

EXPLORING THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGES 6-18 YEARS OLD
RECEIVING SERVICES FROM THE VACAVILLE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER:
LATINO POPULATION PERSPECTIVES

A Project

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Division of Social Work

Abstract
of
EXPLORING THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AGES 6-18 YEARS OLD
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This study aims to explore and better understand the needs of the Latino families with school age children (6 to 18 years old) and who have utilized the services of the Vacaville Family Resource Center (VFRC). The Latino community represents 24% of the population in the City of Vacaville and they represent almost 50% of service recipients at the VFRC. An assessment of their needs would facilitate the development of services that build upon community strengths and needs. A total of 229 VFRC service recipients, with 198 identifying as Latino, completed a one-page assessment questionnaire when they visited VFRC. The survey covered health, economic, psychological, and social needs. Vast majority of respondents answered questionnaire in Spanish. Study findings support author's hypothesis that Latino families have a need for mental health services. Participants also confirmed that financial stability is a major need among this population. Majority of the Latino respondents live in a double parent home, and their children are doing academically well. However, they expressed the needs for utility assistance, academic tutoring, and adult English classes in the near future. Qualitative findings show that VFRC is their agency of choice for the needed educational support, financial

assistance, and family support services. Overall study findings reflect respondents' needs for culturally appropriate and comprehensive services delivered by a trusted and culturally competent organization. A one-stop multilevel service center that serves, promotes, and advocates on behalf of the clients is recommended. The VFRC has the potential to become this hub center, as it is already the service and cultural broker for Latinos in Vacaville.

_____, Committee Chair
Francis Yuen, DSW, ACSW

Date

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The United States is a culturally diverse country, with a total population of 326 million (Census Bureau, 2015). As a result of multiple ethnic groups creating the American state, it is vital to learn and have cultural humility to facilitate collaboration and cooperation among all communities. Ethnic groups have unique characteristics and qualities, and also diverse challenges and needs as a community (Salcido, 2007). One of the largest minority ethnic groups in the United States is represented by Latinos or Hispanics with 17.6% of the total population, and more than a third of the population in the state of California (Census Bureau, 2016).

In the city of Vacaville, California it is estimated that almost 24% of a population of over 98,000 individuals identifies as Latino or Hispanic (Census Bureau, 2015). The Latino community has grown since 2010 from 21,606 individuals to 22,609 persons in 2017 (Census Bureau, 2016). Due to the growing number of people, there are also greater needs among this community. With a poverty rate of 15.5%, and other risks factors playing an active role in the Latino experience, it has been a challenge for many families to meet the financial, emotional, and mental health needs. It is critical to be familiar with the Latino experience and culture to provide social services for this group, especially those at risk. There is limited research on the needs the Latino community experience. The Vacaville Family Resource Center (VFRC) has been providing various services to low income families and in-need community members since 2003. This paper will focus on the needs experienced by the Latino/Hispanic families in Vacaville, California. This paper studied the four types of needs of Hispanic families with school age children, 6 to 18 years old, and who are utilizing the services from the VFRC.

According to the Census Bureau, (2015) California has a population of 39.5 million and Latinos represent 38.9% of population. The Latino community is a diverse group composed of

different national backgrounds which share the Spanish language and the culture. This group is formed by those individuals who are descendants from any Latin American countries including Mexico, the Caribbean, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Central America and South American countries. However, individuals in the U.S. can also be considered Hispanic, if they come from a Spanish speaking culture, including Spain (Salcido, 2007). The terms Latino and Hispanic will be used interchangeably throughout this paper to describe the targeted population.

The Latino community has experienced multiple risk factors affecting the ability to meet their family needs and negatively impacting their wellbeing. Poverty is a social problem that has affected the Latino community in several ways including shelter, nutrition and their health. According to Furman et al. (2009), Latinos make up one of the largest percentages of the working poor in the U.S. Additionally, other individual and environmental risk factors influence several areas such as education, employment, available resources, and representation in the criminal justice system (Gutierrez, Yeakley, & Ortega, 2000). Furthermore, due to the high demands and stressors of daily life, mental health can be impacted within this community.

Background of the Problem

Hispanics tend to share a similar culture, language, and family structure, in which a sense of responsibility, unity and expectations towards the family are more practiced than in non-Hispanic families (Yahirun, Perreira, & Fuligni, 2015). The Latino community places a high value and importance on the family, which includes nuclear and extended family members. One important aspect within the Latino community consists of prioritizing family goals over individual goals. If they encounter any difficulties or problems, Latinos tend to rely on the family first to resolve it (Alfaro, Umana-Taylor & Bamaca, 2006). Latinos are a perseverant group, sharing a strong connection and a great sense of responsibility towards the function of the family (Salcido, 2007).

Parents have high educational expectations for their children to do well in school, although many parents might not have the educational achievement themselves (De Anda, Franke & Becerra, 2009). Among the Latino community, there is stigma when it comes seeking for assistance outside of the home. Hispanics are less likely to ask for support outside of the family unit in several areas, including mental health (Barba, 2015). Mental health is a sensitive topic among this community, which brings shame into the family and, due to the unique experiences and sense of responsibility among Latinos, these practices can trigger mental health related problems, adding more risks factors among this community(Gutierrez, Yeakley, & Ortega, 2000).

