual or group from the minority culture chooses not to adopt the cultures' practices, traditions, and norms of the majority culture (Berry, 1997). The separation acculturation strategy emphasizes maintenance of cultural identity over establishing interpersonal relationships with the majority culture (Han et al., 2016).

As an acculturation strategy, *marginalization* occurs when an individual or group of the minority culture is either disinterested in or unable to maintain their native cultural

identity. In addition, the individual or group of the minority culture is either disinterested in or unable to establish or maintain interpersonal relationships with the majority culture (Berry, 1997). Marginalization is often a byproduct of forced assimilation, exclusionary practices, or discrimination by the majority culture towards the minority culture (Berry, 1997). The involuntary separation associated with marginalization can lead to segregation (Berry, 1997).

Of Berry's (1997) four acculturation strategies, acculturation research focused on immigrant adolescents supports integration as the most adaptive acculturation strategy (Antonio & Monteiro, 2015, Berry & Hou, 2016; Ferguson & Bornstein, 2014; Sanchez & Awad, 2016). This assertion is consistent with findings from Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder's (2006) study where the majority of the approximately 5,000 immigrants that participated in the study were found to have adopted an integration acculturation strategy as opposed to adopting an assimilation, separation or marginalization strategy. However, it should be noted that some acculturation research points out that in some instances individual differences and environmental factors may support immigrant adolescents assimilating, separating, or adopting an entirely different dimension of acculturation strategy (Abu-Rayya & Sam, 2017; Antonio & Monteiro, 2015; Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014). This study was based on the assertion of Berry and others that integration is the most adaptive acculturation strategy for most immigrants with or without disabilities (Antonio & Monteiro, 2015, Berry & Hou, 2016; Ferguson & Bornstein, 2014; Sanchez & Awad, 2016).

Literature Review

Studies suggest that a positive school environment has a significant psychosocial impact on adolescents from immigrant backgrounds (Hoti, Heinzmann, Muller, & Buholzer, 2017; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). Schools provide critical developmental, social, and socio-cultural contexts for children. However, supporting the positive social and emotional adjustment of each child within these contexts is a challenging and multi-dimensional process, particularly for immigrant children (Civitillo et al., 2017). Research findings have noted that immigrant versus non-immigrant backgrounds can influence the psychological and sociocultural adjustment of a child (Dimitrova, Chasiotis, & Van de Vijver, 2016; Schachner, 2017). In addition, avoiding cultural differences and varied backgrounds has led to a stunning lack of diversity in both thought and approach within education systems (Roundtree, 2017).

The ability of immigrant students to adjust socially in school is a critical dimension to successful acculturation outcomes (Dimitrova, Chasiotis, & Van de Vijver, 2016). Intervention strategies that include cognitive, behavioral, and affective elements have been noted to facilitate acculturation (Pan, Ng, Young, & Caroline, 2017). Effective facilitation of acculturation was also noted to reduce levels of acculturative stress, psychological distress, negative thoughts, and emotions when participants were exposed to strategies that targeted social and emotional well-being (Pan, Ng, Young, & Caroline, 2017).

The Concept of Acculturation

Acculturation is generally conceptualized as the multi-faceted process individuals and groups experience as their identities and values adapt to a culture that differs from their own (Berry, 2005; Morrice, 2014; Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). The acculturation process includes an individual's ability to simultaneously retain the uniqueness of their distinct culture while embracing the culture of their host country (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). As immigrants adjust to life in the United States and engage in cultural exchanges with Americans, they undergo varying degrees of acculturation. For example, for a Haitian student with a disability, the acculturation process may involve adaptation or surrender of their language, customs (Bornstein, 2017), or dietary habits (Lee, Gao, & Kim, 2015). The degree to which each individual or group integrates or retains their ethnic identity and adopts the culture of their host country is not a static or linear process, but a dynamic one that varies widely within each individual or group (Rogers-Sirin, Ryce, & Sirin, 2014). For example, in their study of Latino and Asian immigrant high school students, Gupta, Rogers-Sirin, Okazaki, Ryce, and Sirin (2014) noted a greater increase in ethnic identity among Asian immigrant high school than Latino immigrant high school students over time.

An increased understanding of contextual factors such ethnic identity, the culture of the immigrant child's educational environment, and systems that make the immigrant child feel supported has been shown to support acculturation and improve children's mental health (Rogers-Sirin et al., 2014). These findings are consistent with Lincoln, Lazarevic, White and Ellis's (2016) study of Somali adolescents where their mental

health and well-being was found to be positively impacted by strategies that focused on reducing acculturative stressors. These acculturative stress relieving strategies included strategies that included language courses, mental health therapies, and cultural supports designed to assist adolescents and their families connect with the majority culture (Lincoln et al., 2016). Similarly, research indicates that systems that target ethnic identity development in immigrant children to support acculturation were found to increase self-esteem, coping skills, and resiliency (Huq, Stein, & Gonzalez, 2016). Conversely, diminished ethnic identity development in immigrant children was correlated with depressive symptoms in immigrant children (Huq et al., 2016).

While many immigrant children and adolescents are able to adapt into a new culture, those who are not able to adapt into a new culture may experience a range of internalizing and externalizing mental health behaviors (Rogers-Sirin et al., 2014). For example, immigrant children and adolescents who struggle to adapt into a new culture have been found to experience mental health behaviors such as depressive symptoms (Schwartz et al., 2015b); prosocial behaviors (Schwartz et al., 2015a); or substance use (Unger, Schwartz, Huh, Soto, & Baezconde-Garbanati, 2014). Acculturative stress has also been noted in some immigrant children and adolescents as they adapt to a new culture (Singh, Schulz, Neighbors, & Griffith, 2017). Acculturative stress entails behaviors and experiences disruptive to an individual and the affiliated cultural group after the person immigrates (Berry, 1997). For adolescent immigrants, this stress can impact their psychosocial functioning. For example, an adolescent immigrant undergoing acculturative stress may experience identity confusion (Grigsby et al., 2018), a desire to

isolate themselves from native peers (Ramos, Cassidy, Reicher, & Haslam, 2015), or insecurity (Stoessel, 2014). Furthermore, acculturative stress can be exacerbated by perceived discrimination, language difficulties, financial issues, communication difficulties, and lack of social support (Hasmi, Gross, & Scott-Young, 2014).

Haitian Students with Disabilities

Of the 42 nations in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti is the poorest economically (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). Based on socioeconomic indicators such as life expectancy, educational attainment, and national income, Haiti is considered to be a country of low human development (United Nations Development Program, 2013). Haiti is ranked 161/186 countries due to its aged and damaged infrastructure and struggles to initiate and sustain development projects (United Nations Development Program, 2013).

Failing political, economic and social structures in Haiti has led to an increase in migration of Haitians to the United States (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). Between 1990 and 2015, the Haitian immigrant population in the United States rose by nearly 300% (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). Consequently, the United States has a larger Haitian immigrant population than any other nation (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). In 2015, approximately three-quarters of a million Haitian immigrants resided in United States (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). The largest population of Haitian immigrants resided in southern Florida (Cyrus et al., 2016). Given the sparse empirical literature on Haitian students with disabilities, data on the number of Haitian students with disabilities currently receiving special education services in the United States and their disability classifications is not available.

Only one empirical study was found in the literature that specifically targeted Haitian students with disabilities. This study explored the perception of 10 Haitian parents regarding their child with a disability, and the school system that supported their child (Gregoire & Cramer, 2015). The findings of this study indicated that Haitian parents struggled to understand the eligibility process for provision of special education services and supports to their child, the components of their child's individualized education program, and procedural safeguards under IDEA.

Despite the dearth of literature specifically targeting Haitian students with disabilities, a few empirical studies that investigated acculturation issues among Haitian adolescents without disabilities were found (Brunnet, Bolaséll, Weber, & Kristensen 2018; Dévieux, 2016; Mcmahon, 2013). In addition, a handful of studies were found for public health professionals that addressed the impact of the acculturation process on the physical and mental health of Haitian women and their families (Cyrus et al., 2016; Guerda & Smith, 2013; Tovar et al., 2014; Tovar et al., 2013). Significantly more periodicals, reports, and academic journals were found on Haitian adolescents; however, they pertained to Haitian adolescents' psychological responses to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti (e.g., Cadichon, Lignier, Cénat, & Derivois, 2017; Celeste, 2018; Derivois, Cénat, Joseph, Karray, & Chahraoui, 2017; Derivois, Mérisier, Cenat, & Castelot, 2014).

Federal Guidelines that Govern Strategies for Haitian Students with Disabilities

Studies indicate that not all immigrant groups adopt the same acculturation strategy. Thus, the acculturation process may vary by immigrant group (Bartlett, Mendenhall, & Ghaffar-Kucher, 2017; Sun, Hoyt, Brockberg, Lam, & Tiwari, 2016; Telzer, Yuen,

Gonzales, & Fuligni, 2016; Zane & Ku, 2014). The acculturation process among

immigrant groups has been noted to be affected by cultural factors such as generational

status (Hernández, Robins, Widaman, & Conger, 2016), religious identification (Phalet,

Fleischmann, & Hillekens, 2018), and linguistic ability (Patel, Barrera, Strambler,

Muñoz, & Macciomei, 2016).

Haitian students with disabilities are guaranteed the right to a free appropriate

public education (IDEA, 2004). Thus, the provision of special education and related

services that are specifically designed to meet the unique educational needs of each

Haitian student with an identified disability is of utmost importance (IDEA, 2004). The

appropriateness and individualization of these special education and related services not

only allows Haitian students with disabilities to remain in the most inclusive instructional

setting possible while simultaneously receiving appropriate levels of support, but also

increases post secondary education, employment, and independent living opportunities

(IDEA, 2004).

Local education agencies are charged with determining appropriate positive

behavioral strategies, supports, and other strategies for children with disabilities to

improve academic and behavioral outcomes, and their educational experience (IDEA,

2004). Furthermore, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior should be

considered when determining the educational needs of a child with a disability (IDEA,

2004). To that end, Haitian students with disabilities should be exposed to strategies that

vary in academic, social and emotional levels (Nelson, Oliver, Hebert, & Bohaty, 2015).

