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Resiliency in Latino Youth Experiencing Cartel Violence and Other Perceived Traumatic Events

Kasandra Garcia Reyna
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Kasandra Garcia Reyna

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Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2020

Abstract

Resiliency in Latino Youth Experiencing Cartel Violence and
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by

Kasandra Garcia Reyna

MEd, University of Texas Pan American, 2011

BA, University of Texas Pan American, 2005

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology—Clinical Psychology

Walden University

May 2020

Abstract

Latino youth at the violent forefront of the U.S.-Mexico border face traumatic events daily. The present study examined Latino youths' resiliency to the violence that they face and what factors help them cope. A quantitative research approach based upon resilience theory explored social support, perceived traumatic events, and resiliency in 134 Latino youth ages 18 to 19 years who lived near the Texas-Mexico border and had witnessed, had been involved in, or had family members involved in cartel-related violence. Measurement of participants' family and social supports along with their perceived traumatic events enabled a comparison of these scores with the individual resiliency of the participants. The results of the study showed no correlation between family social support and resiliency; however, there was a significant positive relationship between social support and optimism resiliency. Governments may draw upon these findings to implement programs and support systems for children facing adversity in areas with a high risk of violence. Furthermore, resources allocated to building social support systems may aid resiliency across other ethnicities and races.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Resiliency is one component of a child's healthy development and a vital process to growth and prosperity (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2015). Resiliency is an individual's ability to manage adversity and recover emotionally, socially, and psychologically in the aftermath of a major stressor or traumatic event (Deblinger, Pollio, Runyon, & Steer, 2017). Children who have experienced disaster or trauma may have greater emotional reactivity and difficulties in the mastery of resiliency (Kelly et al., 2015).

In 2009, an influx of cartel-related threats reported at the Texas-Mexico border led the Department of Homeland Security to implement a contingency plan to face these challenges (Archibold, 2009). Border towns are gateways to the United States, which makes the towns' citizens more vulnerable to cartel-related violence. The population in border towns across Texas numbers approximately 2.3 million, 500,000 of whom are under the age of 18 years (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). According to Fast (2016), the negativity and violence experienced by school-aged children have led them to become more resilient and develop better coping skills.

This study centered on resilience in Latino youth who have endured various types of violence, such as the drug war plaguing Texas border towns. Many scholars have explored resiliency as an element in how individuals overcome traumatic events. Support systems and components such as listening, understanding, and providing a sense of well-being are vital when a child is developing and becoming more resilient.

Although there is a vast amount of information and literature on resiliency, the current scholarship is lacking in relation to support systems and how to predict, aid, or hinder resiliency.

Chapter 1 contains an overview of the research study, beginning with background information on resiliency and Latinos, the impact of family and social support on resiliency, and individuals' attitudes and experiences with traumatic events. Discussions of the problem statement, purpose of the study, and the research question and hypotheses follow. Descriptions of the theoretical framework, nature of the study, and definitions that guided this study precede a list of assumptions, delimitations, and limitations. Chapter 1 concludes with a review of the significance of the study and how it may contribute to the field, followed by a summary.

Background

Cartel Violence at the Texas Border

Towns at the Texas-Mexico border were joined before the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, when part of Mexico became Texas (Navarro & Vivas, 2012). The connections between these border communities have eroded as a result of violent attacks affecting these once-sister cities. Cartel violence has occurred on the Texas-Mexico border for decades, with Mexican drug cartels entering the United States since the time of Prohibition (Hodgin, 2014). Accompanying the influx of drug cartels has been spillover violence heightened by U.S. gang involvement (Hodgin, 2014; Kellner & Pipitone, 2010). The drug-related battle began against Mexico in 1985 when Mexican drug cartels killed U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent Enrique Camarena (Grant, 2012). As

the cartels have expanded northward and southward, the United States has been vulnerable to further spillover and disaster (Hodgin, 2014). Young people who are recruited into this ongoing drug war serve as pawns on both sides of the border (Navarro & Vivas, 2012).

Resiliency

According to the American Psychological Association (APA; n.d.), *resiliency* is the process of adapting and “bouncing back” to everyday life after facing trauma, tragedy, threat, or significant stress. Kasler, Dahan, and Elias (2008) noted that children who suffered psychological stressors from exposure to the 2006 Second Lebanon War were the least likely to suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) because of their heightened sense of resilience. Resiliency is a process that one must undergo to cope with stressors or traumatic events. Prince-Embury (2008) researched the importance of personal resiliency and its mastery, identifying three domains of resiliency: a sense of mastery; a sense of relatedness in how individuals perceive their relationships; and emotional reactivity, or how individuals go about controlling their emotions. To date, scholarly study regarding violence and resiliency specific to Latino youth in Texas-Mexico border areas has been nonexistent.

Latino Youth

Academic achievement levels among Latino youth are significantly lower than those of nonminority youth (Loera, Rueda, & Oh, 2015). Evidence indicates that neighborhood violence is associated with poor academic functioning, lower grades, and poorer performance on standardized tests (Fite, Rubens, & Cooley, 2014). A major factor

in the low academic achievement ratings of Latino youth who live near the Texas-Mexico border is the cartel violence that surrounds them. As a result of this violence and a lack of social supports, young Latinos experience adverse impacts on academic achievement (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004). However, Latino youth have become resilient to the violence on other fronts such as academics, community, and social engagement. Accordingly, research determining how they have developed resilience to everyday violence could help other populations in similar situations.

Support Systems

Children need support systems so that they can avoid conflict and gain autonomy and a sense of self (Benbenishty, Astor, Zeira, & Vinokur, 2002). Different findings have indicated that having some type of support system can help the recipient. Having a support system helped several children endure the Israeli war (Yablon & Itzhaky, 2015). Various crimes have spilled over from Mexico into U.S. border towns, with violent effects (Dube, Dube, & Garcia-Ponce, 2013). The social and family support experienced by the Latino population in these areas has insulated these citizens from the full impact of such violence. Emotional support from the community fosters resiliency, enabling individuals to overcome adversity (Ophir, Rosenberg, Asterhan, & Schwarz, 2016). There is a need for interventions focused on helping Latinos build a strong sense of resiliency through a support system consisting of family or community members (Wolmer, Hamiel, Barchas, Slone, & Laor, 2011).

The infiltration of violent crimes has created social discord and panic in border towns (Jones, 2014), having an impact on the population and how individuals respond

to and process these violent events (Dube et al., 2013). The social and family support in the Latino population has helped those affected by violence to overcome this adversity. Children exposed to traumatic events may develop PTSD, which, in turn, may signal the need for mental health services (Yablon & Itzhaky, 2015). However, the negativity and violence experienced in a school climate add to the resilience, coping skills, and support children receive from school staff (Fast, 2016). The author indicates that violence and negative experiences that children have experienced may add to their resiliency with the added support of their support system and coping skills.

Problem Statement

The social problem is that many Latino youth who live near the Texas-Mexico border are becoming more resilient to the violence around them and are thus adjusting to and accepting violence. A high number of cartel-related attacks have spilled over from Mexico into the Texas border towns of McAllen, Roma, Rio Grande City, and Hidalgo (Aguilar & Ura, 2016). National Geographic highlighted the struggles of border towns along the Rio Grande River in the face of increasing border violence (Jones, 2014). With border officers fighting Mexican cartel members, these small towns have become “ground zero” for the war on drugs (Jones, 2014). In May 2017, more than 28 people died in a turf war along the border between McAllen, Texas, and Reynosa, Mexico (Virgin, 2017). Civilians may find themselves literally caught in the crossfire in these conflicts; due to daily violence, many residents are apprehensive about living in border towns (Virgin, 2017). The infiltration of Mexican drug cartels

into border towns has turned these small cities into virtual war zones (Flanigan, 2012). According to Davis (2012), “Thousands of people in North America, many of them children, have been murdered in the past two decades as a result of the war on drugs” (p. 1).

So normalized is cartel violence in border communities that residents have become used to it being part of their everyday lives. Although there has been extensive research on resiliency, literature specific to support systems and how to predict, aid, or hinder resiliency is lacking (Fast, 2016; Ophir et al., 2016). Further, although scholars have examined the violence occurring in border towns, none have explored the resiliency of Latino youth near the Texas-Mexico border or how family and social supports may have fostered this resiliency (Fast, 2016; Ophir et al., 2016). Therefore, this study was a means to examine factors related to how Latino youth who live in Texas-Mexico border towns have become resilient to everyday violence.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to measure the resiliency of Latino students 18 to 19 years old who lived near the Texas-Mexico border and had witnessed, had been involved in, or had family members involved in cartel-related violence. This study was a means to determine, measure, and compare participants’ family and social supports along with their perceived experience of traumatic events, and subsequently compare these scores to participants’ resiliency. The variables used in this study were resiliency, family support system, social support system, and perceived traumatic events in Latino youth.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

One research question guided this study.

RQ: To what extent do the variables of family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events predict resiliency in Latino youth who live near the Mexico-Texas border?

H_0 : Family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events do not predict resiliency in Latino youth who live near the Mexico-Texas border.

H_1 : Family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events significantly predict resiliency in Latino youth who live near the Mexico-Texas border.

Theoretical Framework

Resilience Theory

Resilience theory served as the foundation for this study. Resilience theory indicates that a variety of factors, such as poverty, local violence, and family support, can influence an individual's behavior negatively or positively (Stoddard et al., 2012).

Resilience theory encompasses compensatory, challenge, and protective models (Stoddard et al., 2012). First, the *compensatory model* shows resiliency as a factor that neutralizes exposure to risk (Stoddard et al., 2012). Second, the *challenge model* indicates that promotive factors, such as interactions with risk, moderate exposure and reduce negative impacts on adolescent outcomes (Stoddard et al., 2012). Last is the *protective model*, which indicates the need to assess resources to reduce the effects of risk and

negative outcomes (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). In this study, resilience theory served as a framework for examining the variables of resiliency, family support system, social support system, and perceived traumatic events in the population of Latino youth living in high-violence areas near Texas-Mexico border towns.

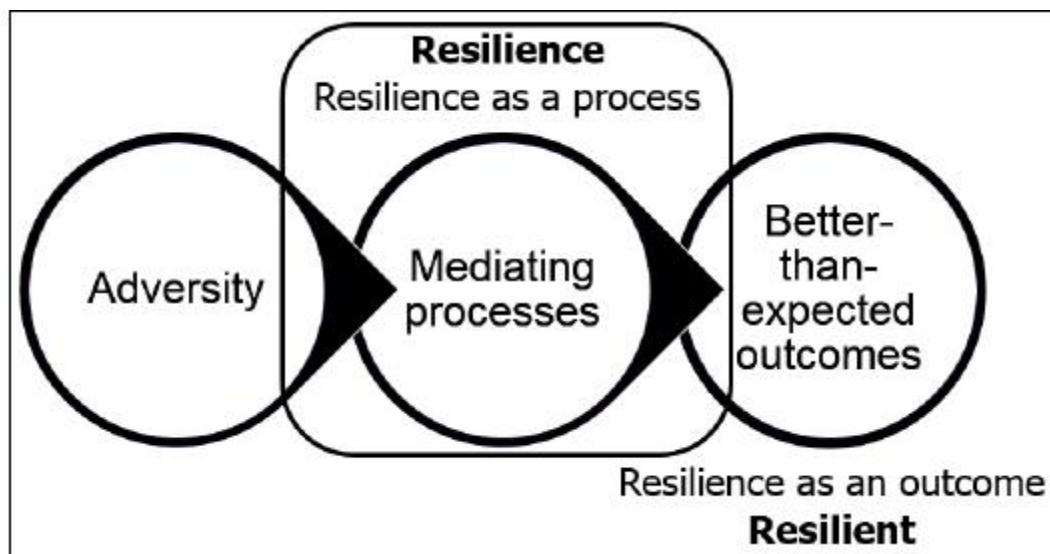


Figure 1. Model of the mediating effect of a traumatic event or adversity, and of how the manner in which one processes it can build resiliency as an outcome. From “Resilience as an Outcome,” by A. D. van Breda, 2018, *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 54, pp. 4 Copyright 2018 by Stellenbosch University. Reprinted with permission.

Nature of the Study

The selection of a research approach must occur in accordance with the specific research problem and questions under exploration (Creswell, 2014). Researchers use quantitative methodology to explore a relationship by using theory as the foundation of a study (Creswell, 2014). Responses to surveys or other instruments provide data for a quantitative researcher to measure variables, with subsequent statistical analysis to determine the relationship between the measured variables (Creswell, 2014). In

comparison, qualitative researchers are those intending to explore the lived experiences of participants by using face-to-face interviews or other nonsurvey methods to collect data (Creswell, 2014).