The intensity of the intervention provided to Haitian students with disabilities should be

based on individualized level of need and consider the relationship that environmental factors may contribute to their behavior (Nelson et al., 2015). The need for schools to integrate acculturation strategies that support inclusive educational experiences for Haitian students with disabilities is essential to support positive future outcomes. Moreover, Section 300.320(a)(3) of IDEA (2004) mandates that educators from local education agencies are involved in the process of determining appropriate positive behavioral strategies and supports and other strategies for children with a disability to enhance their educational experience. This section of IDEA (2004) reinforces the need for schools to continue to integrate more culturally appropriate acculturation strategies that support inclusive educational experiences for Haitian students with disabilities.

Culture and Teacher Perspectives

Slightly over 80% of public-school teachers are Caucasian women (Taie & Goldring, 2017). In addition, nearly 50% of the public-school student population is non-White (Taie & Goldring, 2017). Thus, many public-school teachers are unfamiliar with the cultural norms of the students they teach (Trueba, Jacobs, & Kirton, 2014). Systematically implementing educational structures and behavioral and academic strategies that support students with disabilities has been shown to improve students' academic performance and narrow the achievement gap between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers (DeVries & Tkatchov, 2017). Academic and behavioral strategies stand a greater likelihood of success when teachers remain committed and resolute to intervention implementation and sustainment (Isbell & Szabo, 2014). However, cultural incongruence between teachers and the immigrant students they

educate has been found to influence teachers' perspectives and decision-making (Rogers-Sirin, Ryce, & Sirin, 2014). In a study of 343 teachers, Wang et al. (2017) found that teachers were more likely to implement an intervention with fidelity when they understood the purpose of the intervention and how to put that intervention into instructional practice. Similarly, Steinbach and Stoeger (2016) noted that the more positive a teacher's attitude was towards an intervention the greater their intrinsic desire was to plan, implement, and evaluate that intervention.

Educators should continually be monitoring their professional practice to ensure their instructional and disciplinary practices address the diverse academic and mental health needs of their students and promotes an environment that fosters inclusion (Council for Exceptional Children Special Education Professional Ethical Principles, 2016). The absence of a commitment to inclusion and culturally responsive instructional strategies may not only leave immigrant students with a lack of connectivity to the content that is being taught in the classroom, but also a diminished feeling of positive connectivity to the school as a whole. Thus, it is critical that educators are mindful of how their attitudes towards students from racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds different than their own influences their decision making and actions (Staats, 2015).

Despite the sparsity in empirical research regarding Haitian students with disabilities, an abundance of empirical research exists that highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between teachers' perception of culture and student culture. For example, Yurtseven and Altun (2015) used a mixed-methods approach to

explore teachers' perspectives on intercultural sensitivity and instructional practices that support multiculturalism. The sample for this mixed-methods study consisted of 220 students participating in a teacher preparation course. Qualitative data collected using questionnaires and a sensitivity scale noted that participants lacked intercultural sensitivity and multicultural awareness. While the study's results indicated no differences between male and female participants, these results emphasize the affect that teacher's attitudes towards other cultures may have on the strategies they implement to support Haitian students with disabilities.

Similarly, Karatas and Oral (2015) conducted a qualitative study to investigate teachers' perspectives on culturally responsive education. The most prevalent themes noted from the 25 teachers interviewed were teachers' belief in the importance of students maintaining their cultural values, the value of support systems that promote cultural diversity, and adequate teacher training to deliver a culturally responsive education to students. These findings emphasize how teacher attitudes may influence their ability to actualize school opportunities that promote student integration and acculturation strategies to support Haitian students with disabilities. These findings are consistent with several other research studies that identified a correlation between determinants such as students' cultural background, immigrant status or immigrant generational status and teachers' lower academic and behavioral expectations (Blanchard & Muller, 2015; Fitzpatrick, Côté-Lussier, Pagani, & Blair, 2015; Hernández, Robins, Widaman, & Conger, 2016; Lewis et al. 2018; Pagani & Blair, 2015; Perreira & Spees, 2015).

Strategies for Haitian Students with Disabilities

Educational systems are charged with preparing and creating learning environments that adapt and are responsive to the unique educational needs of an ever-changing public school student demographic. Policy makers and educational researchers have focused on school's using collaborative decision-making processes to target the appropriate selection, use and effective implementation of strategies to improve student academic and behavioral performance (Brown-Chidsey & Bickford, 2016). To that end, students of varying academic, social and emotional levels have access to strategies that vary in intensity based on their individualized level of need (Nelson et al., 2015).

While the primary responsibility of most local education agencies is to plan and deliver instruction to students, local education agencies also bear the responsibility of identifying appropriate group or individualized instructional or behavioral strategies that fosters student learning (Castro-Villarreal, Rodriguez, & Moore, 2014). Immigrants who are able to preserve their cultural identity while integrating the cultural norms of their host country into their lives are more psychologically well-adjusted than those who forgo involvement in either culture (Shafaei, Nejati, & Abd Razak, 2018). Furthermore, the social context of the school also impacts the acculturation of immigrant youth. For example, in a sample of immigrant adolescent students ($N = 396$), Schachner, Noack, Van de Vijver, and Eckstein (2016) found that school practices that fostered inclusion, equality, and maintenance of students' cultural identities were found to have a positive effect on student acculturation. On the basis of these studies, it may be expected that implementation of intervention efforts that provide students such as Haitian students with

disabilities with more individualized academic or behavioral support may mediate or
moderate their acculturation experience. Previous research suggests that academic and
behavioral strategies such as English learner literacy development, Response to
Intervention (RtI), Positive Behavioral Strategies and Supports (PBIS), and culturally
responsive teaching have been used by schools across the United States to link
acculturation to students' needs for more individualized academic or behavioral support
(Islam, 2017; Kim, Wang, Chen, Shen, & Hou, 2015; Kumar, Karabenick, & Burgoon,
2015; Peterson, Villarreal, & Castro, 2017).

    English learners. English learners (ELs) have been noted to be among the fastest
growing populations of students in American schools over the past several decades
(Snyder, Witmer, & Schmitt, 2017). ELs make up nearly 10% of the student population
in the United States (Snyder et al., 2017). To support the cultural and linguistic needs of a
growing EL population, such as Haitian students with disabilities, the impetus in public
education has been towards language and literacy development of immigrant students
(Gándara & Escamilla, 2017). Language and literacy development strategies have been
designed and implemented in schools to support English learners so they can access the
same general education curriculum and have the same educational opportunities as native
English-speaking students (Avineri et al., 2015). However, it should be noted that nearly
three-quarters of all ELs speak Spanish (Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). Given
this large concentration of Spanish speaking ELs, the majority of linguistic strategies
implemented in schools are targeted towards native Spanish speaking students (Gándara,
2015). Consequently, educators struggle to teach in the language of their non-Spanish

speaking ELs (Gándara, 2015). In addition, the linguistic strategies available to both educators and non-Spanish speaking ELs are minimal (Gándara, 2015). Despite these programmatic challenges, schools are required to provide targeted individualized language and linguistic supports, aids, and modifications to support ELs with disabilities (IDEA, 2004)

For ELs with disabilities, lack of proficiency in the language of the host country may affect their academic performance (Gándara & Escamilla, 2017). Studies of ELs and their native English-speaking peers across all academic content areas have indicated a positive relationship between language proficiency and academic achievement (López, McEneaney, & Nieswandt, 2015; Olson, Matuchniak, Chung, Stumpf, & Farkas, 2017; Prevoo, Malda, Mesman, & van IJzendoorn, 2016). For example, in their study of English proficiency in international students, Martirosyan, Hwang, & Wanjohi (2015) found students' increased English proficiency was positively correlated to higher student grade point averages. Other evidence also shows the importance of ELs maintaining their native language (Santibañez & Zárate, 2014). Improved school outcomes have been noted among immigrant students who are bilingual (Prevoo et al., 2016). Santibañez and Zárate (2014) reported similar findings where immigrant students from Asian and Latino families who chose to abandon their native language were less likely to attend college than immigrant students from Asian and Latino families who chose to maintain their native language. Similarly, increased language adaptation has also been found to be positively correlated to improved self-efficacy (Titzmann & Jugert, 2015).

Response to Intervention. The key concept behind Response to Intervention (RtI) is to provide students with appropriate intervention to address their academic deficits and provide behavioral support as early as possible (Higgins Averill, Baker, & Rinaldi, 2014). RtI is a multitiered early intervention and prevention system of support (Higgins Averill et al., 2014). Under the RtI model, after an area of need is identified, an appropriate level of research-based intervention is selected and implemented (Turse & Albrecht, 2015). The effects of the intervention are then evaluated by analyzing collected data, and if necessary, changes are then made either to the intervention or its intensity (Turse & Albrecht, 2015). The RtI model has several relative strengths: (a) universal screening; (b) responsiveness to the needs of struggling learners; (c) varying levels of intervention aligned to students' need; (d) continuous monitoring of student progress; and 5) team-based approach to decision making (Castro-Villarreal, Rodriguez, & Moore, 2014).

The strengths of the RtI model are consistent with Katsiaficas, Suárez-Orozco, Sirin, and Gupta's (2013) study that supports the need for schools to implement culturally responsive instructional and behavioral strategies. Katsiaficas et al. (2013) investigated the relationship between perspectives on academic and emotional support and acculturative stress. The sample for this study was comprised of 304 immigrant adolescent students. The researchers found that although to varying degrees, the relation between acculturative stress and the social and emotional well-being of both first and second-generation immigrant youth was mediated by perspectives on academic and emotional support.

While the benefits of RtI are plentiful, there are limitations to this model. Researchers suggest that variability in teachers' implementation of strategies may result in inconsistent academic and behavioral student performance results (Castro-Villarreal et al., 2014; McGoey et al., 2014; Wertz, Carpenter, & Fewell, 2014. Castillo et al. (2016) expressed similar concerns over the lack of training and supports that teachers receive to effectively implement and sustain instructional practices. McGoey et al. (2014) also investigated factors that hinder teachers' ability to implement behavioral strategies. In their quantitative study, McGoey et al., (2014) suggested that insufficient training, access to resources, time constraints, and lack of technical support were a hindrance to teachers' ability to implement behavioral strategies. Similarly, Castro-Villarreal et al. (2014) explored teacher perspectives about implementing a school-wide RtI system of support. They noted four major themes that hindered school-wide RtI implementation: (a) uncertainty about the purpose of the process, (b) lack of time, training, and teacher support, (c) inefficient intervention process, and (d) complicated documentation process (Castro-Villarreal et al., 2014). Furthermore, the RtI model has been shown to lack clarity regarding how school teams should tailor future strategies for students when strategies that have been effective in the past fail (Vaughn, Zumeta, Wanzek, & Klingner, 2014).

Research suggests that the RtI model may support some of the academic deficits and provide behavioral support for Haitian students with disabilities. However, empirical studies identify barriers that inhibit teachers' ability to effectively implement RtI. Thus, uncertainty remains in how effective the RtI model is in providing culturally specific strategies for Haitian students with disabilities.

Positive behavioral strategies and supports. PBIS are implemented to address inappropriate behaviors by teaching and reinforcing replacement behaviors (Wilson, 2015). PBIS is grounded in the use of evidence-based behavior related practices to improve student behavior and the educational environment (Nelson, Oliver, Hebert, & Bohaty, 2015). In alignment with the foundational principles of a multitiered system of support, PBIS provides differentiated strategies for all students based on their individualized level of need (Nelson et al., 2015). PBIS uses three levels of support: Tier 1 supports (universal), Tier 2 supports (targeted group), and Tier 3 supports (individualized) (Nelson et al., 2015). Furthermore, PBIS examines the relationship that environmental factors play in student behavior (Nelson, 2015). Despite the notable benefits of PBIS, there are some limitations for Haitian students with disabilities. PBIS often relies on discipline data more so than direct observation (Putnam & Knoster, 2016). Primarily using quantitative data to evaluate student behavior could subsequently lead to inaccurate data being produced regarding the targeted student behavior(s) (Putnam & Knoster, 2016). Wilson (2015) also pointed out that the school's chosen targeted PBIS behavior(s) may be incongruent with the sociocultural values of the larger student body. For Haitian students with disabilities, cultural incongruence with the values of the majority could result in resentment not only towards the behavioral intervention, but also the minority population the behavioral intervention may support (Wilson, 2015). In addition, PBIS does not provide mental health support (Wilson, 2015).

Like PBIS, multitiered system of support models are designed to provide an effective level of support to address the academic and/or behavioral needs of students

(Brown-Chidsey & Bickford, 2016). While varying multitiered system of support models exist, Haitian students with disabilities benefit by being able to be exposed to strategies that vary in intensity based on their demonstrated need. Furthermore, they are able to remain in the most inclusive instructional setting possible while simultaneously receiving the appropriate level of tiered support.

Culturally responsive teaching. A salient feature of successful immigrant students is their ability to integrate into the dominant culture of their given educational setting (Blanchet-Cohen & Reilly, 2017). In addition, adolescents should to be exposed to curriculum that teaches them societal norms (Neuman & Guterman, 2017). However, immigrant students who are unsuccessful at making such cultural adaptations are at an increased risk of being academically unsuccessful (Blanchet-Cohen & Reilly, 2017). To support these necessary cultural shifts the need for teaching and instruction that is responsive to students' culture is emphasized in literature (Adair, 2015; Blanchet-Cohen & Reilly, 2017; Gagné, Schmidt, & Markus,2017; Jaffe-Walter & Lee, 2018; Yuan & Jiang, 2018). Culturally responsive teachers exhibit cultural dispositions, such as an awareness that social and cultural experiences shape individuals' worldviews (Durden, Dooley, & Truscott, 2016), a respect for diversity (Karataş & Oral, 2015), a knowledge about their students cultural and family backgrounds (Murtadha-Watts & Stoughton, 2017), and designing lessons that are culturally relevant (Brown & Crippen, 2017). This is consistent with a study by Asendorpf and Motti-Stefanidi (2017) that examined the affect of peer acceptance or rejection based on immigrant status. Results of the study indicated that the relationship between immigrant students and their host country peers

improved with increased interaction between the two groups and immigrant students' engagement with the cultural norms of the host country (Asendorpf & Motti-Stefanidi, 2017). These findings draw attention to the relevance that culturally responsive teaching strategies could have in improving relations between immigrants and nonimmigrants. In the absence of cultural responsiveness, teachers may rely on their individual socially constructed notions of various cultures to not only instruct, but also discipline immigrant students such as Haitian students with disabilities (Larson, Pas, Bradshaw, Rosenberg, & Day-Vines, 2018).

Summary

Acculturation is widely accepted as a bidimensional process that involves the intercultural contact that occurs when individuals and groups from different cultural backgrounds meet. Individuals and groups who are able to integrate (i.e., maintain cultural identity and adopt host country values, traditions, and norms) have fewer cultural adjustment difficulties and mental health concerns. An abundance of research exists indicating the importance of the acculturation process to immigrant adolescents; however, the majority of that research is targeted towards the acculturation of Latino and Asian adolescents. A scarcity of research exists regarding acculturation of immigrant adolescents of Haitian background, particularly Haitian students with disabilities who reside in the northeastern region of the United States. In addition, the perspectives of secondary school educators' regarding strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities is not addressed in current literature. Acculturation is a bidimensional process that requires exploration from a myriad of cultural perspectives.

Thus, exploring the perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation strategies to support acculturation of a lesser studied ethnic minority group, like Haitian students with disabilities, could support creation of strategies for planned intervention to enhance cross-cultural contact and social change between immigrants and their host country.

In Chapter 3, I provide a detailed description of the research methodology that was employed in this study and contributes to closing the gap in literature regarding perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory case study was to explore secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities at a high school in the northeastern region of the United States. In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology that was used in this study: the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, ethical considerations, and how trustworthiness will be established. I also describe the qualitative techniques that were used for data collection and analysis.

Research Design and Rationale

This study focused on the perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. The first qualitative research question was: What are secondary school educators' perspectives on acculturation? The second qualitative research question was: What are secondary school educators' perspectives on the relationship between acculturation strategies that support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities and student achievement?

A qualitative exploratory case study methodology was employed to gain a fuller understanding of the perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation and strategies that support Haitian students with disabilities. Case studies are appropriate when the research is exploratory in nature and the aim of the study is to analyze the context and processes of the phenomenon (Yin, 2017). In addition, case studies are a

particularly valuable investigative method when a phenomenon is not well understood or supported by previous literature (Yin, 2017).

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the goal of the researcher is to be an objective instrument of data collection (Yin, 2017). For this study, my role was that of facilitator for semistructured interviews with study participants. Although the study participants were also my colleagues, I did not have power or authority over the, which could have negatively affected the data collection process.

Several means were employed to manage researcher bias. First, while interacting with the participants throughout the data collection and analysis process, I strived to be as open and neutral as possible. Second, I selected a diverse range of study participants to garner a broadened prospective of the phenomenon being investigated. Third, to bolster the qualitative integrity of the study, I provided study participants with written correspondence that described the nature and purpose of the study. Fourth, I reinforced to participants that all data collected would be safeguarded to ensure that their confidentiality was maintained. Finally, I emphasized that their participation in this study was voluntary.

Participant Selection

The participants for this study satisfied two criteria for participation. First, they were currently licensed and practicing secondary school educators or specialists. Second, they were secondary school educators or specialists who were currently providing educational services that supported Haitian immigrant students with disabilities who were

currently enrolled in secondary school. An eligibility criteria screening form was used to ensure that prospective participants met these predetermined inclusion criteria.

Purposeful sampling was used in this study as the qualitative approach to case selection. As a nonrandom sampling strategy, the use of purposeful sampling enhanced the likelihood that I recruited a diverse range of study participants who were knowledgeable of the phenomenon being investigated. Moreover, the study participants I select were likely to provide rich, unique perspectives of the phenomenon being investigated (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015).

While quantitative research is used to search for patterns in numerical data, qualitative research is used to illuminate deeper meaning or multiple meanings in textual data (Fugard & Potts, 2015). In addition, mathematical calculations cannot be used to determine an adequate sample size for a qualitative study (Fugard & Potts, 2015). For example, in a qualitative case study, an individual or small group of individuals may provide an adequate sample to equip the researcher with ample rich, meaningful data to help the elucidate the phenomenon being investigated (Patton, 2015). The more information (i.e. relevant to the phenomenon being investigated) the study participants can provide, the fewer the number of study participants needed (Patton, 2015). To that end, a combined total of nine educators participated in this study to provide rich, meaningful data into secondary school educators' perspectives on acculturation strategies that support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities.

Written permission was obtained from the appropriate administration authority of the secondary school at which the study was conducted. Thereafter, I sent electronic

correspondence that described the nature and purpose of the study to secondary school educators. For those willing to participate in the study, steps to contact me were included in the electronic correspondence. A mutually agreeable date and time was coordinated between the prospective study participants and me to review and complete an eligibility criteria screening protocol. After determining prospective participants' eligibility for inclusion in the study, informed consent was obtained from each study participant. A mutually agreeable date and time was then coordinated to conduct study participants' semistructured interviews. Semistructured interviews were held in the local public library conference room or a mutually agreed upon location outside of each secondary educators' classroom or schoolwork space.