Based on this information and the research question for this study, a quantitative approach with a nonexperimental, cross-sectional, correlation-survey design was appropriate. Surveys were a means to determine whether the variables of family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events predict resiliency in Latino youth who live near the Mexico-Texas border. The social support measurement used was the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988), a 12-item scale to measure perceived support in three domains: family, friends, and significant others. The MSPSS uses a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from *very strongly disagree* to *very strongly agree*. Measurement for perceived traumatic events or exposure to trauma was conducted via the Exposure to Potentially Traumatic Events Measure (EPTTEM), a 23-item measure of conflict-related trauma, deaths, disappearances of loved ones, childhood adversity, and emergency-related illness, among other adversities (Tay, Rees, Chen, Kareth, & Silove, 2015). The last measure, the Five-by-Five Resilience Scale (5×5RS), is an assessment of resiliency as well as five protective factors that assist in resiliency. The 25-item scale consists of 5-point, Likert-type questions to measure optimism, emotional regulation, social support, self-efficacy, and adaptability (DeSimone, Harms, Vanhove, & Herian, 2017).

Definitions

Definitions of terms used throughout this research follow.

Border town: A border town is a city or town situated on the border that geographically separates the United States from Mexico.

Family support system: A family support system provides a strong connection, both emotionally and physically, to emphasize family cohesion and mutual support (Kim et al., 2016).

Latinos: According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), a person who is Latino or Hispanic is of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central American, or South American descent or from any other culture related to Spanish origin, regardless of race.

Perceived traumatic events: Events perceived as traumatic are those tied to disaster, accident, death, sexual assault, or a similar occurrence, which may produce psychological and physical symptoms (APA, n.d.).

Resiliency: Resiliency is the ability of an individual to bounce back and grow from an experience. It is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, or significant stressors (APA, n.d.).

Social support system: A social support system is a network of relationships providing mutual support (de Jong, Schout, Meijer, Mulder, & Abma, 2016).

Assumptions

Three assumptions underscored this study. The first, based on the inclusion criteria for participants, was that all participants were of Latino origin. The second assumption was that participants would be honest and truthful in their survey responses regarding perceived traumatic events, social supports, and family supports. Finally, the third assumption was that all participants willingly and voluntarily took part in the study

as indicated by their signature on the consent forms. Assumptions are necessary for any research; without them, scholarly inquiry could not occur.

Scope and Delimitations

All participants met the criteria of being Latino high school or university students who lived 25 miles or less from the border. The purpose of the study was to determine whether family and social support would predict resiliency in Latino youth living near the Mexico-U.S. border; thus, only participants living within this range of the border would provide relevant data. The nature of the study and the severity of the subject matter necessitated the recruitment of high school and university students instead of elementary and middle school students. Further restriction of this population to Latino youth ages 18 to 19 years was a similar effort not to subject younger individuals to the traumatic survey questions. Finally, because prior research on resiliency has included family members and community members as participants (Benbenishty et al., 2002; Ophir et al., 2016), only youth were eligible for this study, the intent of which was to examine family and social support from the perspectives of Latino youth.

Limitations

Potential limitations to this study included the data collection process, participant bias, and inability to generalize the results. Data collection limitations stemmed from the self-reporting nature of the surveys. That is, if the participants did not answer the questions fully, the data provided might not be accurate. Next, participant bias could have occurred if the Latino youth had answered the survey questions in the way they thought I would want rather than responding honestly (Simundic, 2013). To address this limitation,

I explained to the participants that because each answer was vital to the research process, I greatly appreciated their truthful responses. Finally, due to the limited population of Latino youth and the small age range, the research results are not generalizable beyond the study population. However, findings are likely applicable to the broader Latino population of youth 18 to 19 years of age.

Significance

This study was a means to address the literature gap regarding the direct relationships between family support, social support, and perceived traumatic events in the resiliency of Latino youth. Past scholars have focused on either resiliency in children or traumatic events, and how they affect children (Benbenishty et al., 2002; Fast, 2016; Ophir et al., 2016; Prince-Embury, 2008). This study was a measurement of the variables of resiliency, family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events in the population of Latino youth ages 18 to 19 years living in a high-violence area near the Texas-Mexico border. The study is unique because of limited scholarship regarding the Latino youth population and Mexican cartels concerning resiliency or what factors cause youth to be resilient. The results of this study present a thorough analysis of how cultural factors—for example, family structure, religious beliefs, rituals, and upbringing (conservative, liberal, traditional)—can influence one’s resilient nature. Findings may aid others by pinpointing what causes Latino children to become more resilient, something future researchers could apply to other populations, thus leading to positive social change. Accordingly, this study of the Latino youth

population and the support variables related to resiliency may provide a greater understanding of resiliency in children after they have witnessed traumatic events.

Summary

Resiliency is a continually growing topic in the field of psychology. Latinos have become the largest minority group in the United States, hence the focus of this study on the problems faced by Latino youth living in Texas-Mexico border towns. Examined was how factors including family support, social support, and perceptions of traumatic events impact the resiliency of these young Latinos.

Past research on border-town violence and its impact on citizens is available; however, no previous researchers focused on Latino youth. Extant literature was also lacking regarding resiliency in the population of 18- to 19-year-old Latino youth in this area. Thus, this study may fill a gap in the literature regarding how Latino youth 18 to 19 years of age have become so resilient in the face of cartel violence at the Texas-Mexico border, providing a foundation for scholars to explore the issue further. Findings may also indicate what type of supports better predict resiliency in this population.

This chapter included an overview of the study and the background of the topic. Also presented were the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the research question and hypotheses. Chapter 1 included the theoretical framework, the nature of the study, and guiding definitions, as well as the assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the study. Finally, I discussed the significance of this study and how it may contribute to the fields of multicultural information and psychology.

Chapter 2 includes an in-depth discussion of the available literature on resiliency, the impact of social and family supports, and how Latino youth perceive traumatic events. After identifying the literature review search strategies and the theoretical foundation, I provide a thorough overview of the literature related to similar variables, bearing in mind the lack of research on the combination of variables specific to this study. Chapter 2 ends with a summary of the available literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Violence at the U.S.-Mexican border has escalated as the result of increasing drug cartel activity (Archibold, 2009), creating potentially highly dangerous conditions for the estimated 2.3 million people living in Texas border towns adjacent to Mexico (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). This criminal activity has the potential to significantly impact the lives of U.S. citizens, including the numerous children who live along the Texas-Mexico border. Although harmful conditions at the border may result in negative outcomes, violence and other negative conditions might improve children's resilience and coping capabilities (Fast, 2016). The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2015) found that the cultivation of resilience among children was an important part of healthy growth. Children who developed the ability to manage negative emotions and respond positively in the face of adversity displayed increased resilience (Deblinger et al., 2017). However, when children fail to develop resilience, they may experience emotional difficulties as a result of poor responses to adverse conditions (Kelly et al., 2015).

The purpose of this quantitative study was to measure the resilience of Latino youth ages 18 to 19 years who had experienced or observed cartel-related violence along the Texas-Mexico border. This study is significant for several reasons. First, I addressed the existing gap in the literature regarding resilience among Latino youth as it relates to cartel violence. Results from the study may be applicable to efforts to improve the well-being of students. Data-supported findings indicate what protective factors among Latino youth guard against the negative outcomes of cartel violence, information that may

facilitate interventions in Latino communities that foster such factors and improve the well-being of this population.

Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature on resilience theory, resilience, Latino resilience, and border violence and its consequences. The purpose of this study was to examine the association between family support systems, social support systems, and traumatic events and resilience among Latino youth living near the Texas-Mexico border. Chapter 2 addresses the literature search strategy, the study's theoretical foundation, and literature related to key variables, concluding with a summary.

Literature Search Strategy

Online databases reviewed to obtain the necessary literature for this study were PsycNet, PubMed, SAGE Journals, Taylor & Francis, and Wiley Online Library. Google Scholar and Google search engines were further sources for queries. Keywords searched were *border crime*, *border violence*, *cartel crime*, *group resilience*, *individual resilience*, *Latinos*, *Latino youth*, *Latino resilience*, *resilience*, and *resilience theory*. The majority of material used in the literature review comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and published dissertations, with additional data drawn from government websites. To ensure recent scholarship, most publication dates were between 2015 and 2019; however, earlier works were occasionally appropriate when the information was critical to the theoretical framework or integral to the study.

The research reviewed for this study pertained to Latinos, border violence, resilience, and resilience among Latinos. Although border violence has escalated and waned over the years, unintended consequences of the war on drugs with Mexico led to

the creation of even more drug cartels. The transport of drugs across the border continues, with border towns being locations of ongoing violence owing to both the cartels and the conditions created by the intersection of police forces, political policies, and criminal cartels. This literature review begins with an examination of the underlying theoretical framework before leading into a discussion of Latino resilience and the violence that is present along the border.

Theoretical Foundation

Resilience Theory

Resilience theory suggests that numerous factors, including poverty, local violence, and familial support, can all impact the likelihood of a positive or negative response by an individual (Stoddard et al., 2012). The three models comprising resilience theory are compensatory, challenge, and protective. The compensatory model indicates that resiliency is a factor that neutralizes an individual's exposure to risk, the challenge model indicates that some factors can moderate the consequences of risk exposure, and the protective model shows that certain resources can reduce the impact of negative outcomes.

Resilience theory not only indicates factors that lead to increased negative outcomes resulting from negative risk exposure, but also shows protective factors that either act as moderators or have a direct impact in reducing the effects of risk (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Stoddard et al., 2012). The basic argument underlying resilience theory is that increased levels of resilience allow individuals to cope more easily with a crisis and resume their typical routines in a relatively short time (van Breda, 2018). The

study of resilience is, therefore, important to identify what factors affect the outcomes of negative events, either positively or negatively.

The original researchers on resilience theory attempted to understand how risk impacts individuals and to identify protective factors against risk (Garmezy, 1973). Scholarly inquiry into resilience began in the 1970s, with Garmezy and Streitman (1974) contributing to the formalization of resilience as a construct. Garmezy and Streitman began by examining how children respond when exposed to various risks within their environments. Next, the researchers compared how these children developed into adults, comparing adults who grew up with relatively few negative outcomes despite having heavy risk exposures as children to adults who had negative outcomes because of childhood exposure to risk. An early body of research indicated that although negative childhood conditions often turned into adult trauma, the construct of resilience sometimes mitigated negative outcomes.

Creating confusion surrounding resilience theory and the resilience construct is the changing definition of resilience, with several reconceptualizations over the years (Southwick, Bonanno, Maten, Panter-Brick, & Yehuda, 2014). In many cases, resilience is an individual quality that manifests in the face of negative circumstances and can help mitigate adverse outcomes (Graber et al., 2015; Sippel, Pietrzak, Charney, Mayes, & Southwick, 2015). However, the conceptualization of resilience is not always as an individual characteristic, but as a characteristic of groups.

Groups can range in size from small to large organizations (Alliger et al., 2015; Fuentes-Peláez, Balsells, Fernández, Vaquero, & Amorós, 2016; Keck & Sakdapolrak,

2013). Groups may also extend to entire countries, in which case the characteristic of *national resilience* refers to the ability of a nation to withstand negative circumstances that strike across the country (Eshel & Kimhi, 2016; Fjäder, 2014). Despite the shifting definition of resilience as part of resilience theory, the most common way of exploring resilience is within the context of an individual and resulting environmental effects.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

Border Violence

A significant amount of violence has occurred at the Texas-Mexico border, specifically in the border towns of McAllen, Roma, Rio Grande City, and Hidalgo (Aguilar & Ura, 2016). This violence has become a significant issue for residents, with many individuals' central points of violence occurring between members of Mexican drug cartels and local border officers (Jones, 2014). In May 2017, an estimated 28 individuals died from cartel violence, which expanded beyond those involved in the conflict to civilians living in the area (Virgin, 2017). This outbreak of violence created tenuous conditions in which anxiety and fear were rampant among those living in the region. Flanigan (2012) suggested that a significant degree of infiltration of Mexican drug cartel members into these local border towns led to ongoing local conflicts.

Research indicates that cartel violence has been ongoing at the U.S.-Mexico border since the time of Prohibition, suggesting a long history of criminal unrest in the region (Hodgin, 2014). Over the decades, cartel violence has had significant consequences for Americans as it moved into and across the United States. One of the most prominent examples of spillover violence was the 1985 killing of Drug Enforcement

Administration agent Enrique Camarena by Mexican drug cartels (Grant, 2012). Since then, the cartels have expanded both northward into the United States and southward, deeper into Mexico (Hodgin, 2014). This expansion has left the United States increasingly exposed to further violence. The ongoing spread of cartel influence has meant increased infiltration into some of the United States' largest cities, with many major U.S. gangs aligning with cartels in the movement of drugs (Kellner & Pipitone, 2010). This ongoing alignment between cartels and U.S.-based gangs has entailed the recruitment of an increasing number of young people for the movement of drugs in both countries, increasing the risk of violence against youth as part of the war on drugs. As a result, there has been a normalization of violence within these communities as a means to cope (Virgin, 2017).