Instrumentation

An exploratory approach was used to investigate secondary school educators' perspectives on acculturation strategies that support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Conducting semistructured interviews was the sole data collection tool used for this study. Semistructured interviews are useful for collecting qualitative data regarding the lived experiences of individuals in relation to a phenomenon (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Individual semistructured interview sessions were conducted privately with nine educators to add depth to research pertaining to the perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation and strategies that support Haitian students with disabilities. A researcher developed interview protocol was developed to structure each qualitative interview and generate expansive responses from participants. Previous studies relating to acculturation were reviewed to develop the interview protocol

(Coronel & Gómez-Hurtado, 2015; Hilburn, 2015; Hilburn, Rong, Parkhouse, & Turner, 2015). Seven interview questions were developed that elicited expansive responses from secondary school educators (see Appendix B). Content validity of the interview protocol was established by analysis of the protocol by five secondary educators not participating in the study, but familiar with the phenomenon being investigated. Final questions for the interview protocol consisted of those agreed upon by the majority of secondary school educators. Semistructured interviews were audiotaped to ensure participants' views were completely and accurately captured.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Written permission was obtained from the Director of Human Resources & School Climate who oversees the secondary school at which the study was conducted. No further steps were taken toward data collection until approval was obtained from Walden University's Institutional Review Board. Walden University's approval number for this study was 01-22-19-0638165. After approval was obtained from Walden University's Institutional Review Board and prior to data collection, electronic correspondence was sent to secondary school educators. The electronic correspondence described the nature and purpose of the study. For those willing to participate in the study, steps to contact me were included in the electronic correspondence. A mutually agreeable date and time was coordinated between the prospective study participants and me to review and complete an eligibility criteria screening protocol (see Appendix A). After determining prospective participants' eligibility for inclusion in the study, informed consent was obtained from each study participant. Study participants were reminded that they voluntarily agreed to

participate in one 30-minute interview and a 5-10-minute member checking activity following the interview that would allow them the opportunity to review, add or edit the information they provided to the interviewer. The interview was held at a mutually agreed upon date, time, and location for the study participants and researcher. Study participants were also made aware that interview sessions would be audiotaped, I would be taking notes during the interview, and steps would be taken to ensure their privacy and confidentiality.

Data Analysis Plan

Codes are descriptive labels assigned by the qualitative researcher to illuminate various parts of information that relate to particular points made by the research participant (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). After audiotapes from interviews were transcribed verbatim, an open-coding process was employed by the researcher to examine interview data. Detailed examination and reexamination of codes was then be carried out by the researcher to draw nearer to find an integrated fit or link between codes. NVivo 11 software was then be used to organize and analyze interview data. Three constructs of Berry's (1997) bidimensional theory of acculturation were used to guide the organization and analysis of interview data: secondary school educators' perspectives on the various dimensions of acculturation, how secondary school educators' role influences their perspective of acculturation, and the influence of educator training or support on secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation. The integrated linking of codes or nodes created coherent themes pertaining to the various aspects of the phenomenon under investigation (Saldaña, 2016). Thematic coding was

then used to analyze the two areas of inquiry that relate to secondary school educators' perspectives on acculturation and acculturation strategies that support Haitian students with disabilities. Discrepant cases that did not support or contradicted themes that emerged during data analysis were either recoded or the original information was reviewed with the participant for accuracy. If the discrepant case was still unresolved further examination of the data may have identified researcher bias or design flaw. If no biases or design flaws were noted, discrepant cases were included in the findings section of the study.

Trustworthiness

Several strategies were employed to establish trustworthiness in the findings of this study. Credibility and dependability reflect the idea that the research findings in this study were a true representation of the perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation strategies that support Haitian students with disabilities. Three specific validation strategies were used in this study to establish credibility and dependability in the findings: peer debriefing, member checks, and data triangulation.

Peer debriefing allowed me to discuss and review the methodology, analysis and interpretations of the research with educators who were not directly associated with the study. To that end, two secondary school educators with at least one qualitative research experience acted as peer debriefers for this study. Confidentiality of information was maintained by each peer debriefer completing and signing a confidentiality agreement.

Member checking allowed study participants to evaluate the interpretation of the data collected by the researcher (Anney, 2014). Thus, after each semistructured

interview, I reviewed the information gathered with each participant to validate its accuracy. At that time, each participant had the opportunity to affirm or refute that the information I recorded accurately reflected their perspective. After all data was analyzed, I sent a draft of the findings to each participant to allow them to check the researcher's interpretation of their data used in the findings.

Nine secondary school educators were interviewed to investigate their perspectives on acculturation strategies that support Haitian students with disabilities. Collecting data from regular education educators, special education educators, transition specialists, a school counselor, and a school psychologist enhanced the credibility of the findings. Additionally, the findings would be a representation of several differing points of view regarding the phenomenon under study.

Thick description and purposeful sampling were used in this study to establish transferability of data. Detailed descriptions of secondary school educators' perspectives were provided to enhance the fit and possible transfer of this data to other educational contexts. In addition, regular education educators, special education educators, transition specialists, a school counselor, and a school psychologist were selected to provide greater insight into perspectives on acculturation strategies that support Haitian students with disabilities.

Confirmability in qualitative inquiry is the extent to which the qualitative data supports the interpretations and findings of the study (Anney, 2014). To establish confirmability in this study, a clear audit trail was maintained. Detailed record keeping throughout the research process not only enhanced confidence in the findings of this

study, but also supported replication of investigation into this phenomenon by other researchers.

Ethical Procedures

Several ethical procedures were adhered to throughout this study to ensure the appropriate treatment of study participants and data. Written informed consent was obtained from each study participant. The written informed consent form provided study participants with an explanation of the purpose of the study, procedures for participation in the study, voluntary nature of participation in the study, and risks and benefits of participation in the study. Tokens of appreciation were not given to study participants for their participation in this study. Participation in this study did not require any experiments to be conducted or study participants to undergo any form of testing.

The identities of individual participants were not shared. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also were not shared. I did not use personal information for any purpose outside of this study. Several means were used to secure collected data, such as: properly disposing, destroying, or deleting study data; limiting access to identifiable information; storing data within a locked location in my home, and assigning security codes to computerized records. Data will be kept for a period of 5 years, as required by the university.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I provided a detailed description of the research methodology that was employed in this study to investigate the perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with

disabilities. A qualitative exploratory case study methodology was employed to gain

fuller understanding of this phenomenon. Purposeful sampling was used in this study as

the qualitative approach to case selection. As the researcher, I was the primary data

collection instrument. An interview protocol was also used as a tool to structure

interviews with study participants. Questioning was used during interviews that

attempted to generate expansive responses from study participants and support the

collection of rich, meaningful data for analysis. To establish validity and reliability in the

data collected, this study was conducted in a manner that employed several strategies to

address critical elements of trustworthiness and ethics in qualitative research. In Chapter

4, I present the data collection and data analysis processes, and research findings

regarding perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation strategies to

support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities.

Chapter 4: Results

Chapter 4 contains the data collection and data analysis processes, along with the

research findings with respect to the two research questions presented in Chapter 1: What

are secondary school educators' perspectives on acculturation? What acculturation

strategies do secondary school educators use to support acculturation of Haitian students

with disabilities and enhance their achievement? These research questions sought to

deepen understanding of the perspectives of secondary school educators regarding

acculturation strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Semi

structured interviews were audiotaped to support accurate transcription. A member

checking activity followed each interview to verify that the information recorded by the

researcher accurately reflected participants' perspectives. An open-coding process was

used by the researcher to examine interview data. The integrated linking of codes or

nodes created coherent themes that pertained to each research question and the various

perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation strategies to support

acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities.

Setting

To ensure privacy during data collection and minimize any personal or

organizational conditions that could influence participants, semi structured interviews

were not conducted in any district school building or office. Thus, the research setting for

this study that was mutually agreed upon by the research participants and the researcher

was a local public library conference room. The participants for this study were

secondary school educators or educational specialists: (a) who held a current license as a

secondary school educator or educational specialist for the state of Delaware, (b) who were currently employed in a Delaware secondary school as a school educator or educational specialist, and (c) who were currently providing educational services to support Haitian students with disabilities who are currently enrolled in secondary school.

Data Collection

Semistructured interviews were used to gather qualitative data from nine secondary school educators. After meeting the researcher at a local public library conference room and prior to the interviews taking place, participants were reminded that they had voluntarily agreed to participate in one 30-minute interview and a 5-10 minute member checking activity following the interview that would allow them the opportunity to add to or otherwise edit the information they provided.. All interviews and member checking activities were conducted within the expected time frame. After all data were analyzed, a draft of the findings was sent to each participant to allow them to check the researcher's interpretation of their data used in the findings.

All interview sessions were audiotaped. Research participants were also informed that the researcher would be taking notes during the interview. Codes were used to disguise research participants' identities to ensure that the data collected did not contain any information that could be used to identify research participants.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the qualitative interview data collected began with summarizing participants' responses relative to the study's two research questions. Qualitative interview data was then transcribed. To support analysis of the data, transcribed

interviews were then imported into NVivo 12 qualitative data analysis software and examined to search for connecting ideas and interrelating patterns that could be identified within the semistructured interviews. Connecting ideas and interrelated patterns relevant to the two research questions were identified within the responses of the nine research participants and entered in NVivo 12 qualitative data analysis software as nodes or subfolders related to each node. Connecting ideas and interrelated patterns were then placed into themes related acculturation and strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Four broad themes emerged from analysis of the transcripts of the nine participants and the nodes that were identified: (a) educators' understanding of acculturation, (b) importance of cultural maintenance, (c) educator professional development targeted towards acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities, and (d) school-based support. Tables were then manually created to organize and display each theme that emerged from analysis of the data.

The educators' understanding of acculturation category addressed research participants' awareness of the term acculturation and two of the processes associated with acculturation. This category was divided into three levels of educator awareness or subcategories: (a) Level 1 or not aware, (b) Level 2 or somewhat aware and, (c) Level 3 or very much aware. Research participants who were either unfamiliar with the term acculturation or the two of the processes associated with acculturation, as developed by Berry (1997), were coded in the Level 1 or not aware subcategory. Research participants who had some degree or measure of familiarity with the term acculturation or the two of the processes associated with acculturation, as developed by Berry (1997), were coded in

the Level 2 or somewhat aware subcategory. Research participants who had a thorough understanding of the term acculturation or the two of the processes associated with acculturation, as developed by Berry (1997), were coded in the Level 3 or very much aware subcategory.

The importance of cultural maintenance category addressed research participants' recognition of the importance of Haitian students with disabilities retaining or preserving their cultural values to academic achievement. This category was divided into three levels of importance or subcategories: (a) Level 1 or not important, (b) Level 2 or moderately important, and (c) Level 3 or very important. Research participants who saw no benefit in Haitian students with disabilities retaining or preserving their cultural values to academic achievement were coded in the Level 1 or not important subcategory. Research participants who saw some benefit in Haitian students with disabilities retaining or preserving their cultural values to academic achievement were coded in the Level 2 or moderately important subcategory. Research participants who saw substantial benefit in Haitian students with disabilities retaining or preserving their cultural values to academic achievement were coded in the Level 3 or very important subcategory.