U.S. government officials have introduced proposals for increased spending to better equip and staff border agencies (Slack, Martínez, Lee, & Whiteford, 2016). However, border militarization may potentially promote violence rather than restricting it (Slack et al., 2016). The Migrant Border Crossing Study consisted of more than 1,000 surveys of deported immigrants, producing data on family members and returning migrants, among others. The use of violence had varying results based on geographic differences (Slack et al., 2016). Study findings indicated that the use of violence in areas with drug cartel activity was not always associated with positive outcomes in a region. Also found was that, at times, border patrol officials abused their roles and used violence in inappropriate ways, leading to poor outcomes in the region. Accordingly, further

research is necessary to better understand the impact of violence as a response (Slack et al., 2016).

The border between the United States and Mexico has also suffered with increased attention in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center (Payan, 2016). Although the attacks that occurred in 9/11 were far away from the border, the bombing has become a major focus of the war on terror. This renewed attention at the border overlapped with a period when the war on drugs within Mexico was accelerating, leading to an estimated 120,000 deaths from Tijuana to Ciudad Juarez and beyond (Payan, 2016). Law enforcement along the border became increasingly militarized in response to both the war on terror and the war on drugs. Security became more than a means to an end it increased, with the involvement of ever-increasing numbers of police officers, judges, and juries (Payan, 2016). These assertions align with those of Slack et al. (2016), who found that border militarization was an increasing phenomenon and that violence, when conceptualized to include the actions of law enforcement, may lead to poorer outcomes within the region rather than promoting peace.

At least one study indicated that individuals who injected drugs along the border experienced police victimization (Pinedo et al., 2015), findings that align with Slack et al.'s (2016) discovery that border militarization had partly contributed to police-rooted aggression among locals. Drug injection is a common driver of HIV infection among people living on the border; accordingly, Pinedo et al. (2015) examined factors associated with police victimization in the border city of Tijuana, Mexico, to include behaviors such as physical and sexual violence, bribes, unlawful confiscation, and extortion. Between

2011 and 2013, Pinedo et al. collected data from 733 people who injected drugs, subsequently using regression analysis to identify factors correlated with police victimization. Among the participants, 56% indicated recent targeting and victimization by police.

Certain factors were more likely to produce victimization. Recent injection of methamphetamines was associated with increased victimization (Pinedo et al., 2015). The researchers suggested that using drugs produced physical markers that made these individuals easier targets. Police may have been identifying recent drug users and targeting them, leading to increased victimization (Pinedo et al., 2015). Border violence associated with drug use connected not only to illegal cartels but also to police officers operating in the region.

Acts of violence at the border have claimed many lives, hurting the people who live in these areas. Journalists covering violence at the border have often become victims themselves (Bustamante & Rely, 2015). Between 2000 and 2014, there were more than 100 journalists killed in Mexico, with over half murdered along the northern states forming the country's border. Several conditions in Mexico made it difficult for journalists to work safely (Bustamante & Rely, 2015). Members of the press faced oppression rooted not only in illegal violence, but also in political oppression and efforts to silence the press. Bustamante and Rely (2016) identified Mexico as among the most dangerous Latin American countries for journalists.

Attacks on journalists often occurred as criminal rivalries increased between groups (Holland & Rios, 2015). Examining the conditions in which journalists were

targets of violent action in Mexico, Holland and Rios (2015) found that the presence of influential cartels alone did not predict violence; however, when rivalries increased, violence escalated. Holland and Rios suggested that the cartels attempted to limit information to the public using violence and violent actions against the press. The link between violence and cartel rivalry was consistent with assertions by Beittel (2015) and Calderón, Robles, Díaz-Cayeros, and Magaloni (2015), who found that cartels broken up by authorities divided into smaller organizations, engaging in increasing levels of violence that affected not only one another, but also individuals living within a region. Holland and Rios added to the body of literature by suggesting that journalists may fall victim to such violence, given their findings associating rivalries with journalist-directed violence.

According to Vogt (2017), the fluid U.S.-Mexico border is an arterial border, a location of dynamic interaction. Accordingly, the conceptualization of borders is not as fixed lines, but as fluid areas in which existing authorities and migrant groups interact. Contexts vary across the 714 miles that constitute the U.S.-Mexico border, with concerns over national security and the ongoing war on drugs negatively impacting the lives of the people who live there.

Restrictive immigration policies enacted in the 1970s and 1980s were in response to large numbers of Central American residents fleeing social upheavals within their countries. During the 1980s, Mexico began to militarize its southern border in response to the northward migration of Central Americans (Vogt, 2017). This time was a period of joint training between U.S. immigration authorities and Mexican operatives. This

combined response to immigration filtered into the drug war, which expanded in 2006 during Mexican President Felipe Calderón's increased war on drug cartels. Although the United States funded Calderón's efforts, the offensive took a toll on Mexico in the form of more than 100,000 lives lost. As Vogt (2017) noted, tight immigration enforcement and an intensifying war on drugs produced violence and death along the border. Immigrants had to pass through increasingly dangerous environments, smugglers grew in prominence, and violence directed against migrants was overlooked (Vogt, 2017). As such, the combined impact of the war on drugs and tightened immigration had inadvertent negative outcomes for migrants along the border.

The war on drugs led to significant pushback from cartels, with extensive loss of life. Even so, the United States appears to experience less overall crime along the border when enacting high border enforcement (Coronado & Orrenius, 2017). Between 1991 and 2000, the crime rate along the U.S. border fell by 34%, and the overall U.S. crime rate fell by 30%, indicating perhaps a higher decline elsewhere in the country. Coronado and Orrenius (2017), however, were unable to attribute this decline to migration enforcement alone.

There were also changes in statistics that indicated that the situation along the border was more complex than migration enforcement, leading to greater declines in crime (Coronado & Orrenius, 2017). For instance, although property-related crime along the border dropped sharply, violent crime fell at a slower pace along the border when high migration enforcement was in place compared to other parts of the nation (Coronado & Orrenius, 2017). Consequently, policies and law enforcement produce varying

outcomes and, given the complexity of factors along the border, there may not be a simple relationship between high migration law enforcement and decreased crime.

Also notable is that drug violence arising out of Mexico is not a product of the country's war on drugs; indeed, other factors have contributed to outbreaks of violence (Trejo & Ley, 2017). For instance, in the 1990s, Mexican drug cartels engaged in a violent war against one another at a time when there was no significant push to end the drug trade out of the country. Instead, the degradation of existing protective factors led to increased violence in areas of Mexico (Trejo & Ley, 2017). One of the primary means by which this occurred was through rotation of the political parties in power at the gubernatorial level throughout the country. This rotation was a distinct shift from the prior one-party rule, with the uncertainty of that transition creating a lack of protection against the cartels (Trejo & Ley, 2017). The resulting power vacuum led to cartels securing and expanding territory as opposition parties won more power throughout the country, creating transitional periods.

The situation in the 1990s was distinct from the circumstances in the 2000s, when the war on drugs increased violence along different pathways (Calderón, 2015). After 2006, security policies shifted to the targeting and arrest of high-profile cartel leaders. Although such actions could help disrupt criminal organizations, they might also promote both inter- and intracartel fighting (Calderón et al., 2015). Essentially, Calderón et al. (2015) suggested that the fracturing of large organizations into smaller ones as a result of police action led to cartel warfare.

Calderón et al.'s (2015) finding that police efforts increased cartel violence was similar to Beittel's (2015) assertion that efforts directed against cartels led to their splintering and beginning to fight among themselves. Calderón et al. suggested the capture of senior leaders and targeting of drug kingpins had inadvertent effects that would not have occurred with the arrest of lower-ranking members of these organizations. Evidence indicated an uptick in violence and homicides following the capture of one of these leaders, showing that arresting highly placed gang leaders had multiple unintended effects (Calderón et al., 2015). Although strong action may help to create disorganization with cartels in the short term, it could also lead to multiple forms of unintended violence as organizations try to regroup in the aftermath of the arrest (Calderón et al., 2015). In contrast, the arrest of lower-ranking individuals does not seem to increase violence; in fact, removal of such individuals may help disrupt drug operations. As such, it may at times be appropriate to arrest individuals lower in an organization to disrupt operations and limit violence in the region.

Osorio (2015) discussed the ongoing role of fracturing and its place in encouraging violence at the border. The researcher examined patterns of drug violence within Mexico between 2000 and 2010, drawing upon the escalation of drug violence during this time of increased police enforcement meant to disperse cartels. Osorio analyzed spatial data to determine police impact in areas of Mexico and found that law enforcement had a disruptive effect in different regions of the country. Accompanying this disruption was an intensification of violence between criminal organizations. After the deployment of police forces into areas where there was a high concentration of cartels

and other criminal groups, the resulting disruption turned cartels against one another and increased the degree of violence in the region.

An increase in criminal violence in Mexico occurs whether the police activity is violent or nonviolent (Osorio, 2015). This result was consistent with previous scholars who linked intensified police efforts to a corresponding uptick in violent actions by criminal organizations. Calderón et al. (2015) and Beittel (2015) indicated that intensified police activity fragmented and fractured criminal organizations, leading to intensified violence between cartels that often affected innocent individuals living in these areas. Therefore, Osorio's (2015) research added to a significant body of literature indicating that police activity could have the unintended effect of promoting cartel violence.

Violence on the border has correlations with numerous factors, both economic and noneconomic (Baysan, Burke, Gonzalez, Hsiang, & Miguel, 2018). Baysan et al. (2018) found intergroup violence often associated with economic factors, whereas noneconomic factors were more significant in motivating interpersonal violence. Baysan et al. examined crime within the country in an attempt to clarify whether these assumptions held in assessing violence in Mexico. Although economic factors did drive intergroup violence in Mexico, increasing murders and violent attacks between groups in the country, economics only partly explained violence within the country. Baysan et al. identified psychological factors in the increased violence in Mexico. The researchers also put forward the intriguing hypothesis that seasonal temperature in the nation also had an influence on crime (Baysan et al., 2018). Therefore, when attempting to understand violence in the country, it may be important to consider not only the economic drivers but

also the noneconomic motivators, including psychological and physiological factors, that may contribute to violent behavior.

Regardless of the source of the violence, authorities find an extremely high number of individuals dead along the U.S.-Mexico border every year. Hundreds of people have died along the border since the late 1990s, a number variously estimated as between 200 and 500 (Alonso & Nienass, 2016). However, there is a lack of accountability for these deaths. Many of the bodies go unidentified and buried in unmarked areas along the border, sometimes on private ranches and potter's fields, with little effort made to find relatives. Despite recent efforts to bring more attention to this situation and create greater state accountability (Alonso & Nienass, 2016), there remains a severe lack of attention given to those who die at the border.

Economic Costs

There are also significant economic costs associated with border violence. In a study of the violence and resulting insecurity within Mexico, Trevino and Genna (2017) investigated how President Calderón's war on Mexican drug cartels impacted the economy of Mexican cities. The researchers had great interest in the borderland, defined as a geographic region with close links between the adjoining territories and symbiotic cities (Trevino & Genna, 2017). Trevino and Genna noted that Mexican businesspeople and consumers along the U.S. border had the luxury of making economic transactions in the more secure environment of the US versus the insecure environment of Mexico. As violence increased, including acts of homicide, kidnapping, and extortion, there was a corresponding increase in gross sales in Texas (Trevino & Genna, 2017). This

phenomenon was apparent even after controlling for other economic and demographic factors, indicating that various crimes had led to a decline in retail sales within Mexico.

The impact of violence on Mexico's economy emerged not only in terms of financial costs, but also with regard to decreased labor productivity (Cabral, Mollick, & Saucedo, 2016). Cabral et al. (2016) examined Mexico's labor productivity as gauged by GDP per worker from 2003 to 2013. During that same timeframe, there was a notable rise in drug-related crimes inside the country. Following the analysis of financial data, Cabral et al. found that the overall impact of crime on labor productivity across the country was small. However, they also noted the impact of crime on productivity varied by geography. The key determinant in whether productivity declined was whether law enforcement prosecuted crimes in the area. Cabral et al. concluded that crime did have a negative impact on labor productivity during the country's war on drugs, an outcome worsened when there was a failure to invest in public security and prosecute crimes. However, Cabral et al. explained that federal authorities within Mexico were more effective than state and local authorities at prosecuting such crimes, indicating the need for a strong response from the national government to achieve reduced crime and increased productivity.