The educator professional development category focused on the preparation, training or support research participants received to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. This category was divided into two levels of preparation, training or support, or subcategories: (a) Level 1 or no preparation, training or support at all, and (b) Level 2 or some preparation, training or support. Research participants who

responded that they received any preparation, training or support regarding Haitian students with disabilities were coded in the Level 2 or some preparation subcategory.

The school-based support category was not divided into levels. However, this category addressed two aspects of academic and behavioral strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities and enhance their achievement. First, this category focused on research participants' views regarding the effect of academic and behavioral strategies on acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Second, this category focused on specific acculturation strategies that research participants viewed as important to enhance achievement of Haitian students with disabilities.

Results

Research Question 1

Participants' responses to Interview Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 aligned with the first research question of this study. Participants' responses to Question 1, noted in Table 1, indicated that the majority of participants had some knowledge of acculturation. The common view noted amongst participants was that acculturation involved differing cultures coming in contact with one another, individuals' blending or integrating. Several participants defined acculturation in terms of the integration of two cultures, maintenance of cultural norms, or adopting practices of the dominant culture. However, two differing definitions of acculturation also emerged. For example, Participant 2 defined acculturation as "assimilation of a culture into another culture." Participant 7 defined acculturation as "assimilation to a different culture, typically the dominant one."

Participants' responses to Question 2, noted in Table 1, indicated that a variety of perspectives were expressed when participants were asked to compare and contrast the acculturation processes of integration and assimilation. Participant 3 and Participant 5 defined integration as "falling into a societal structure, fitting in, and being physically present." While Participant 2, Participant 4, and Participant 8 defined integration as "blending into our culture while still maintaining the integrity of their culture, including your cultural beliefs and processes along with the cultural systems that are set in place, and adapting to a new culture or area while holding part of your identity." A recurrent perspective among the majority of participants' responses was that assimilation involves adopting the cultural norms of the dominant society. Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 8 felt that assimilation is associated with "dropping most of your culture, modifying your habits, conforming, or abandoning ones' cultural identity."

Table 1

Participant Interview Response Summary to Interview Question 1 and Question 2

Participant	Question 1: How would you define acculturation?	Question 2: In terms of acculturation, what do you think the difference is between integration and assimilation?
1	"I don't know the official definition of it. I would assume that it refers to the integration of a culture within a community." "I guess it could mean a community in general. A town, a setting within a town, like a school district or specific setting."	"How to make sure that students of other cultures are included in the school setting versus assimilation, I see more as making it more of a specific fit, so taking into account pieces of the of their culture and accommodating for those in some way." "Integration you're just kind of fitting them in." "Assimilation in my opinion would be more of. You know. Instead of just putting them in, making sure that they fit by looking at the specific pieces of that culture and how the community or school setting can change to the fit that."
2	"So, it's something that I've never been formally taught, but I would say that acculturation, would be the assimilation of a culture into another culture, such as somebody coming from Haiti to America and then being expected to fit into American culture."	"Integration would be where we expect folks from other countries to blend into our culture while still maintaining the integrity of their culture, where assimilation would be. They're expected to drop most of their culture. And instead of blending, becoming."
3	"When somebody, an individual from a particular culture is living somewhere that's not native to them and they're exposed to and experiencing the new places culture and kind of how they adapt and how they fit in and how they kind of integrate their own culture in with that particular culture that they're moved to."	"In integration, an individual would kind of just fall into this society structure, like in within their institutions, they become integrated into the school system." "Assimilation is when they kind of take on cultural practices as well and they try to modify."

(table continues)

Participant	Question 1: How would you define acculturation?	Question 2: In terms of acculturation, what do you think the difference is between integration and assimilation?
		"When somebody changes their name to sound more American, they tried to assimilate with that culture by modifying their habits. My neighbors are Ukrainian and Russian, yet they celebrate Thanksgiving, which is an American holiday. To me that's assimilating to the American culture."
4	"The process of acclimating to a new culture, like adjusting your cultural norms and finding a happy medium between your cultural norms and the cultural norms of a new population of people."	"Assimilation would mean like conforming, becoming what that culture already does and is, and integration would be finding a way to include your cultural beliefs and process along with the cultural systems that are set in place"
5	"I would define that as the process where students who come to us from a non- traditional family situation, living situation, education situation become familiar with our norms of doing things. I don't think that has to mean they take on all those things. I think they see what we're, about." "Maybe our social norms with respect to things like how included students with disabilities are, how we handle discipline situations, how teachers interact with each other or interact with students and families. I think of acculturation as the process where kiddos who come to us, where all those things maybe didn't look like that at home."	"I think students, especially those who are diverse, they're here with us. They're physically integrated. They're part of our class, they're part of our meetings, their part of our school. I think assimilation is a much bigger leap. I think assimilation is a much fuller experience where they start to take on or adopt some of those norms as their own." I think of integration as more limited. You could just be physically integrated during lunch. You're integrated you're mixed in. I think of assimilation as a longer-term thing that may or may not even happen to all students. "Students may be physically integrated and part of our institution, but not really assimilate to a high percent."

(table continues)

Participant	Question 1: How would you define acculturation?	Question 2: In terms of acculturation, what do you think the difference is between integration and assimilation?
6	"I've actually never heard this word before. Um, however, using my powerful skills of deduction, I would say that acculturation has to do with um, probably placing somebody else's culture within a current culture. But I don't know that I am right."	"So, integration is when you say, okay, like here's this culture, go. Assimilation is elaborate. I'm going to take you to Costa Rica plop you down in the culture. I don't want to say figure it out. Sort of like integrating you into the culture."
		"When I assimilate you into the culture, I'm saying, okay, here are some tools that would help you and it's kind of like a slower process into introducing you to a culture and bringing your own cultural beliefs and seeing how they relate to your current culture or the culture you're being placed in."
7	"It means assimilation to a different culture, typically the dominant one." "My definition of acculturation is entering into the dominant culture as it relates to our school setting."	"Assimilation is starting to take on all of the traits of the culture. And integration would be still maintaining your subculture but being a part of the building."
8	"Acculturation to me is a combination of allowing someone new to our country to adopt typical ways that we interact culturally while also maintaining a relationship with their heritage from the country that they've come from."	"Assimilation is tied to abandoning a prior identity and just assuming the cultural identity of the country you're coming to. Integration teaches you to adapt and potentially thrive in a new culture or area while also holding part of who your identity is."
9	"That is how they assimilate to like our culture, in my belief." "Students that are traveling from their nonnative country into our native soil."	"It would be the level of acculturation, but integration would mean like perhaps more of an immersion or a depth level. Maybe a more familiarity versus how well they emerge in our culture."

Participants' responses to Question 3, noted in Table 2, revealed several views with respect to how participants' current role supports acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Talking about this issue, Participant 1, Participant 5, Participant 6, and Participant 9 focused their responses on supporting students' linguistic needs. Participant 1 stated, "When I'm testing those students, I try to ensure that we're as fair to the students as possible in terms of being language and culture free as much as possible, so that I would be assessing the actual ability of the student." Participant 9 said, "I acknowledge the language barrier." Participant 2, Participant 3, and Participant 8 felt that their role supports acculturation by providing social and emotional support to Haitian students with disabilities.

Table 2

Participant Interview Response Summary to Interview Question 3

Participant	Question 3: How does your current role support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities?
1	"When I'm testing those students, I try to ensure that we're as fair to the students as possible in terms of being language and culture free as much as possible so that I would be assessing the actual ability of the student."
	"When explaining educational matters to parents obviously you may have to deal with an interpreter."
	"Parents may not be as educated about you know the different kinds of disabilities and may need more explanation. Receptiveness to disabilities may vary from culture to culture so just being aware of those kinds of things and making sure that students' performance is well explained to the parent."
	"Talk with that student and find out more about their culture and what is accepted and how it may be related to any of the difficulties going on in their life."
2	"I do attempt to support my students with their post-secondary outcomes and understanding what education is available after high school, what they need to do to prepare for post-secondary success, jobs and careers that are available that they may not know. And determining the life skills that they may need here that they wouldn't need in their home country and guiding them in a direction where they could learn the skills needed."
3	"In terms of academic support, we kind of just teach them how our classroom system works in terms of our grades and how our expectations in terms of assignments and our technology works. So, teaching them how to use our internet kind of tools that we use in the classroom that will pertain to our culture that they might not have in Haiti."
4	"I'm not sure beyond our own set of Americanized ways. There's anything specific to Haitian students."
	"In terms of differentiating supports based on nationality, I'm not sure that there's a whole lot that would be specific to Haitians versus any other student with a disability."
5	"We do surface level things. Sometimes they even feel trite. We kind of fudge a little bit and do like a French version of assessments. We recognize that their language might be different. At a deeper level, I feel like my struggling to come up with a specific thing that I do to support those students. I don't know that I've ever created a document that takes culture into account and I don't think that would know how. And yet I'm aware that their experience is different."

(table continues)

Participant	Question 3: How does your current role support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities?
6	"I cannot pronounce Haitian words correctly to save my life. So, I oftentimes ask my Haitian students, especially those with disabilities to teach me Haitian so that they can see me stumble and they can see me struggle and they can see me kind of make fun of myself and that allows them to feel more comfortable in my classroom when they're trying to make their mouths form words that their mouths I've never formed before. So then trying to get a kid to read aloud in class or something like that becomes a less daunting task."
	"I also try to give kids roles, for example, right now are they are reading the Crucible and there's a role of a slave from Barbados. It's a perfect role for a Haitian child to fill."
7	"I get to see what a student's ability level is and what their strengths and weaknesses are."
8	"Each time we encounter students from Haiti, regardless if they have a disability or not, there is definitely a bit of a culture shock to what they're used to and to what they're walking into. Disabilities definitely impact their opportunities to integrate themselves. So, we have chances to get to know these kids in a classroom setting. We get to learn a little bit about them informally. The more opportunities that these kids are given to have contact with people that are not their own cultural identity, I'd say gives them an opportunity to be successful in that integration process."
9	"I support them the same way I support all disabilities. Also acknowledging the language barrier, any kind of translation I can do, any kind of software I will find. I have acquired textbooks of their native tongue."

Participants' responses to Question 4, noted in Table 3, indicated that all participants expressed a willingness to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities in their respective roles. However, there was a sense of ill preparedness amongst all participants regarding their ability to meet the specific acculturative needs of Haitian students with disabilities. The common views noted amongst Participant 1, Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 7, Participant 8 and Participant 9 focused on Haitian students' linguistic challenges and educators' lack of cultural competence regarding students of Haitian descent.

Participants' responses to Question 4, noted in Table 3, also indicated a recurring theme in the interview data regarding the lack of educator training to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Participant 1 stated, "I probably had one class over the course of my schooling." Participant 9 noted, "I feel like my training has been more for the American citizen that has a disability and not much more beyond that." Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 7, Participant 8, and Participant 9 mentioned being provided little or no training to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities.

Table 3

Participant Interview Response Summary to Interview Question 4

Participant	Question 4a: How prepared do you feel you are to support the needs of Haitian students with disabilities?	Question 4b: How much training have you received to support immigrant students with disabilities, such as Haitian students with disabilities?
1	"Overall, I don't feel well prepared in terms of knowing the specific needs of Haitian students with disabilities" "When I was working in another state, I dealt with a lot of different cultures, but Haitian students was not one of them"	"Probably over the course of my school you know I may have had one class and I don't think it was even just a class that was specific" "A portion of a class where we were dealing with you know how to deal with different cultures" "In terms of specifically Haitian students this is really the first time that I've dealt with this population"
2	"Minimally" "Without mentors, I would probably be lacking even more than I am"	"Formal training would be none"
3	"In terms of their learning disabilities, like reading and math, you know the content, I feel prepared, but in terms of understanding what they, I'd have no idea what it's like to move to a different country and be placed into a classroom where I don't understand the language. So, I cannot relate, and I do not feel prepared" "I think that it's very hard to understand how to help kids how to be successful and how to kind of feel comfortable and not overwhelmed and not stressed"	"None at all"
4	"Probably not very prepared. I don't know much about the Haitian culture at all" "I don't know that I'm super prepared to provide a lot of support to that population specifically"	"I have done like the professional development programs where we've had an opportunity to ask for specific supports'

(table continues)

Participant	Question 4a: How prepared do you feel you are to support the needs of Haitian students with disabilities?	Question 4b: How much training have you received to support immigrant students with disabilities, such as Haitian students with disabilities?
5	"I feel prepared to support students with disabilities in ways that deal with academics. I feel prepared to take a lesson and break it into smaller parts. I feel prepared to help a disorganized student become organized. I feel prepared to consider things like, let's keep all these notes in the classroom that we take because home, regardless of your diversity. I don't feel prepared to create supports that specifically target areas where Haitian students may have a different burden than a white student or an Asian or Latino student." "I struggle to identify what the needs are in the first place. If I knew what the needs were, I could maybe better support them." "Part of the struggle to identify the needs of those students might be in my experience"	"The training that I recall was a lone moment of training maybe I'm thinking 10 years ago, perhaps 11 years ago. An ESL teacher got up at a faculty meeting and said, I just want to let you guys know, um, couple of things. I'm seeing a couple of breakdowns in communication. Just want to let you guys know that Haitian students, they're going to kind of be late because they call that Haitian time and they're going to be late and try to just work with them. That's a cultural thing. Just work with them on that." "It was little more than a blip at a faculty meeting." "Probably seven, 10-minute chat, 10 years ago. It stuck with me. Um, I wasn't sure what to do with that information. That was as formal a training as I ever experienced."
6	"I don't. I feel like I've gotten support on any foreign language speakers at all and even less training on foreign speaking students with a disability."	"None. Formally, none"
7	"I'm unprepared. I'm not fluent in Haitian-Creole, which makes it so it would be more difficult for me to chunk information that needs to be given to those students. It would be difficult for me to have my student understand what their IEP means and what it says." "I feel prepared to implement an IEP, but if there is a language barrier, I am vastly unprepared."	"I have received minimal training on supports for immigrant students with disabilities." "The only training, I received was from to two teacher colleagues who said that for a Spanish speaker with disability to translate my worksheets into Spanish and then chunk them. They were not ELL teachers. That's the only training."

(table continues)

Participant	Question 4a: How prepared do you feel you are to support the needs of Haitian students with disabilities?	Question 4b: How much training have you received to support immigrant students with disabilities, such as Haitian students with disabilities?
8	"I'm not. The specific needs of students with disabilities I'm better off prepared to, to deal with than a specific ethnicity." "There's also a cultural awareness that I think many of us lack." "There are cultural taboos and cultural things that I may or may not understand. There are barriers that I could be more aware of."	"In terms of training, it's limited to just the umbrella of students with disabilities, not particular ethnicities. So, I can help the average student experiencing a disability, but beyond that there is no ethnic specialty."
9	"Not any more prepared than I would for a non-American disability student." "In terms of techniques and technology, um, I'm not really going above and beyond my basic American approach for one's disability."	"That would be zero. I feel like my training has been more for the American citizen that has a disability and not much more beyond that." "I have not felt that I have been equipped to serve them or help with their achievement" "I was never totally sure even how to embrace their culture, the do's and the don'ts, if you will, outside of the Hispanic culture. I've never been trained in that. So, I was probably offensive, and I didn't mean to be, or I was probably ignorant to something in the world news that was affecting them, and you know, and what they were going through"

Participants' responses to Question 6, noted in Table 4, indicated that the majority of participants emphasized the importance of maintenance and development of cultural heritage to support the acculturation process of Haitian students with disabilities. In response to this question, Participant 8 mentioned the importance of cultural pride as it relates to acculturation. "Everyone is proud of where they're from and should be proud of their heritage and history and to expect people to no longer identify with that would be denying them a part of who they are." Participant 7 when asked stated, "It's vital to hold on to who you are, where you come from and what you value." Two participants did have conflicting discourses. Participant 1 noted that the importance of cultural maintenance to a Haitian student with disabilities should be considered in relation to the students' generational status. Participant 2 considered cultural maintenance to be a possible hindrance to the academic and behavioral performance of Haitian students with disabilities.

Table 4

Participant Interview Response Summary to Interview Question 6

Participant	Question 6: How important do you feel cultural maintenance is to the behavioral and academic achievement of Haitian students with disabilities?
1	"I think it's going to be much more important for first generation students that have just come over from you know another country to feel like they're maintaining some of those roots and, you know, that's part of their identity." "I think the further you get away from the first generation, the less important it may become, but you know, even as second generation, if you're living in a family with parents that are from another country, from a different culture, you know, there are going to be, you know, maybe other languages spoken within the home, maybe other traditions, habits, things like that, that, um, are important within the home. And so, you know, those are things that are, are going to impact the student. So, it is definitely going to be an important part of their identity. But, like I said, as they get further and further away, the third, fourth generation, so forth, it would probably become less important."
2	"I do not feel that the cultural maintenance is important. When you start speaking societal or heritage, of course where students came from is extremely important, and their beliefs. But when it comes to the academics and behavior, cultural maintenance can make it difficult to change behavior. I think, you know, education is education, learning is learning."
3	"I think that's very important. I think about like just taking a child and moving on from like one neighborhood to another can be a stressful situation. So, keeping things as consistent as possible for any individual, especially children I think is very beneficial to their whole wellbeing, their mental health, their emotional stability." "I think that providing them with stability in terms of their cultural practices is really, really important. I think as long as it's safe and respectful to everybody else within the classroom or within the school, cultural practices should be allowed to be continued for any individual for that reason."
4	"Yes, maintaining a level of comfort within the culture that somebody has been exposed to is important. Part of being the person that you are is based on the way you were brought up and the belief structure that you have and the community that you were raised in. And all of those things come as part of the culture, um, that made you who you are. And if you're asking somebody to give that all up and to assimilate completely, um, you're going to lose a little bit of who that person is."

(table continues)

Participant	Question 6: How important do you feel cultural maintenance is to the behavioral and academic achievement of Haitian students with disabilities?
5	"Cultural maintenance for our Haitian students does seem like a balance is going to be required."
	"I can see from the family experiences I've had with Haitian students that family is important and there are expectations at home and relationship dynamics at home that might not match what I'm familiar with."
	"Haiti's important to them. I do feel like for their family unit, which is going to need to stay strong much longer than their time here. Schools temporary here, families more permanent. I do feel like maintaining that their culture at home is really important for their family relationship"
	"I think because that family unit should stand the test of time, cultural maintenance is important to students. Not to the point that it causes them to not be successful here, but I really think it's important for them to hold on to that."
6	"I think it is not only just important, I think it has everything that they can remain who they are."
	"Kids should be encouraged to laugh and joke and act the way that they act in their culture, which is very different than the way that we may act in an American classroom."
7	"It's vital to hold on to who you are, where you come from and what you value."
8	Everyone is proud of where they're from and should be proud of their heritage and history and to expect people to no longer identify with that would be denying them a part of who they are."
9	"I think it's huge. Whatever your culture is. I mean, I know we're on American soil here, but everybody has their own voice. What they're accustomed to, where they're coming from and more important their story"

Research Question 2

Participants' responses to Interview Question 5 and 7 aligned with the second

research question of this study. Participants' responses to Question 5, noted in Table 5,

indicated that all of the participants felt that acculturation strategies have an impact on the

academic achievement and behavior of Haitian students with disabilities. The common

view noted amongst Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 4, Participant 5, Participant 7,

Participant 8, and Participant 9 was that feelings of social, cultural or linguistic

estrangement within the school environment influence the academic and behavioral

performance of Haitian students with disabilities. Participant 1, Participant 5, Participant

6, and Participant 7 noted that acculturation strategies can be instrumental in supporting

the academic motivation and adjustment to the school setting of Haitian students with

disabilities. For example, Participant 5 stated, "feeling culturally supported and

connected surely contributes to academic success and behavioral improvement."