Multiple forms of violence have occurred at the border (Slack & Campbell, 2016). Some of this violence occurs because of human smuggling, which has given rise to coyotes, or individuals who help to transfer Mexican residents across the border without capture by authorities. Some coyotes perform not only human smuggling but also drug trafficking, with the services offered dependent upon larger economic conditions. Over

time, progressively united human smuggling and drug trafficking efforts have become increasingly violent. This merging of services transformed corridors previously used for family migration and human smuggling into drug corridors. Coyotes and cartels often use groups of migrants as a cover for the smuggling of drugs across the border. As these pathways are increasingly overrun by drug smuggling, regions of Mexico become ever more dominated by drug-related violence. The Zetas, a group of violent security enforcers for drug cartels, broke off and formed their own cartels in the area of Nuevo Laredo. Hanging bodies found strapped to a bridge in Nuevo Laredo preceded a blogger found brutally murdered in the same area. With the increasing growth of cartels and illicit regimes came a consequent decline in security for migrants seeking shelter along the border and safety from drug violence (Slack & Campbell, 2016). The transformation of migrant pathways to drug corridors, therefore, resulted in increasing violence for individuals still using those regions for migration into the United States.

Gendered Violence

Conners et al. (2015) found sexual violence also prominent in the cities of Ciudad-Juarez and Tijuana. The researchers focused on female sex workers who were disproportionately impacted by HIV and most likely to be the victims of gender-based violence perpetrated by clients; accordingly, Conners et al. proposed that structural factors had facilitated these actions. Over 6 months, the researchers examined how structural determinants tied together physical and sexual client-perpetuated violence along the border of the two cities. Conners et al. used multivariate logistic regression to determine the factors most associated with client-perpetuated violence, finding high

numbers of foreign clients and substance-abusing clients associated with increased client-perpetuated violence. The chance of violence against female sex workers increased if the woman was a street worker and if the violence occurred in a neighborhood (Conners et al., 2015). The role of substance abuse in perpetuating violence was particularly notable given the association between cartels, substances, and violence along the border.

The children of sex workers also likely faced several high-risk factors (Servin et al., 2015). Servin et al. (2015) noted that researchers of female sex workers along the border tended to focus on HIV risk related to sexual and substance abuse patterns; accordingly, Servin et al. studied the children of sex workers, taking the focus off individual factors leading to increased HIV risk. The researchers examined 628 female sex workers who injected drugs, 20% of whom reported having a parent who was a sex worker, most commonly the mother. Most respondents had begun working in prostitution before the age of 18 years, first drank alcohol before age 18, were likely to have taken cocaine, and were likely to have been coerced into nonconsensual sex (Servin et al., 2015). Servin et al. concluded there were generational factors among this part of the population, with risky behavior among parents leading to poorer outcomes and similar behaviors among their children.

Further research has occurred to explore female sex workers operating along the border who inject drugs and their respective intravaginal practices (Seidman et al., 2016). Seidman et al. (2016) used data from interviews with 529 female sex workers in Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez who injected drugs. Of the women who completed surveys, 43.3% had performed intravaginal acts in the previous 6 months that incorporated a range of

behaviors, including the insertion of liquids or suppositories into their vaginas for any reason. Such practices differed depending on a variety of factors, including demographic and social aspects. The high number of individuals engaged in intravaginal acts was of some concern, given the association between such practices and increased vulnerability to HIV (Seidman et al., 2016); however, the correlation was not clear. Seidman et al. found that women engaged in such practices to treat vaginal infections, indicating this population may have a lack of access to appropriate medical care. Given the increased risk of a variety of diseases due to their use of injected drugs, women in this population have unique health risks (Seidman et al., 2016).

The U.S.-Mexico border environment seems to promote substance abuse among female sex workers (Nowotny, Cepeda, Perdue, Negi, & Valdez, 2016). Nowotny et al. (2016) investigated female sex workers in these regions to identify pathways to substance abuse. Their qualitative investigation consisted of interviews and ethnographic observations to provide a better understanding of how factors along the border contributed to substance abuse. Nowotny et al. suggested that, for many women, the need to enter sex work may result from immigration patterns at the border, the economic pressures created by an increasingly globalized economy, and a woman's desire for financial autonomy. Women often turned to sex work as a means to support their families, despite the negative outcomes of engaging in such work. For instance, as women became increasingly involved in sex work, they were more likely to become substance abusers, typically beginning with alcohol and transitioning to cocaine and heroin (Nowotny et al., 2016). Accordingly, identifying pathways for substance

development is important to help curtail the ongoing problem with substance abuse among this population (Nowotny et al., 2016).

The impact of early exposure to negative conditions such as violence can last well into adulthood (Oza, Silverman, Bojorquez, Strathdee, & Goldenberg, 2015). Nowotny et al. (2016) identified several contexts in adulthood that led to substance abuse. For example, sex workers' use of alcohol eventually progressed to the use of harder substances. Children of sex workers often faced violence at the border and began abusing substances early as a result (Servin et al., 2015).

Other early experiences included exposure to sexual abuse, violence, limited access to sexual health care, and sexual abuse (Oza et al., 2015). Following a qualitative investigation of 25 female sex workers in Tijuana, Oza et al. (2015) found experiences during childhood and adolescence influenced adulthood outcomes; however, the researchers were unable to ascertain whether exposure alone led to participation in the sex work industry. The vast number of negative outcomes in adulthood indicates the need for programs to address vulnerabilities at multiple levels in border cities: individual, social, and structural (Oza et al., 2015). By addressing these vulnerabilities, it might be possible to improve the reproductive and sexual health of sex workers operating along the border (Oza et al., 2015).

Gendered violence at the border threatens not only sex workers, but all women who live in border areas (Stephen, 2016). Domestic violence is part of the experience of Mexican immigrant women, facilitated by the larger structural context in which these incidents occurred (Stephen, 2016). Stephen (2016) suggested transborder violence as the

underlying phenomenon, a type of violence that crossed national borders as well as geographic regions, social classes, ethnic structures, and state boundaries. Research into violence against women at the border included acts committed by illegal forces, political policies, and authorities. Women on the U.S. side of the border as illegals face multiple threats, yet lack a way to escape those conditions given that their actions may lead to deportation (Stephen, 2016).

Violence along the border causes pain and suffering to the individuals who live there, with women frequently the targets of drug war violence (Agnew, 2015). Agnew (2015) deemed this phenomenon “femicide,” with women murdered simply because they were women. Previous research indicated that changing economic conditions, owing partly to changes created by the North American Free Trade Agreement, led to a devaluation of women in Mexican society; however, Agnew suggested the shift in the global drug trade corresponded with the killing of women. At the core of Agnew’s argument was that creation of an environment in which women lost their lives was due not to economic conditions, but to expanded drug trafficking.

Resiliency

Formal characterization of resilience is as the ability of individuals to endure negative conditions and circumstances and to return to normal functioning and a positive mental health outlook (U.S. Department of State, 2018). Cultivating resilience may include having an ability to accept change and anticipate challenges, as these qualities allow an individual to adapt to negative conditions rapidly. Other means of being resilient include maintaining a healthy perspective on problems, not overemphasizing them but

instead seeing them for what they are. Other qualities of the resilient individual include the ability to let go of anger, overcome fears, and act in the face of adversity (U.S. Department of State, 2018). The U.S. Department of State does not suggest that resilient people do not experience negative emotions; rather, resilient people can appropriately respond to the negative conditions they face.

The APA (n.d.) has also addressed resilience and the factors that help to increase it. To improve resilience, individuals can acquire better communication and problem-solving skills. Better communication helps individuals to connect with others during negative circumstances and find help; in turn, problem-solving skills are useful for generating potential resolutions to problems. A second important aspect of remaining resilient includes being able to manage one's emotions. In the face of adversity and painful times, individuals often respond with particularly strong emotions that complicate the determination of an appropriate solution. Resilient individuals are better equipped to manage those emotions.

Other factors may contribute to resiliency. For instance, robust social support may help individuals more easily manage their emotions, connecting them with others in whom they can confide. Also, individuals with positive self-perceptions often demonstrate an increased ability to endure negative circumstances and return to normal functioning. People with positive self-perceptions are often more confident in their abilities and decision-making, allowing them to respond more adequately to challenges. Finally, individuals can increase their resilience by caring for their physical condition, which may entail simply taking time away from negative conditions and relaxing (APA,

n.d.). Consequently, there are numerous actions individuals can take and multiple conditions present that influence a person's resilience.

Other aspects of personality and psychology may help increase the level of resilience (Meyer, 2015). Researchers have found an association between improved resilience and multiple personality qualities, ranging from the locus of control to extroversion (Meyer, 2015). Important to note is that personal qualities occur within a context and that interaction with the environment affects how those characteristics impact resilience. Personality qualities can only partly account for a person's ability to rebound from a negative condition. When assessing resilience and rebounding, it is also important to consider the environmental contexts that shape an individual's response. For instance, family and community may both contribute to a person's ability to respond to negative conditions. As such, any assessment of resilience must incorporate consideration of the person's environment (Meyer, 2015).

At one time, researchers assumed individuals were typically resilient and able to rebound from negative occurrences (Infurna & Luthar, 2016). However, the body of scholarship has more recently indicated that resilience and the ability to rebound are less common than previously thought (Infurna & Luthar, 2016). Infurna and Luthar (2016) used longitudinal data that tracked how individuals responded following a range of negative life events. The researchers found that instead of being a common response to negative circumstances, resilience was instead an uncommon response. In practice, this meant that even individuals who had previously demonstrated a fair amount of personality stability often responded unfavorably to negative conditions. Findings

indicated that resilience did not manifest even among individuals with high degrees of positive mental health, whom the researchers anticipated would strongly rebound to negative life events (Infurna & Luthar, 2016). As such, Infurna and Luthar indicated that further research was necessary to better understand how frequently resilience influenced outcomes.

Individual Resilience

The body of literature is rife with studies into how resilience manifests within the individual; however, such inquiry often includes consideration of environmental factors. To assess how students drew upon available resources to respond to a negative life event, Graber, Turner, and Madill (2016) examined resilience among individuals and how friendships impacted that resilience. The researchers administered a self-reporting survey to 409 male and female students in which participants recorded the quality of their friendships. Students also rated themselves on constructs such as social support and psychological resilience. Analysis of the data indicated that when students perceived they had high-quality friendships, their level of resilience was also higher (Graber et al., 2016). The close ties between high-quality friendships and resilience showed that perceptions of friendships were highly related to resilience. Students' perceptions of having high-quality friendships correlated with higher levels of resilience, which might help them respond positively in the face of a negative event (Graber et al., 2016).

Graber, Pichon, and Carabine (2015) identified further protective factors in a person's environment, the most important being family, which helped increase resilience in two ways. First, children of supportive parents had a better chance of responding

positively when confronted by negative life events. These children were more likely to return their normal routines than youth who had less-supportive parents. A second way in which families functioned to promote resilience was through family attachment, which helped to improve a person's ability to rebound from harmful incidents. Graber et al.'s (2015) findings indicated the importance of attachment within families to promoting resilience in children. Also critical was for parents to watch over their children, providing the necessary supervision to guide them in difficult times (Graber et al., 2015). Findings showed that strongly attached families with supportive parents who watched over their children were most likely to have resilient children.

Monitoring and overseeing children was a quality that Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) also found of particular importance. Specifically, the researchers asserted that close supervision was especially important for children raised in an environment characterized by dangerous conditions and violence. Parents served as a valuable supportive force that helped children to return to normal function following negative events (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005).

The importance of external support in improving resilience was a topic of study by Lu et al. (2016), who examined social support as a means of improving outcomes and raising resilience following a negative life event. Friends can serve as needed social support, although as indicated by Graber et al. (2016), even the perception of high-quality friendships was associated with increased resilience. Accordingly, resilience corresponded with this form of social support, whether due genuinely close friendships or merely the perception thereof. Such findings indicate the environmental impact on

individual resilience and the role that friends might have on how an individual responds to a negative life event. Graber et al. (2016) suggested that, although commonly associated with friendships, social support also occurred within romantic relationships and when children placed their trust in dependable adults.

Coping skills appear to be another means of improving resilience (Graber et al., 2015). Graber et al.'s (2015) findings are not dissimilar to the APA's (n.d.) assertion that the ability to adapt to problems and respond to issues was possible by properly assessing the size of a problem and coping with intense emotions. Graber et al. identified a link between coping and improved results, regardless of an individual's background. Even individuals from different cultures showed similar positive outcomes when they had the appropriate coping skills to navigate negative incidents. As suggested by Fergus and Zimmerman (2005), people able to cope with negative life incidents were often those best able to take advantage of social support. Graber et al. also found that emotional regulation was important, as were individual-level personality traits. Importantly, personality traits were linked to self-efficacy beliefs, raising individuals' confidence in their decision-making. This finding is also consistent with the APA (n.d.), which noted that individuals who most demonstrated resilience were those who believed in their decision-making. In addition to these various qualities, optimistic personality traits contribute to an individual's likelihood of resiliency. This cluster of findings indicated the importance of both individual and environmental, or system-level (Sippel et al., 2015), factors in promoting resilience.

Not only did environmental forces impact a person, but individuals could also impact their environment (Sippel et al., 2015). Sippel et al. (2015) distinguished between individual and system-level resilience. Individual resilience referred to a person's response to stress; system-level resilience, on the other hand, was resilience that occurred at a social scale, such as the resilience of a family or a neighborhood to larger negative events. Sippel et al. focused their study on the system-level relationship of romantic couples composed of two individuals suffering from PTSD. Sippel et al. hypothesized that introducing a system-level intervention may help the individuals comprising the system, with the two individuals, in turn, impacting the system, in this case, the relationship. Sippel et al. found that introducing a system-level intervention provided treatment for the individual PTSD experienced by system members, reducing their symptoms and improving their psychological outcomes. However, as the system-level intervention reduced individuals' PTSD, the system (the marital relationship) also improved (Sippel et al., 2015). The research showed that by introducing system-level interventions, individual members of the system could experience improvements that then reflected upon the system itself, findings that have potential consequences for treating not only couples but communities. The bidirectional nature of resilience could, therefore, be a way to improve outcomes for individuals, who then improve outcomes for systems.

Dooley, Slavich, Moreno, and Bower (2017) suggested resilience was not only a product of positive circumstances and influences but might also develop when individuals experienced a certain degree of lifetime stress. Importantly, they noted that a

moderate level of stress produced increased resilience. Dooley et al. (2017) interviewed women breast cancer survivors who experienced stress from their cancer diagnosis to understand their acute and chronic stress levels. Dooley et al. examined low, moderate, and high levels of stress, finding neither low nor high stress produced resilience. Instead, moderate levels led to improved degrees of resilience with fewer intrusive thoughts. These findings were important because they indicated there was an ideal amount of stress a person could experience that led to increased resilience. Accordingly, a moderate degree of stress was most likely to help improve the resilience of these women in coping with their diagnosis of breast cancer.

Latino Resilience

Studies of Latino resilience have taken place in several contexts. Li, Thing, Galvan, Gonzalez, and Bluthenthal (2017) explored resilience strategies among gay and bisexual Latino individuals within families. Li et al. (2017) found negative effects from heterosexism and racism, whether the discrimination occurred within the community or beyond. However, discrimination incorporated more than just overt discrimination but also the form of microaggression. Discrimination also appeared through microaggression, defined as a form of daily discrimination through covert comments or treatments that could have a negative psychological impact on individuals. In Li et al.'s study, the gay and bisexual Latinos shared that they faced microaggressions and responded in a variety of ways, with resilience strategies including engaging in self-discovery, exploring their perspectives, and strengthening their identities. The individuals became more involved in their communities, as well, which served as a further buffer against the negative effects of

stigma. Participants also chose to socialize more selectively, which helped them find others who could best understand how they felt. Finally, the gay and bisexual participants became advocates for themselves and overtly resisted microaggressions (Li et al., 2017). One takeaway from this study was that engaging in active responses to oppressive conditions could facilitate resilience.

Latinos who have crossed national borders during migration face risks and tests of their resilience (Torres, Alcántara, Rudolph, & Viruell-Fuentes, 2016). Torres et al. (2016) found little examination of health after border crossings among migrants who maintained ties with their family members back home. In addition, Torres et al. hypothesized that elements such as social ties and ethnic identity factored into resilience. Analyzing data from the National Latino and Asian American Survey, Torres et al. identified migration as a significant source of psychological stress. However, in this case, maintaining family ties did little to affect individual outcomes (Torres et al., 2016).

The lack of resilience can have far-ranging consequences. Saucedo, Wiebe, and Simoni (2016) found childhood sexual abuse and depression among Latinos associated with poor outcomes as adults. In a study of 149 HIV-positive Latinos, Saucedo et al. (2016) noted that individuals who experienced childhood sexual abuse were less likely to adhere to their treatment programs when they suffered from depression. Consequently, depression acted as a mediator between childhood sexual abuse and treatment adherence. This finding was significant, given the established relationship between childhood sexual abuse and HIV among men who have sex with men (Saucedo et al., 2016). Accordingly,

Sauceda et al. recommended renewed efforts at improving Latino resilience to reduce depression and achieve better treatment outcomes.

Gray, Mendelsohn, and Omoot (2015) conducted a qualitative exploration into the experiences of 13 LGBT Latinos who were first- or second-generation immigrants. Findings showed that participants' resilience stemmed from a sense of connectedness with the LGBT and Latino communities to which they belonged. Gray et al. (2015) found intersectional challenges in the union between the LGBT and Latino communities. However, the overall findings indicated that community was generally important to improving the outcomes of LGBT Latinos and helping support their well-being.

Resilience is, in part, a group construct. Accordingly, Cuervo, Leopold, and Baron (2017) suggested promoting Latino community resilience, indicating that, following Hurricane Sandy in 2012, Latinos were able to quickly rebound and recover their communities with only simple outside intervention. Also noted was that the government-provided training among community-based organizations helped reduce health-based risks to the local population. Cuervo et al. (2017) designed an intervention to improve community-based organizations' capacity to train Latino immigrants in disaster preparedness, creating a culturally competent training program that improved outcomes for Latino immigrant workers operating to restore disaster-stricken communities. The culturally competent element must be the most effective in such training, as this competence addresses Latino immigrants' specific needs.

Positive adaptations to negative conditions have resulted from the use of group therapy administered within Latino communities (Hoskins, Duncan Moskowitz, &

Ordóñez, 2018). Hoskins et al. (2018) conducted group therapy sessions with a sample of 16 Latino youth from an urban environment, testing for both pre- and postintervention outcomes. Reduced scores on the Child Depression Inventory showed this form of therapy was effective. Two unique elements of the therapy were the use of a group context to provide social support and the integration of cultural competency by administering the therapy in Spanish, as needed (Hoskins et al., 2018). Findings indicated the value of using a group approach to therapy to improve resilience and general well-being among Latino youth.

In assessing spirituality as a means of resiliency among Latinos living with cancer, Hunter-Hernández, Costas-Muñíz, & Gany (2015) found adverse life events encouraged individuals' coping skills. One source of adaptation and a means for improving resilience may be spirituality, which often serves as a core aspect of cultural values. Hunter-Hernández et al. (2016) recommended paying attention to the role of spirituality for patients living with cancer, particularly Latinos. Spirituality and religion acted as coping resources for this population; as such, integrating the two aspects into the treatment of cancer may help promote adjustment to treatment among Latinos (Hunter-Hernández et al., 2016). Hunter-Hernández et al. cautioned against the application of findings into a medical field due to a scarcity of research into using spirituality to improve resilience.

Bosma, Orozco, Barriga, Rosas-Lee, and Sieving (2017) found a link between negative social circumstances and increasingly risky behaviors, lack of engagement with formal learning, health disparities, transmission of sexual diseases, and unintended

pregnancies. The researchers emphasized the importance of identifying and encouraging elements that might help Latinos become more resilient to negative conditions, thus improving outcomes and avoiding negative conditions such as racism and discrimination (Bosma et al., 2017). Frequent exposure to discrimination, combined with factors such as economic hardship and harsh immigration policies, negatively impacted Latino adolescents' development. However, encouraging traits such as determination and commitment were helpful in overcoming these negative conditions.

Whereas Bosma et al. (2017) identified negative factors that were harmful to Latinos, Consoli, Delucio, Noriega, and Llamas (2015) noted a factor of resilience. In a study of Latino well-being, Consoli et al. (2015) found that spirituality was often important in helping to counter negative life events. This finding was consistent with Hunter-Hernández et al. (2016), who asserted that spirituality may be a source of resilience in Latino culture. Consoli et al. suggested cultural values and a supportive family were also important in helping cope with adversity. The researchers found spirituality linked specifically with the positive construct of "thriving," which Consoli et al. conceptualized separately from resilience.

When discussing Latino resilience, it is important to remember Latino immigrants may face factors that second- and third-generation Latinos do not (DeJonckheere, Vaughn, & Jacquez, 2015). Part of the fastest-growing population in the United States, Latino immigrant children often live in conditions that lack appropriate infrastructure and resources. Immigrant children often do not have access to bilingual education services and other support services that might help to improve their outcomes. Negative impacts

included factors such as language differences, family strain, and conditions surrounding the immigration process (DeJonckheere et al., 2015).

Consoli and Gonzales (2017) documented the struggles encountered by Mexican immigrants in an exploration of resilience among this population. After conducting interviews with 14 participants, Consoli and Gonzales identified several negative common themes. Acculturation was difficult for these individuals and made integrating into a new society difficult. Language and economic barriers were among the most significant difficulties, although Mexican immigrants also felt oppressed within their new, dominant society. Consoli and Gonzales identified problem-solving as a quality associated with resilience, helping these individuals negotiate negative circumstances, assess situations, and arrive at solutions by drawing on whatever resources they might be able to find. The research was useful in that it illustrated not only aspects that made life more stressful for Mexican immigrants, but factors that helped improve their resilience and arrive at solutions.

Youth

Leiner et al. (2015) indicated the potential for emotional and behavioral problems in children living at the border who face exposure to poverty and collective violence. Collective violence, often the result of criminal activity, is often associated with increased mental health burdens. Leiner et al. set out to measure emotional and behavioral problems between children exposed to poverty and collective violence and children exposed to other early risk factors. The researchers situated their study along the U.S.-Mexico border to contextualize the findings within border activity. Following data

analysis, Leiner et al. found both poverty and collective violence positively correlated with increased emotional and behavioral problems as measured by the Pictorial Child Behavior Checklist, presented in Spanish to gauge mental health among this young population (Leiner et al., 2015). Children exposed to collective violence and poverty had higher levels of emotional and behavioral problems than youth who faced only poverty or who had physical injuries (Leiner et al., 2015). Also, children exposed to both poverty and collective violence had greater emotional and behavioral problems than children of substance-abusing parents. Findings affirmed the negative outcomes of poverty and collective violence on young individuals living at the border.

Violence at the U.S.-Mexico border is particularly problematic for children, who are entering the United States in growing numbers (Musalo & Lee, 2017). In 2014, increased numbers of children and their families began arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border during migrations out of Central America from countries including El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala (Musalo & Lee, 2017). These countries were points of origin largely due to progressively dangerous conditions that led families to seek asylum in the United States. An estimated 24,481 unaccompanied children arrived at the border in 2012, with another 38,833 showing up in 2013 (Musalo & Lee, 2017). In 2014, 68,631 children arrived unaccompanied at the border; the same year, the number of families had grown from 15,056 in 2013 to 68,684 in 2014. These rising numbers indicated a surge of families and children putting their lives at risk due to the violence in their home countries (Musalo & Lee, 2017).

College Age

O'Connor, Vizcaino, and Benavides (2015) found that drug conflicts among university students at the U.S.-Mexico border had a negative impact on mental health. O'Connor et al. (2015) used cross-sectional data to examine how young adults who had a close tie to Mexico responded on mental health assessments. The researchers compared self-reported data from individuals with close ties to Mexico and those without in which students described negative mental health outcomes. During the drug-related armed conflicts between 2008 and 2012, individuals with closer ties reported higher levels of anxiety and posttraumatic stress than their counterparts without such a connection (O'Connor et al., 2015). These individuals reported experiencing at least five traumatic events caused by the drug war, with one of the most negative outcomes being that they often had to stay home to avoid violence. As the students' connection to Mexico grew, the reported negative mental health outcomes also increased.

Drug Use

Significant violence surrounds drug transportation at the U.S.-Mexico border (Beittel, 2015). In a report released by the Congressional Research Service, Beittel (2015) indicated a reversal in the number of arrests and imprisonments of Mexican drug cartel leaders, with notable escapes from prison, such as that by Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, marking massive setbacks in efforts to contain the drug trade in Mexico. Beittel noted the pushback against Mexican crackdown efforts on the drug trade came in response to the capture of Los Zetas leaders and the arrest of cartel leaders Héctor Beltrán Leyva and Vicente Carrillo Fuentes. However, the crackdowns of large organizations led to their

fracturing into many smaller organizations. Between 2006 and 2015, authorities linked an estimated 80,000 homicides to organized crime in Mexico, although there was a slow decline after 2011 during the crackdown led by Mexican President Felipe Calderón (Beittel, 2015). Accurate information about homicides after 2011 is difficult to obtain, given that the Mexican government stopped publishing data regarding organized crime-related homicides. Still, the government reported a 30% decline in homicides after 2012, although other violent crimes continued to rise, including kidnapping and extortion (Beittel, 2015).