Participant 4 said, "I'd imagine if you can make a student feel more comfortable in their

setting, it's going to limit behavior issues as a whole, particularly a population of students

that are highly underrepresented."

Participants' responses to Question 7, noted in Table 5, indicated a variety of

acculturation strategies participants felt would support acculturation of Haitian students

with disabilities. Participant 1, Participant 5, Participant 7, Participant 8, and Participant 9

focused on the language acquisition strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students

with disabilities. Participant 4, Participant 6, and Participant 8 highlighted the importance

of cultural awareness or sensitivity training to support acculturation of Haitian students

with disabilities. Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 5, Participant 7,

and Participant 8 expressed the importance of interpersonal relationships and social

connectedness to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities.

Table 5

Participant Interview Response Summary to Interview Question 5 and Question 7

Participant	Question 5: How do you feel acculturation strategies impact students' behavioral and academic achievement, particularly behavioral and academic achievement of Haitian students with disabilities?	Question 7: What acculturation strategies do you use or perceive to be important to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities and enhance their achievement?
1	"If students are coming here from other countries, whether it be Haiti or any other country, they're going to be at a disadvantage in terms of not having that language base of English" "A lot of the academic achievement tests are culturally biased and language heavy. So, if you were testing a student started to see kind of where they were in terms of academic achievement, they're going to probably look like they are a lot lower than what they may actually be because, the measures that you're having to use to measure that academic achievement aren't necessarily looking at their strengths" "The difficulty with academics is probably going to cause some frustration in that would likely be the primary reason that we might see behaviors with students that are from Haiti or from other countries" "The behaviors that may be expected or the social skills that may be expected might be different"	"I would probably try to use an interpreter as much as possible to make sure that the student was understanding the questions I was asking" "Communicating with parents. Things that are the norm in their culture may be different here" "The EL teachers are going to be the ones that are trained to work with those students of other cultures that speak other languages coming in to try to enhance their vocabulary" "Help them as much as possible to know, the American school system" "Focusing on their strengths. If they are visual learners trying to enhance their achievement as much as possible using visual strategies paired with other kinds of learning strategies. Doing whatever you can to play on their strengths and use those as much as possible to help increase their academic achievement"
2	I think it would better prepare the students to understand what's expected in the educational system here in America. For example, the norms regarding gender roles are different here than they are in Haiti"	"I have to remind myself that these students were brought up differently. They were raised differently" "I think a parent training, a parent to teacher workforce"

(table continues)

Participant	Question 5: How do you feel acculturation strategies impact students' behavioral and academic achievement, particularly behavioral and academic achievement of Haitian students with disabilities?	Question 7: What acculturation strategies do you use or perceive to be important to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities and enhance their achievement?
3	"Academically I think that it helps because if they can understand the material better, that's obviously helpful, but I don't know that it makes them feel like less overwhelmed by the whole setting"	I think the biggest thing is just to talk to the students and kind of like get their take on things. Hear their side to kind of understand what their life is like outside of the time that we see them. That really helps you kind of better understand them as an individual. And then it also makes them feel like that's part of my life here as a student, not just my life here outside of school" "Giving them opportunities to share their experiences" "Giving them translated materials"
4	"I'd imagine if you can make a student feel more comfortable in their setting, it's going to limit behavior issues as a whole. Particularly a population of students that are highly underrepresented" "Without strategies, frustrations and struggles in school create stress, which leads to outbursts and behavior issues" I'd imagine that frustration is probably even higher for a child who is outside of their cultural norms and outside of their comfort zone. Even more than somebody who maybe speaks the language and understands the cultural norms where they live"	"Celebrate aspects of the Haitian culture that students want to celebrate in order to build those relationships and help students feel like they're a part of something" "Build awareness for different cultural norms from any background or nationality. I think there's a lot of misconceptions and preconceived notions of students from different countries" "Educating people about different nationalities and different cultures and different belief structures that they may not be aware of or that they may think they're aware of, but have misconceptions about is probably an important strategy"
5	"Feeling culturally supported and connected surely contributes to academic success and behavioral improvement"	"Families of Haitian students need to understand the supports that their students are being provided. "It's very important to have an available translator to explain the supports and services"

(table continues)

Participant	Question 5: How do you feel acculturation strategies impact students' behavioral and academic achievement, particularly behavioral and academic achievement of Haitian students with disabilities?	Question 7: What acculturation strategies do you use or perceive to be important to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities and enhance their achievement?
6	"I think that with any child, when they are frustrated, don't understand or feel like they're not being heard or understood, that lends itself to behavioral, academic struggles and frustrations and they act out behaviorally"	"I would like to be more educated on what happens in a Haitian classroom, so that I can make those things be mirrored in my own classroom"
7	To take a student who recently either came to America or grew up in a household where there is no English spoken, and then has to learn English, has to learn how to assimilate into a teenage culture in America and have a disability, they would struggle behaviorally and struggle with academic achievement. If they didn't achieve as an individual, they would act out or it would seem as though they acted out to the culture because of the cultural barriers"	"I use food for acculturation. Haitian foods are a little bit different and that think that's super awesome. So, when Haitian students with disabilities talk about a food, I get to the point where I try to compare it to something that would be similar to a local dish, native to this area"

"I ask cultural questions like, what do you like to wear? What holidays do you celebrate? When you start to ask those questions, it's helping them helping them integrate in" Those are strategies that I use because I want to know who my students are, where they come from, what they value." I also ask them to teach me Haitian-Creole words" |
| 8 | "If there's no strategy in place for students who are already experiencing barriers to success due to language and being in a new school, you're, you're going to see some withdrawal. You're going to see some frustration"

"The better prepared these kids are to integrate has a great value and we should be interested in that because the diversity that they offer mirrors the reality of the world we live in" | "Lean on other students of Haitian ethnicity to help"

"Take an interest in what they know, finding out a little bit about their background, what they can offer to the classroom culture"

"Show them that this is a safe environment"

"Use translation tools" |
| 9 | If there's a cultural barrier and kids can't connect, there may be a domino effect where kids act out. | "Rely on the EL world on what is most effective culturally and translates into the classroom" |

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Several strategies were employed to establish trustworthiness in the findings of this study. Credibility and dependability reflect the idea that the research findings in this study are a true representation of the perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation strategies that support Haitian students with disabilities. Three specific validation strategies were used in this study to establish credibility and dependability in the findings: peer debriefing, member checks, and data triangulation.

Peer debriefing allowed me to discuss and review the methodology, analysis and interpretations of the research with educators who were not directly associated with the study. To that end, two secondary school educators with at least one qualitative research experience acted as peer debriefers for this study. Confidentiality of information was maintained by each peer debriefer completing and signing a confidentiality agreement.

Member checking allowed study participants to evaluate the interpretation of the data collected by the researcher. Thus, a member checking activity immediately followed each interview. This member checking activity was to verify the information I recorded accurately reflected each participants' perspectives. After all data was analyzed, a draft of the findings was sent to each participant to allow them to check the researcher's interpretation of their data used in the findings.

Nine secondary school educators were interviewed to investigate their perspectives on acculturation strategies that support Haitian students with disabilities. Collecting data from a diverse range of secondary school educators was believed to

enhance the credibility of the findings since the findings would be a representation of several differing points of view regarding the phenomenon under study.

Thick description and purposeful sampling of three regular education educators, two special education educators, two transition specialists, a school counselor, and a school psychologist established transferability of data. Detailed descriptions of nine secondary school educators' perspectives was provided to enhance the fit and possible transfer of this data to other educational contexts. In addition, a broad range of secondary school educators was selected to provide greater insight into perspectives on acculturation strategies that support Haitian students with disabilities.

Confirmability in qualitative inquiry is the extent to which the qualitative data supports the interpretations and findings of the study (Anney, 2014). To establish confirmability in this study, a clear audit trail was maintained. Detailed record keeping throughout the research process not only enhanced confidence in the findings of this study, but also supported replication of investigation into this phenomenon by other researchers.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I presented the data collection and data analysis processes, and research findings regarding perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Four broad themes relating to the two research questions emerged from analysis of participants' transcripts: (a) educators' understanding of acculturation, (b) importance of cultural maintenance, (c) educator professional development targeted towards

acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities, and (d) school-based support. The common view noted amongst participants was that acculturation involved differing cultures coming in contact with one another, individuals' blending or integrating. A variety of perspectives were expressed when participants were asked to compare and contrast the acculturation processes of integration and assimilation. A number of views were expressed with respect to how participants' current role supports acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Participants' responses indicated a concern regarding the lack of educator training to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Most participants emphasized the importance of maintenance and development of cultural heritage to support the acculturation process of Haitian students with disabilities. In addition, the majority of participants felt that acculturation strategies have an impact on the academic achievement and behavior of Haitian students with disabilities. Moreover, participants believed that language acquisition, cultural awareness and social connectedness acculturation strategies best support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Several of the strategies that were employed by the researcher to address critical elements of trustworthiness and ethics in qualitative research were also discussed in this chapter.

In Chapter 5, an analysis and interpretation of the findings in the context of the acculturation conceptual framework will be discussed. Furthermore, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research and implications for social change will be presented.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

Chapter 5 provides an analysis and interpretation of the findings in the context of Berry's (1997) acculturation conceptual framework. Limitations of the study and recommendations for further research are discussed. This chapter concludes with the implications for social change based on the results of this study.

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory case study was to explore secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. An abundance of acculturation research has focused on immigrant adults and Latino and Asian adolescents, but there is a dearth in research on educational strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students, particularly Haitian students with disabilities. Exploring secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities adds to the body of research on the influence of school processes and practices on acculturation of immigrant adolescents, specifically the acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities.