Cherpitel, Ye, Zemore, Bond, and Borges (2015) found cross-border mobility associated with alcohol and drug use along the U.S.-Mexico border. Despite increased media attention indicating an ongoing epidemic at the border, Cherpitel et al. (2015) found little epidemiological evidence of a connection between the use of alcohol and other substances and individuals living at the border. Cherpitel et al. studied heavy drinking, alcohol use disorder, and the co-occurring presence of both heavy drinking and drug use through household surveys of 1,565 Mexican American individuals living in the border towns of Laredo, McAllen, and Brownsville, Texas. Findings showed that as mobility at the border increased, so did levels of substance abuse, particularly among individuals aged 18 to 29 years. Individuals sometimes cross the border into Mexico to engage in cheap nightlife and excessive drinking, which may lead to substance abuse.

Individuals also cross the border to obtain OTC prescription drugs, a phenomenon similarly predictive of co-occurring heavy drinking and drug use (Cherpitel et al., 2015). In an attempt to understand the connection between perceived neighborhood violence,

perceived neighborhood collective efficacy, and binge drinking addition, Vaeth, Caetano, and Mills (2015) found neighborhood characteristics influence binge drinking at the U.S.-Mexico border (Vaeth et al., 2015). Therefore, the increased likelihood of abusing substances along the border has more than one precipitating factor.

Vaeth et al. (2015) administered surveys to 1,307 individuals in California and Texas. The results indicated that women over the age of 30 years who perceived violence was low also perceived collective efficacy was high, with less binge drinking as a result. Similar results emerged in women under 30 years of age and in older men. Interestingly, younger men who perceived collective efficacy had higher rates of binge drinking (Vaeth et al., 2015). Accordingly, improving perceptions of violence impacted self-efficacy, having a protective effect against binge drinking (Vaeth et al., 20105). However, because the phenomenon did not hold for young men, different interventions are necessary for decreasing binge drinking among that subset of the border population.

Injected drug use is a significant problem at the border, particularly among sex workers, compounded by the connection between injecting drugs and an increased risk of contracting and transmitting HIV (Cepeda, Nowotny, & Valdez, 2015). The problem is of particular note given the increasing rate of HIV throughout Mexico. Cepeda et al. (2015) identified a 54.2% prevalence of lifetime sexually transmitted infections among individuals who injected drugs, a higher rate than those who had never injected. Sex workers were more likely to inject drugs, increasing the likelihood of contracting HIV and spreading the disease (Cepeda et al., 2015). There was also a correlation between sex workers and the use of crack and cocaine. Accordingly, Cepeda et al. found the

population of sex workers at a particularly high risk of substance abuse and HIV infection.

Qualitative assessments indicated perceived gender differences in the use of methamphetamines along the U.S.-Mexico border (Loza, Ramos, Ferreira-Pinto, Hernandez, & Villalobos, 2015); however, researchers of drug use near the border failed to explore the use of methamphetamines (Loza et al., 2015). Accordingly, Loza et al. (2015) recruited 20 women aged 18 years or older who were active meth users and lived in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, a town that borders El Paso, Texas. Most women indicated introduction to the use of drugs by men they trusted. It became apparent that women trusted men to acquire drugs, feeling unsafe to do so themselves. As a result, the women often began to behave differently toward their family members and friends, in many instances becoming physically aggressive and psychologically unstable (Loza et al., 2015). Accordingly, drug use among women had potentially severe consequences for themselves and others.

Summary and Conclusion

Violence along the border takes on many forms, much of it owing to cartels or resulting from conditions created by border policies and interactions between police and cartels. Although the United States and Mexico have implemented policies to reduce violence, resultant complications have emerged, including inadvertent violence. Cartels continue to operate within Mexico and transport drugs across the U.S. border. In addition, the border environment has created conditions that make life difficult for women and children.

A significant body of literature showed that U.S. and Mexico responses exacerbated cartel violence along the border. However, certain protective factors could help to protect individuals against adverse life events. The ability to manage negative emotions or rely on social support were both connected to increased resilience. The research, though, lacked specific examination of the factors impacting Latino youth who had connections to cartel violence. In response to the gap in the literature, this study was an exploration of how different variables influence resilience and the well-being of Latino youth.

Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the research design and rationale; methodology, including the population; sampling and sampling procedures; procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; and instrumentation and operationalization of constructs. Also explained are the data analysis plan and threats to external and internal validity. Finally, Chapter presents a detailed overview of ethical procedures.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to measure the resiliency of Latino youth 18 to 19 years of age who lived on the Texas-Mexico border and had witnessed, had been involved in, or had family members who had been involved in cartel-related violence. The study was a means to determine, measure, and compare participants' family and social supports along with their perceived opinions and attitudes concerning these traumatic events, and then compare scores to the individual resiliency of the participants. A quantitative approach using a nonexperimental, cross-sectional, correlation-survey design was appropriate to achieve this objective. Findings show whether the variables of family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events predict resiliency in Latino youth who live near the Texas-Mexico border. Individual surveys including the MSPSS, EPTEM, and 5×5RS instruments provided data for analysis (Zimet et al., 1988).

This chapter contains a comprehensive explanation of the methodology used, including the research design, population, and sampling. Also explored are the methods for data analysis and the potential errors in methodology. A discussion of data analysis follows.

Research Design and Rationale

A quantitative approach was appropriate to adequately explore the topics of interest in this study—chiefly, how Latino youth ages 18 to 19 years view their support systems with regard to cartel-related violence along the Texas-Mexico border.

Researchers apply quantitative methods to examine a relationship with the use of theory as the foundation (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, surveys can allow a researcher to measure variables in a quantitative study, subsequently analyzing data to produce statistical findings to determine the relationship between the measured variables (Creswell, 2014). As the purpose of this study was to quantify and measure the variables of family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events among Latino youth ages 18 to 19 years who lived along the U.S.-Mexico border, the project consisted of a nonexperimental, cross-sectional, correlation-survey design. This approach was appropriate for determining whether the variables of family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events predict resiliency in Latino youth who live near the Mexico-Texas border, and if the variable are statistically related to one another. Researchers often use this design to describe, differentiate, and better understand variables among groups at a point in time. The independent variables were the presence of family support systems and social support systems, and the perceived trauma of events along the Texas-Mexico border. The dependent variable of interest was the predicted or actual resiliency of an individual within the context of the independent variables.

Methodology

Population

The overarching population was individuals subjected to or involved with routine cartel violence who had acclimated to the point of resiliency. The target population of interest was Latinos aged 18 to 19 years who lived along the Texas-Mexico border and had been subjected to or involved with trauma caused by cartel violence to such a degree

that they had become resilient. This population comprised hundreds of individuals (Puyana et al., 2017).

Procedures for Recruitment and Participation

Participant recruitment began following approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB); the approval number for this study is 08-09-19-0610063. Community resources and community advocates advertised the study through their Facebook, LinkedIn, and company websites via Mireles Psychological Health Services. Individuals who expressed interest received a link to the informed consent document, which included the purpose of the study, participant expectations and rights, potential risks and benefits of participation, confidentiality, the means of survey administration, and the approximate length of time to complete. After asking any questions they had, participants digitally signed the consent forms and received a link to complete the survey via SurveyMonkey.

Participant eligibility criteria included being 18 to 19 years of age, being currently enrolled in a high school or university less than 25 miles from the Texas-Mexico border, and having been subjected to or influenced by cartel violence. Participants also needed English language proficiency to understand the consent form and survey questions. The exclusion criteria applied to anyone outside of this age range, anyone not enrolled in high school or a local university, and anyone not living in the specified geographic area. Also excluded were individuals who were illiterate or had not endured influence from cartel violence, as well as those who did not provide consent.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

Participant sampling was nonrandom based upon individuals' expression of interest in the study. Interested individuals responded to recruitment posts on Facebook, LinkedIn, or professional websites. After providing their consent to participate, Latino youth received a link to the survey. Of the 134 individuals who completed the survey, 122 met inclusion criteria, with their responses considered in data analysis. Inclusion criteria were being 18 to 19 years of age, currently enrolled in high school or college, and having the necessary support groups and cognitive capabilities to comprehend the trauma associated with cartel violence.

According to Creswell (2014), a minimum sample size of 30 to 50 participants is necessary to fulfill data analysis in a study like this one. To identify the number of participants that was appropriate for this study, I conducted an a priori power analysis, establishing a statistical power of 80%, along with minimal medium effect size and alpha level ($\alpha = .05$). According to these computations, the minimum targeted sample size was 122.

Data Collection

Upon providing informed consent, participants completed a survey administered via SurveyMonkey. Outside of demographic questions, all responses were on a 7-point, Likert-type scale. Surveys included three instruments: the MSPSS, EPTEM, and 5×5RS. Data collected from this survey underwent analysis to answer the research question and determine whether to reject the null hypothesis.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

Demographics. Students provided demographic information via open-ended questions at the beginning of the survey, including their age, gender, grade level, and city or place of residence. Collecting this information was a means to ensure that all respondents met the inclusion criteria. The demographics section took approximately 2 minutes to complete.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. The MSPSS was the social support measurement used in this study. Created by Zimet et al. (1988), the MSPSS is a brief survey intended to measure the social support perceived by the respondent. The MSPSS has a 12-item scale for measuring perceived support across the domains of family, friends, and significant others. The measure uses a 7-point, Likert-type scale ranging from *very strongly disagree* to *very strongly agree*.

Reliability and validity. Stanley et al. (1998) questioned the construct validity of the MSPSS, noting its instability in the factor structure. Using a sample of 50, Stanley et al. identified a two-factor structure with regard to in adults suffering from generalized anxiety disorder. However, due to the small sample size, the researchers were unable to draw a definitive conclusion.

Clara et al. (2003) provided analysis endorsing the a priori framework of the three-factor MSPSS model in two samples: students with depression ($N = 549$) and outpatients with depression ($N = 156$). Clara et al. found that the three-factor construct provided a better fit than the two-factor model for both samples. A relatively low reliability coefficient in this study indicates that respondents may not have been able to

discern the difference between the variables, subsequently leading to a problem with factorial validity.

Exposure to Potentially Traumatic Events Measure. EPTEM was the measurement tool for perceived traumatic events or exposure to trauma within the sample of this study. EPTEM contains 23 items that include conflict-related trauma, deaths, disappearances of loved ones, childhood adversity, and emergency-related illness (Tay et al., 2015).

Five-by-Five Resilience Scale. The last part of the survey, 5×5RS, is a means to measure resiliency as well as five protective factors that assist in resiliency. The 25-item scale consists of 5-point, Likert-type questions that measure optimism, emotional regulation, social support, self-efficacy, and adaptability (DeSimone et al., 2017). The International Personality Item Pool served as a framework for placing five resilience component subscales with to ensure adequate content coverage and minimize redundancy (Waaktaar & Torgersen, 2010). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses conducted on two samples enabled the evaluation of structural validity. These samples were also useful to establish norms and relationships with demographic characteristics, determine internal consistency estimates, and provide evidence of convergent and construct validity. Results indicate that the 5×5RS is a valid, reliable measure of adaptability, emotion regulation, optimism, self-efficacy, and social support (Waaktaar & Torgersen, 2010).

Data Analysis

A chi-square test in *R* enabled analysis of the data collected from the closed-ended survey questions. Inferential statistics using a chi-square test indicated the

goodness of fit, or how well expected values and observed values correlated. A chi-square test was appropriate because samples were independent of one another, the sample size was adequate, data were categorical, and the population was at least 10 times that of the sample (Gaboardi, Lim, Rogers, & Vadhan, 2016; Moore, 2017). Chi-square is a common test to show relationships in categorical variables using statistical means. The null hypothesis stated that there was no relationship between comprehensive support systems and levels of resiliency after exposure to the trauma of repeated cartel violence along the Texas-Mexico border. Conducting a chi-square test and analyzing data indicate the likelihood of rejection of the null hypothesis (Gaboardi et al., 2016; Moore, 2017).

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) enabled examination of the relationship between adequate support systems and exposure to trauma and resiliency—the variance, or amount of difference—among participants. Conducting a one-way ANOVA requires a researcher to develop a hypothesis and set parameters, such as significance level and degrees of freedom, prior to analysis. Subsequently, the one-way ANOVA produces results indicating the degree to which there is a relationship between independent and dependent variables—in this case, the degree to which there is a relationship between comprehensive support systems and resiliency after trauma from being involved in or witnessing cartel violence on the Texas-Mexican border.

Threat to Validity

Threats to External Validity

The main threat to the external validity of this research was the inability to generalize to broader populations representative of the sample. As this study incorporated

a nonrandom sample of 18- to 19-year-old high school and university students on the Texas-Mexican border who had been subjected to regular cartel violence, results may not be generalizable to other age cohorts, youth not enrolled in high school or university, individuals within other geographic locales, or those facing other types of repeated violence or only a single exposure to other types of trauma.

Threats to Internal Validity

The main threat to the internal validity of this study was the use of survey instruments in data collection, as they may have produced biased or untruthful data. Students self-reported their experiences, which may have led to inaccurate responses or misunderstanding the question. Further, students may have provided responses that they believed I wanted to see rather than giving truthful responses. To minimize the threat to internal validity, answers to the survey were anonymous, thus reducing the risk of bias of both participants and researcher.

Ethical Procedures

Prior to recruitment and data collection, Walden University's IRB approved the research proposal to ensure that the study would meet all ethical requirements. The IRB reviewed the study's framework and methodology to confirm proper participant protection. Even after IRB approval, a researcher must maintain consideration throughout a study to uphold ethical standards. In that responding to this content may have been upsetting to respondents, administering self-reported surveys was a way to minimize any discomfort to participants. Participant anonymity in data collection and analysis and presentation of results was another means to mitigate discomfort and adhere to ethical

requirements; in addition, participants would have learned had there been any changes to consent, procedure, or intent of this research project. Participants were free to quit the study without repercussion if they became uncomfortable or were unable to further complete tasks.

Summary

I conducted this study to determine, measure, and compare the participants' family and social supports along with their opinions and attitudes regarding traumatic events, and then compare these scores to the individual resiliency of the participants. A quantitative research approach consisting of a nonexperimental, cross-sectional, correlation-survey design was appropriate to achieve this goal. This approach was a means to determine whether the variables of family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events would predict resiliency in 18- to 19-year old Latino youth who live near the Texas-Mexico border. Collected and analyzed data came from surveys to assess social support via three instruments: MSPSS (Zimet et al., 1988), EPTEM, and 5×5RS.

Participant selection was via nonrandom sampling from interested individuals living along the Texas-Mexico border who had been involved with or subjected to cartel violence yet had become acclimated and further resilient to this type of trauma. Beyond participant self-selection, the use of snowball sampling meant asking participants to recommend others. This was necessary to recruit as many participants as possible, especially as Latino youth might be hard to locate or hesitant to become involved with such a project. Participants selected were 18 to 19 years of age and enrolled in either high

school or university, as individuals meeting this criterion likely have the necessary support groups and the cognitive capabilities to comprehend the trauma associated with cartel violence.

A chi-square test performed on collected data indicated whether the rejection of the null hypothesis was necessary (Gaboardi et al., 2016; Moore, 2017). A one-way ANOVA was a means to explore the relationship between adequate support systems, exposure to trauma, and resiliency and to understand the variance, or degree of difference, between participants. Due to the limited population of Latino youth on the Texas-Mexico border and the restricted age range of the sample, results are not generalizable beyond the study population. However, the findings provide information likely applicable to the full Latino population of youth aged 18 to 19 years.

Consideration throughout this project ensured adherence to ethical standards and participant protection. As this content may have been upsetting to respondents, surveys administration was with the utmost respect, executed in a self-reporting format to minimize discomfort to participants. Further, all participants received as much anonymity as possible, with the agreement that any changes to consent, procedure, or the intent of this research project would be transparent.

Chapter 4 presents the data collection process, along with the time frame. A detailed description of statistical analysis and findings appears. In addition, tables present the findings in graphical form.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Children who have witnessed or experienced trauma may have difficulties in mastering resiliency (Kelly et al., 2015). Some scholars, however (e.g., Deblinger et al., 2017), argue that resiliency enables an individual to bounce back from adversity and become stronger after a significant stressor or traumatic event. The present study was an examination of resiliency in Latino youth who lived on the Texas-Mexico border and witnessed cartel-related violence or other perceived traumatic events, subsequently becoming more resilient. Although there is significant literature on resiliency, research is lacking about support systems and how to predict, aid, or hinder resiliency.

This chapter presents a discussion of the purpose of the study, research question and hypotheses, and data collection techniques. A presentation of results includes survey collection, participant data, descriptive statistics of the scales, and the research question and hypothesis testing. The chapter concludes with a summary and a look toward Chapter 5.

The primary purpose of this study was to measure the resiliency of Latino students ages 18 to 19 years living on the Texas-Mexico border who had witnessed, had been involved in, or had family members involved in cartel-related violence. I sought to determine, measure, and compare the participants' family and social supports along with their perceived traumatic events to compare those scores to the individual resiliency of the participants. The variables used in this study were resiliency, family support system, social support system, and perceived traumatic events in Latino youth.

Research Question and Hypotheses

One research question guided this study.

RQ: To what extent do the variables of family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events predict resiliency in the Latino youth population who live near the Mexico-Texas border?

H₀: Family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events do not predict resiliency in the Latino youth population who live near the Mexico-Texas border.

H₁: Family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events significantly predict resiliency in the Latino youth population who live near the Mexico-Texas border.

Data Collection

I collected data over 6 weeks in November and December 2019. Data collection occurred through an online survey administered via SurveyMonkey to 122 Latino students ages 18 to 19 years. The scales used were the MSPSS, EPTEM, and 5×5RS to determine if there was a relationship between comprehensive support systems and levels of resiliency after traumatic exposure to repeated cartel violence along the Texas-Mexico border. Also collected was demographic information. Community resources and community advocates advertised the study via their Facebook, LinkedIn, and company websites via Mireles Psychological Health Services. Although 134 participants clicked on the study, 12 did not meet survey criteria. The process for participant recruitment and data collection follows.

After I verified that all scales were for public or educational use, community advocates posted the survey link on Facebook, LinkedIn, and company websites, including an introduction and a link to the survey. Once interested individuals clicked the link, they encountered a consent form with additional information on the study, which included acknowledgment of any risks and benefits of participation, the lack of compensation for study participants, their access to results when available, the approximate time to complete the survey, and steps taken to ensure participant anonymity. The consent form also indicated that participation in the study was voluntary and that participants could exit the survey at any time before submitting it.

Also presented in the consent form were the criteria for participation. Individuals clicked “OK” to indicate their qualification for and acceptance of the terms of the study; clicking “no” indicated that an individual was not between the ages of 18 to 19 years, leading to redirection to the disqualification page. Qualified individuals continued through the survey until either submitting or exiting before submitting. Upon collection of 122 surveys, the survey closed, with the data subsequently transferred from SurveyMonkey to Microsoft Excel and the IBM SPSS statistical software program for analysis.

Results

Data Collection

All 122 submitted surveys underwent data analysis following a brief check for accuracy by ensuring that they fell within the specified minimum and maximum ranges.

After running frequencies to determine if there were missing data, I checked for outliers and assumptions before data cleaning. Participants' demographic information follows.

Participant Demographics

Demographic data collected were participants' gender, ethnicity, highest level of education, and qualification for the study (i.e., between 18 and 19 years of age). The initial 134 submissions were nearly equal for females ($n = 69$, 51.5%) and males ($n = 64$, 47.8%). Of these respondents, 122 were between the ages of 18 and 19 years, which qualified them for the study. Ethnicity of the 134 participants was as follows: not Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino ($n = 2$, 1.5%); Mexican ($n = 18$, 13.4%); Mexican American ($n = 104$, 77.6%); some other Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino ($n = 5$, 3.7%); and from multiple Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino ($n = 2$, 3.7%). Education levels were less than high school ($n = 35$, 26.1%), high school or equivalent ($n = 68$, 50.7%), some college but no degree ($n = 27$, 20.1%), associate's degree ($n = 1$, 0.7%), and bachelor's degree ($n = 3$, 2.2%). The participants were from the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. Table 1 presents all demographic data.

Table 1

Demographic Scale (N = 134)

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Female	69	51.5
Male	64	47.8
Highest level of education completed		
Less than high school	35	26.1
High school degree or equivalent	68	50.7
Some college but no degree	27	20.1
Associate's degree	1	0.7
Bachelor's degree	3	2.2
Are you between the ages of 18 to 19 years?		
Yes	124	92.5
No	10	7.5
Ethnicity		
Not of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino descent	2	1.5
Mexican	18	13.4
Mexican American	104	77.8
Some other Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino	5	3.7
From multiple Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino	5	3.7

Descriptive Statistics of the Scales and Frequencies

Exposure to Potentially Traumatic Events Measure. The EPTM enabled measurement of the participants' exposure to traumatic events with 23 questions, including "Have you heard about family members being tortured or murdered?" Response options were *not experienced*, *yes*, or *no*. Because this scale is for public or educational use, it is validated.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. The MSPSS is a brief survey to measure the social support perceived by an individual. The 12-item scale enables the assessment of perceived support by family, friends, and significant others

along a 7-point, Likert-type scale ranging from *very strongly disagree* to *very strongly agree*. The MSPSS is a valid, reliable measure available for public and educational use to measure perceived social support. In this study, the mean for the total social support scale was 5.59 ($SD = 0.76$).

Five-by-Five Resilience Scale. Application of the 5×5RS occurred in the last part of the survey to measure resiliency as well as five protective factors that assist in resiliency. The 25-item scale consists of 5-point, Likert-type questions to measure optimism, emotional regulation, social support, self-efficacy, and adaptability. Availability for public use indicates that the 5×5RS is a valid, reliable measure of adaptability, emotion regulation, optimism, self-efficacy, and social support (Waaktaar & Torgersen, 2010). Tables 2 and 3 show the descriptive statistics and frequencies for the scales used.

Table 2

Perceived Traumatic Event Scale: Descriptive Statistics of the Scale and Frequencies (N = 122)

Perceived Traumatic Event Scale	Yes (%)	No (%)
Experienced violence	13.20	86.80
No shelter	9.80	90.20
Home vandalized	5.70	94.30
Forced to hide	6.60	93.40
Forced in poor living conditions	6.60	93.40
Deprived of food and water	2.50	97.50
Imprisoned	1.70	98.30
Humiliated	59.80	40.20
Involved in combat	0.00	100.00
Held captive	1.60	98.40
Experienced torture	1.60	98.40
Experienced abduction	1.60	98.40
Witnessed torture of strangers	5.70	94.30
Head of family tortured	44.30	55.70
Witnessed rape	0.00	100.00
Witnessed dead bodies	29.50	70.50
Witnessed violence at home	40.20	59.80
Experienced physical abuse	22.10	77.90
Separated from family member	25.40	74.60
Multiple deaths in family	45.10	54.90
Forced to abandon family	8.20	91.80
Unable to perform rituals/ceremonies	5.70	94.30
Experienced natural disaster	80.50	19.50

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support and the Five-by-Five Resiliency Scale (N = 122)

Scale	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min.	Max.
Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support				
Significant other	2.00	6.00	5.48	1.03
Family	2.50	6.00	5.84	0.51
Friends	2.00	6.00	5.45	0.97
Total social	2.67	6.00	5.59	0.76
Five-by-Five Resiliency Scale				
Adaptability	2.00	3.80	3.10	0.34
Emotional regulation	1.00	5.00	3.30	0.95
Optimism	1.40	5.00	3.91	0.80
Self-efficacy	2.40	5.00	3.68	0.47
Social support	2.00	5.00	4.16	0.71

Research Question and Hypothesis Testing

This study was a means to address the research question: To what extent do the variables of family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events predict resiliency in the Latino youth population who live near the Mexico-Texas border? The initially intended chi-square test proved inadequate to analyze the scores for each subconstruct. Because the average is an interval variable containing decimals, Pearson's correlation was the appropriate statistical test. A sole focus on the null hypothesis for resiliency versus perceived social support required no categorical assessments, which were instead appropriate for summary statistics (frequencies and percentages). Pearson's correlation coefficient is a means to assess the relationships between two variables (strong, moderate, or weak). A correlation coefficient of 0 suggests no relationship; however, the corresponding *p* values may show statistical

significance. An alpha of 0.05 was the criterion for rejection. Results indicated a strong positive relationship between the total optimism and emotional regulation scales ($r = 0.5, p \text{ value} = 0.000$). Total self-efficacy and emotional regulation had a moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.291, p \text{ value} = 0.001$). The total optimism and self-efficacy scales had a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.701, p \text{ value} = 0.000$). There was a moderate positive relationship between total social support (resiliency) and emotional regulation ($r = 0.384, p \text{ value} = 0.000$), with a weak negative relationship between total perceived social support and emotional regulation ($r = -0.282, p \text{ value} = 0.002$). There were strong positive relationships between total optimism and total social support ($r = 0.667, p \text{ value} = 0.000$) and self-efficacy and social support ($r = 0.753, p \text{ value} = 0.000$). Significant other and emotion regulation scales showed a moderate negative relationship ($-0.318, p \text{ value} = 0.000$), whereas significant other and optimism had a weak negative relationship ($-0.179, p \text{ value} = 0.048$). Total social support (resiliency) and total self-efficacy had a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.753$ with a $p \text{ value} = 0.000$); significant other and friends scales had a moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.456, p \text{ value} = 0.000$); total social and significant other scales had a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.960$ with a $p \text{ value} = 0.000$); with strong positive relationships found between total social and family scales ($r = 0.644$ with a $p \text{ value} = 0.000$) and total social and friends scales ($r = 0.967$ with a $p \text{ value} = 0.000$).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to measure resiliency in Latino students between 18 to 19 years of age who lived on the Texas-Mexico border and had witnessed, had been

involved in, or had family members involved in cartel-related violence. The intention was to determine, measure, and compare the participants' family and social supports along with their perceived traumatic events to the individual resiliency of the participants. Because the average is an interval variable containing decimals, Pearson's correlation was the appropriate statistical test to address the null hypothesis for resiliency versus perceived social support. Findings indicated a positive relationship between the total optimism and emotional regulation scales, with a moderate positive relationship between self-efficacy and emotional regulation. In addition, there was a strong positive relationship between self-efficacy and social support (resiliency), but a moderate negative relationship between significant other and emotion regulation and a weak positive relationship between significant other and optimism.