Berry's (1997) bidimensional theory of acculturation was used to ground this study. Berry posited that the acculturation process is heavily dependent on one's desire to maintain his or her cultural identity and adapt to the host country's cultural practices, traditions, and norms. Berry emphasized four acculturation strategies that individuals immigrating to a new society undergo: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Of Berry's four acculturation strategies, acculturation research focused on immigrant adolescents supports integration as the most adaptive acculturation strategy

(Antonio & Monteiro, 2015, Berry & Hou, 2016; Ferguson & Bornstein, 2014; Sanchez & Awad, 2016). Thus, for immigrants, such as Haitian students with disabilities, integration into school may be more successful with school processes that promote the interrelationship between maintenance of native cultural identity and American identity. Consequently, Berry's (1997) integration acculturation strategy was the primary aspect of acculturation used in this study to explore secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities at the secondary level.

Interpretation of the Findings

Four broad themes emerged from analysis of transcripts from semistructured interviews conducted with secondary school educators. These findings were compared to peer-reviewed literature described in Chapter 2. Moreover, these findings were analyzed and interpreted in the context of Berry's (1997) acculturation conceptual framework.

Research Question 1

Data analysis indicated that three of the four themes that emerged focused on this Research Question 1: (a) educators' understanding of acculturation, (b) the importance of cultural maintenance, (c) educator professional development targeted at acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Educators differed in their perception of acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities in American society and acculturation processes. Thus, educators' perspectives and use of strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities may be limited due to their differing interpretations of acculturation and acculturation processes. This finding is consistent with those of Berry

and Hou (2016), which suggested that varying ideas about the importance of integration

and assimilation within the dominant society can hinder acculturation of ethnic

minorities. This finding further supports the idea of Hoti et al. (2017) that teachers'

academic and behavioral strategies to support students are guided by their perceptions of

acculturation expectations of immigrants into the dominant society. I identified that

participants with a greater understanding of acculturation and acculturation processes

were more supportive of integration as a way for immigrant students to acculturate.

Most educators perceived cultural maintenance to be important to acculturation of

Haitian students with disabilities. The majority of participants commented that cultural

maintenance supports social adjustment, emotional health, and better academic

achievement of Haitian students with disabilities. The participants suggested that

maintaining cultural identity may reduce the culture shock Haitian students with

disabilities may experience due to the dissimilarity between Haitian cultural norms and

American cultural norms and contributes to the richness of the school environment. This

finding corroborates the ideas of Civitillo et al. (2017) who found cultural maintenance to

be an important predictor of psychological well-being and social inclusion among

adolescent minorities. In addition, this finding supports previous ethnic identity research

which positively links cultural maintenance to reduced family conflict (Paat, 2017),

maladjustment (Telzer et al., 2015), and aggression (Schwartz et al., 2015a). Although

the majority of participants did not note experiencing any specific internalizing or

externalizing behaviors in Haitian students with disabilities, some participants did

identify some externalizing behaviors they perceived to be correlated to Haitian students with disabilities desire to validate their cultural worldview.

The majority of participants stressed the lack of educator professional development targeted towards acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. The consensus among participants was that they felt unprepared to support the linguistic, cultural, academic, and behavioral needs of Haitian students with disabilities. Moreover, most participants emphasized the lack of training or professional development to support the linguistic, cultural, academic, and behavioral needs of Haitian students with disabilities. Most of the participants indicated a need to receive training or professional development targeted specifically to meet the linguistic, cultural, academic, and behavioral needs of Haitian students with disabilities. The attitudes expressed by participants in this study regarding the importance of training and professional development targeted specifically to meet the linguistic, cultural, academic, and behavioral needs of Haitian students with disabilities mirror those of previous studies by Karatas and Oral (2015) and Brown and Crippen (2017) that found implementation of culturally responsive education highly related to the amount of training teachers receive about cultural diversity. Overall, participants expressed concern with their ability to meet the acculturative needs of Haitian students with disabilities due to their limited knowledge and expertise about this culturally diverse population.

Research Question 2

Most participants were unable to identify specific acculturation strategies that they use to support Haitian students with disabilities. Participants noted a heavy reliance

on language acquisition resources, such as EL teachers or translating tools, as the primary acculturation strategy to support Haitian students with disabilities. Most participants noted little experience implementing acculturation strategies that are unique to Haitian students with disabilities. However, I did find that the majority of participants commented that building connections with students and parents, support from classmates, inclusive instructional practices, and finding ways for Haitian students with disabilities to make positive contributions in the classroom and school would be effective acculturation strategies to support Haitian students with disabilities. This finding is in agreement with the ideas of Birman and Simon's (2014), who emphasized the importance of forging social connections to immigrants' acculturation. This finding also agrees with Makarova and Birman (2015) study which suggested that positive teacher and peer relationships and interpersonal support may buffer some of the negative effects associated with ethnic minority status.

Limitations of the Study

A few limitations to trustworthiness may exist following execution of this study. A case study was the research methodology was used to explore secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Case studies are difficult to replicate (Yin, 2017). While this study cannot be replicated, the results of this study may provide greater information for subsequent studies regarding secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities.

This study focused on secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Consequently, educators that met the eligibility criteria for participation in this study were selected only from a secondary school. This limits the generalizability of the research study findings to school grade levels outside of the secondary level. Conducting a study that includes educators from all grade levels would enhance the depth and richness of the qualitative data regarding the educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities.

The use of purposeful sampling can pose issues related to the transferability of findings to similar settings or populations. For example, the subjective and judgmental nature of selecting study participants may increase researcher bias and call into question appropriateness of the sample selected (Yin, 2017). In addition, the small sample selected using purposeful sampling may not adequately answer the research questions (Yin, 2017). To address the limitations associated with purposeful sampling, efforts were taken to select participants who were believed to be able to provide rich, detailed information that covered the range of variation in high school educators that support Haitian students with disabilities.

Recommendations

Supporting Acculturation

The results of the study indicated that secondary school educators have some level of awareness of the cultural, linguistic, academic and behavioral challenges that Haitian students with disabilities face. However, the majority of secondary school educators are

uncertain how to meet the diverse needs of Haitian students with disabilities. It is recommended that secondary school educators request specialized materials and ongoing training from their school administration targeted to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Research suggests that teachers that are trained to support culturally diverse populations exhibit cultural dispositions, such as an awareness that social and cultural experiences shape individuals' worldviews (Durden, Dooley, & Truscott, 2016), a respect for diversity (Karataş & Oral, 2015), a knowledge about their students cultural and family backgrounds (Murtadha-Watts & Stoughton, 2017), and designing lessons that are culturally relevant (Brown & Crippen, 2017).

Secondary school educators in this study noted the importance of cultural maintenance coupled with social connectedness in school to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Telzer et al. (2016) used Berry's (1997) bidimensional acculturation theory to examine the relationship between cultural maintenance and family functioning and youth adjustment. Telzer (2016) noted the importance of social support interventions to encourage adolescents' cultural maintenance. Thus, school administrators may want to create peer networks, cultural awareness programs, or implement bi-cultural parent information sessions to support cultural maintenance of Haitian students with disabilities.

Further Research and Inquiry

This study focused on secondary school educators' perspectives on strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. However, given the distinct developmental stages of Haitian students with disabilities and school supports at

elementary and middle school grade levels, further research that includes educators at elementary and middle school grade levels may be warranted. Further research that includes educators at elementary and middle school grade levels may provide a deeper understanding of strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities.

In addition, this study focused on acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. Expanding the scope of future exploration to include acculturation strategies to support acculturation of other immigrant groups could add to Berry's (1997) bidimensional approach to acculturation. Universal acculturation processes and practices could be identified which may assist schools in the developing acculturation strategies that supports a broad range of immigrant adolescents.

Implications

Schools have a challenging endeavor; they not only have to educate all students in their care, but also be responsive to the unique needs of each student. Positive social change occurs when students are able to establish healthy relationships and successfully integrate themselves into their community and school. Through the findings of this study, I have contributed to the depth of understanding of perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. While many immigrant children and adolescents are able to adapt into a new culture, those who are not able to adapt into a new culture may experience a range of internalizing and externalizing mental health behaviors (Rogers-Sirin et al., 2014). Immigrant children and adolescents who struggle to adapt into a new culture have been found to experience mental health behaviors such as depressive symptoms (Schwartz et

al., 2015b); prosocial behaviors (Schwartz et al., 2015a); or substance use (Unger et al., 2014). My hope is that the findings in this study would be beneficial to secondary school educators and administrators to make more informed instructional and behavioral decisions and improve their professional practice to enhance acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of secondary school educators regarding acculturation strategies to support acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities. One of the most salient findings of this study was the lack of resources and educator training to support integrative acculturation. As the cultural demographic of students with disabilities continues to become more diverse, it is paramount that educators and administrators not only receive adequate acculturation resources and training, but also become more aware of the process of acculturation and research that supports immigrant students. I am hopeful that these findings promote integration for a growing multicultural population that may require additional levels of psychoeducational support and supports creation of strategies to enhance cross-cultural contact and positive social change between immigrant adolescents and their host country.

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Appendix A: Eligibility Criteria Screening Protocol

1. Do you hold a current license as a secondary school educator or educational

specialist for the state of Delaware?

     o Yes

     o No

2. Which of the following educational roles best describes your area of licensure

for the state of Delaware?

     o Teacher (Please specify content area/s)

     _____

     o Administrator

     o Educational specialist (Please specify area of specialty)

     _____

     o Other (Please specify)

     _____

3. Are you currently employed in a Delaware secondary school as a school

educator or educational specialist?

     o Yes

     o No

4. Are you currently providing educational services to support Haitian students

with disabilities who are currently enrolled in secondary school?

     o Yes

     o No

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____
Interviewer: _____ Interviewee #: _____

1) How would you define acculturation?

2) In terms of acculturation, what do you think the difference is between

integration and assimilation?

3) How does your current role support acculturation of Haitian students with

disabilities?

4) How prepared do you feel you are to support the needs of Haitian students with

disabilities? How much training have you received to support immigrant students

with disabilities, such as Haitian students with disabilities?

5) How do you feel acculturation strategies impact students' behavioral and

academic achievement, particularly behavioral and academic achievement of

Haitian students with disabilities?

6) How important do you feel cultural maintenance is to the behavioral and

academic achievement of Haitian students with disabilities?

7) What acculturation strategies do you use or perceive to be important to support

acculturation of Haitian students with disabilities and enhance their achievement?