Chapter 5 presents a summary of the findings, interpretation of those findings, and the limitations of the study. Also discussed are recommendations, opportunities for future research, and implications for social change. Chapter 5 ends with a conclusion to the research study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine and measure the resiliency in Latino students ages 18 to 19 years who lived on the Texas-Mexico border and had witnessed, had been involved in, or had family members involved in cartel-related violence. This study was a means to measure, determine, and compare the participants' family and social supports along with their perceived traumatic events, comparing these scores to the individual resiliency of participants. Scales of measurement in Latino youth included resiliency, family support system, social support system, and perceived traumatic events. Future researchers may use these results to help improve individuals' resiliency through identification of the predictors that contribute to resilience.

A researcher selects a methodology based on the specific research problem and questions under exploration (Creswell, 2014). A quantitative approach is appropriate to examine a relationship using theory as the foundation of a study (Creswell, 2014). Surveys or other instruments are means to measure the variables in a quantitative study, with subsequent statistical analysis to determine the relationship between measured variables (Creswell, 2014). In contrast, qualitative researchers seek to explore the lived experiences of participants by using face-to-face observations, interviews, or other nonquantifiable methods to gather data (Creswell, 2014). Based on the research question and objective for this study, a quantitative nonexperimental, cross-sectional, correlation-survey design was appropriate.

Psychologists, community leaders, and families may reference the findings of this study regarding resiliency and how support systems can aid or hinder youth in becoming more resilient. The study is unique because the Latino youth population and cartel had not previously been the focus of research about resiliency or what factors lead youth to become resilient. The results of this study provide an analysis of how cultural factors can influence individuals' resiliency regarding how family structure, religious beliefs, and regional cultural beliefs such as protective factors, rituals, and upbringing (conservative, liberal, traditional) can influence one's resilient nature.

Summary of Findings

Data collection occurred over 6 weeks in November and December 2019 via an online SurveyMonkey survey of Latino youth between the ages of 18 to 19 years. The three scales used were the MSPSS, EPTEM, and 5×5RS to determine if there is a relationship between comprehensive support systems and levels of resiliency after traumatic exposure to repeated cartel violence along the Texas-Mexico border; I also collected demographic information. The sample comprised 122 surveys collected from 18- to 19-year-old Latino youth. Community resources and community advocates advertised the study via their Facebook, LinkedIn, and company websites via Mireles Psychological Health Services. Although 134 participants clicked on the study, 12 did not meet participation criteria. Data indicated a positive relationship between optimism and emotional regulation, with moderate positive relationships between self-efficacy and emotional regulation. A strong positive relationship emerged between self-efficacy and social support (resiliency); however, significant other and emotional regulation had a

moderate negative relationship and significant other and optimism had a weak negative relationship.

This study was a means to address the research question: To what extent do the variables of family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events predict resiliency in the Latino youth population who live near the Mexico-Texas border? The initially intended chi-square test proved inadequate to analyze the scores for each subconstruct. Because the average is an interval variable containing decimals, Pearson's correlation was the appropriate statistical test. A sole focus on the null hypothesis for resiliency versus perceived social support required no categorical assessments, which were instead appropriate for summary statistics (frequencies and percentages). Pearson's correlation coefficient is a means to assess the relationships between two variables (strong, moderate, or weak). A correlation coefficient of 0 suggests no relationship; however, the corresponding p values may show statistical significance. An alpha of 0.05 was the criterion for rejection. Results indicated a strong positive relationship between the optimism and emotional regulation scales ($r = 0.5, p$ value = 0.000). Total self-efficacy and emotional regulation had a moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.291, p$ value = 0.001). The total optimism and self-efficacy scales had a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.701, p$ value = 0.000). There was a moderate positive relationship between social support (resiliency) and emotional regulation ($r = 0.384, p$ value = 0.000), with a weak negative relationship between perceived social support and emotional regulation ($r = -0.282, p$ value = 0.002). There were strong positive relationships between optimism and social support ($r = 0.667, p$ value = 0.000)

and self-efficacy and social support ($r(r = 0.753, p \text{ value} = 0.000)$). Significant other and emotion regulation scales showed a moderate negative relationship ($-0.318, p \text{ value} = 0.000$), whereas significant other and optimism had a weak negative relationship ($-0.179, p \text{ value} = 0.048$). Social support (resiliency) and self-efficacy had a strong positive relationship ($r(r = 0.753$ with a $p \text{ value} = 0.000)$); significant other and friends scales had a moderate positive relationship ($r(r = 0.456, p \text{ value} = 0.000)$); total social and significant other scales had a strong positive relationship ($r(r = 0.960$ with a $p \text{ value} = 0.000)$); with strong positive relationships found between total social and family scales ($r(r = 0.644$ with a $p \text{ value} = 0.000$) and total social and friends scales ($r(r = 0.967$ with a $p \text{ value} = 0.000)$).

Interpretation of Findings

The theoretical framework for this study was resiliency, which indicates that a variety of factors such as violent area, poverty, and familial support can influence an individual's behavior negatively or positively (Stoddard et al., 2012). Resiliency theory comprises three models: compensatory, challenge, and protective (Stoddard et al., 2012). Resiliency theory served as a guide for this study, creating a foundation to examine the study variables of resiliency, family support system, social support system, and perceived traumatic events in the population of Latino youth in a high-violence area.

The study first entailed determining to what extent the variables of family support systems, social support systems, and perceived traumatic events predict resiliency in the Latino youth population who live near the Mexico-Texas border. Although there have been no studies on resiliency and social support with participants who experienced traumatic events, researchers (e.g., Benbenishty et al., 2002) have suggested that a

support system for children may help them avoid conflict and gain autonomy and a sense of self. Yablon and Itzhaky (2015) found that having a support system during the Israeli war helped several children endure. Ophir et al. (2016) indicated the importance of emotional support from the community to aid with resiliency, enabling some to overcome daily adversity. The data from this study indicated a strong positive relationship between self-efficacy and social support (resiliency). These findings are in line with the null hypothesis that social support system can contribute to self-efficacy resiliency in participants.

This study was an examination of different types of support systems such as significant others and how resilient an individual can become. The findings indicated that when participants have a strong significant other support system, their emotion regulation decreases. Ophir et al. (2016) and Wolmer et al. (2011) discussed the need for interventions in building a strong sense of resiliency with a support system that can consist of family or community members; however, the researchers did not discuss how significant others can help.

Also investigated in this study was the extent to which family support system would predict resiliency. Family and community may both contribute to a person's ability to respond to negative conditions. As such, any assessment of resilience must include the person's environment (Meyer, 2015). The research results indicated that strongly attached families with supportive parents who watched over their children were most likely to produce resilient children; however, there were no significant findings in the data collected.

Limitations of the Study

There were some limitations to this study. The use of a self-reported survey meant that there was a possibility that participants did not answer all of the questions honestly. Additionally, participant bias may have occurred after participants read the consent form, perhaps having a belief that they would be helping by providing the answer they believed that I wanted (Simundic, 2013). There is no way of determining whether either of these situations occurred.

Generalizability concerns remain due to the small sample size of 122 Latino participants from 18 to 19 years of age. Such a small group in quantitative research may cause overgeneralization. In addition, results are not generalizable to older or younger participants or other ethnicities or races.

Recommendations

The results of this study provide information on the resiliency and support systems of Latino youth who have witnessed, have heard of, or have knowledge of drug cartel violence. Based on the findings, future research is needed on ways to help individuals gain autonomy and develop a support system to aid in resiliency. Qualitative inquiry with participants from different racial and ethnic backgrounds will allow exploration of their resiliency and what factors, such as support system or traumatic events, have helped them to overcome adversity, especially in low-income, high-violence areas. This direction of research could help care providers create programs to aid in individuals' resiliency, regardless of the adversity they have faced.

Mixed-methods research using populations across the United States would provide an overall perspective on Latinos and predictive factors that help individuals to become more resilient. Researchers could find ways of developing beneficial programs to help individuals gain more autonomy, develop a support system, and, in turn, increase their overall resiliency. Greater resiliency would not only benefit children and adolescents, but also could help in their transition to adulthood.

Future scholars may wish to replicate this research study on a larger scale to determine if other age groups are more resilient due to their support systems. Also recommended is a study comparing levels of resiliency and in males and females by age and grade level, such as elementary, middle, and high school and college students. Such inquiry would allow a researcher to determine if there is a pattern with resiliency levels increasing as participants age.

Implications for Social Change

This study is significant because it reduces the gap in information and research on resiliency and support systems for Latino youth. There is also a dearth of scholarship in this area on different age ranges, as most of the extant research using these variables focuses only on resiliency and not what factors cause resiliency, such as exposure to traumatic events or support systems. This gap in understanding is of great concern; accordingly, these findings may allow researchers to implement different interventions to aid in resiliency. This study contributes to the field of psychology and may guide future research to determine additional ways to help others who have faced adversity. Administrators and community members may draw upon the results of this study to

create programs and support centers for youth facing trauma, thus creating a more positive and resilient environment with the aid of support systems. Additionally, findings and recommendations could have a significant impact on U.S. policies and procedures with drug cartel violence and immigration policy.

Conclusion

Violence along the Texas-Mexico border stems from several sources, including the impending drug and cartel war, U.S. policies, and interaction between law enforcement and cartel activity. Drug cartels continue to operate in Mexico. The transfer of drugs across the border into the United States creates difficulties for people living on the Texas-Mexico border.

A review of the literature indicated that responses by the United States and Mexico led to increased cartel violence along the border. Scholars also showed that factors of resilience could help to decrease the negative impact of traumatic events. The ability to manage negative emotions or rely on social support corresponded with increased resilience. However, information was lacking with regard to specific examination of the factors impacting Latino youth who had connections to cartel violence in a variety of forms. Accordingly, this study was an examination of whether these variables influence the resilience and well-being of Latino youth.

Multiple adverse factors can impact an individual, such as poverty, a violent area, and familial support, leading to either negative or positive responses (Stoddard et al., 2012). Resiliency theory served as the framework for this study to examine the level of resiliency resulting from participants' support systems and perceived traumatic events. A

quantitative approach with a self-reported survey enabled the collection of data from Latino youth ages 18 to 19 years. Included in the survey was a scale listing different traumatic events and whether the participant had experienced them, a social support scale, and a resiliency scale. Performing a Pearson's correlation coefficient enabled assessment of the relationships between resiliency and support system, along with the frequency of traumatic events that the participants endured. The results were statistically significant, indicating that social support systems can contribute to individuals' self-efficacy and resiliency.

These results are significant, filling the gap in literature by providing information of use to psychology professionals and community leaders. Scholars can reference the results from this study to conduct future research on ways to improve community outreach programs and build curriculum for use nationwide to build support systems and community ties. Findings may also inspire inquiry into improving areas with high crime rates so that individuals affected by traumatic incidents have an outlet to discuss and build upon that support system. Finally, scholars may wish to use this research as a blueprint to explore other ethnicities and races in the United States. In turn, community leaders may expand programs and advocate for individuals affected by trauma in building their support system.

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Appendix A: Permission to Use Figure

From: Van Breda, Adrian
Sent: Monday, June 24, 2019 12:13 AM
To: Kasandra Garcia Reyna
Subject: RE: Graphic on resilience as an outcome

Dear Kasandra

Thank you for your email and for asking. You may use it with pleasure in your dissertation, with the usual citation of course. Your work sounds very meaningful. All the best as you wrap up your D.

Warm wishes
Adrian

From: Kasandra Garcia Reyna
Sent: Saturday, 22 June 2019 21:58
To: Van Breda, Adrian
Subject: Graphic on resilience as an outcome

My name is Kasandra Garcia-Reyna, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am working on my dissertation, on Resiliency in Latino Youth Experiencing Cartel Violence and other Perceived Traumatic Events. I am requesting permission to use your graphic on Resilience as an Outcome. I will be using the graphic to depict the flow of resilience and the mediating process. My future research in this area of Resiliency and Trauma will help my community and other community members to develop resiliency programs in the future. I hope to hear from you soon. If you have any suggestions or advice, they will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for taking the time to read my email. Have a nice day.

Respectfully,
Kasandra Garcia-Reyna