The VFRC has provided several services to the Hispanic community including financial assistance, counseling services, links to community resources, and others to remove some of the challenges faced by this group. There are barriers and social problems affecting Latinos that ought to be researched, understood, and addressed to help this community thrive in Vacaville. The Latino community represents almost a quarter of the total population in Vacaville; nevertheless, this group is almost half of the VFRC recipients (I. Montano, personal communication, May 20, 2017). The main goal for this study is to get a better understanding of the basic needs of the Latino/Hispanic community in Vacaville utilizing the services at the center, with special focus on those families who have school age children (6 to 18 years old).

VFRC Background and Contribution to Vacaville Community

The following information about the history of the VFRC comes from an interview with Gloria Diaz, LCSW, and Center Director. The VFRC started under the Vacaville Department of Housing, which was primarily focused on providing affordable housing, to do child abuse prevention work among families in the community. In 2003, the child welfare services pushed the resource center towards more case management; however, the Housing Department was not able to provide those services at that time and decided to stop the program. Vacaville Police

Department had developed the Family Investigative Response Services Team (FIRST), which addressed the family violence crime in the community, including domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and sexual assault (G. Diaz, personal communication, October 10, 2017).

Because the FIRST office was working with several families in need from the family resource center, the Vacaville Police Department decided to collocate the center as part of the FIRST program. Under the police department, the resource center continued assisting the Vacaville community with more case management work, outreach and community activities in child abuse prevention. In addition, the VFRC moved into the FIRST office to facilitate a one-stop resource facility for families and individuals. In 2006, First Five Solano gave the VFRC a grant, which allowed the center to do even more intervention and clinical work such as home visits, parenting classes, counseling services to families at risk, and who were receiving services from the Child Protective Services or who had been referred to the police department for services. Some of the problems these families experienced included poverty, substance abuse, domestic violence and stress. Solano County started funding the VFRC to assist those families with school age children, six to 18 years old, at the same time. Currently, the Family Resource Center provides supportive serviced to families and individuals in need.

In addition, the VFRC provides mental health support all K-12 school levels through the use of a school wide system of support, the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS Program). The center provides assistance with social skills, counseling groups, child abuse, dating violence, depression, and anxiety, among other emotional needs in school settings. The Christmas Wish Program serves families with children who are financially disadvantaged and by finding local sponsors who are willing to donate gifts. The VFRC is in charge of all the logistics, including the all signs families up, collects toys from donors, and distributes gifts to families

The center has been working with many Latino families and their children to address their needs, attempting to remove some of the barriers faced by this community. The VFRC has been providing families with parenting tools and assisting them in developing their own skills and coping mechanisms, helping increase parent-child relationships in hopes that the young Latinos have supportive parents. It also provides individual therapeutic and counseling services to young Latinos in the school setting, helping address their academic performance but also their mental health and cultural, social and economic needs. It is important to mention that providing services in Spanish has been imperative to the success of the VFRC in engaging and supporting Latinos in the Vacaville community (G. Diaz, personal communication, October 10, 2017).

Statement of the Research Problem

Despite the challenges experienced by the Latino community, Hispanics are a resilient, striving, and optimistic group of individuals (Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010). Their sense of unity, support, and responsibility towards each other within the family including the children also acts a protective factor with this community (Rothe, 2004). Latino families place a high value and respect in education, as they want their children to succeed in school (Salcido, 2007). A positive relationship between the parent involvement in school has been correlated with a successful school adjustment among Latino students. However, Latinos could benefit from supportive services, helping minimize struggles and barriers and increasing their participating in the dominant culture (Suk Hwang & Vrongistinos, 2010).

Purpose of Study

In collaboration with the VFRC and the Vacaville Police Department, this needs assessment study offers an opportunity for service recipients to voice out their greater needs. Furthermore, the results of this study will assist the VFRC in gathering relevant data to provide appropriate services to Latino families. This assessment study is the result of the authors' interest

in contributing to a broader understanding of Hispanic families with children. One of the researchers resides in Vacaville and had knowledge about the local family center. The researchers were interested in learning more about the Latino community, as they represent almost half of the service recipients (I. Montano, personal communication, May 20, 2017).

This study aims to explore and bring to light some of the needs of the Latino/Hispanic families in Vacaville to help the VFRC determine how they can respond to these needs. Through the use of our findings, this study will attempt to reflect on and contribute to the existing literature on the challenges Latino families face on a daily basis. The authors hypothesized a high need for mental health services including individual, family, and group counseling/therapy. In addition, we anticipated a need for economic aid to alleviate financial hardship.

A needs assessment is crucial as a measurement to identify the highest necessities/needs from the community (Yuen, Terao, & Schmidt, 2009). A community needs assessment will contribute to the improvement and or development of new and appropriate services to meet the needs of the Latino participants. Although communities have various needs, it is important to prioritize those essential necessities to promote and empower Latino families in Vacaville. The results of this needs assessment study will inform the VFRC to attend to the most urgent and critical needs when working with Latinos.

Definition of Terms

The following terms have been used throughout this research. It is essential to understand the definition(s) of the terms within this study and results.

- **Latinos/Hispanic:** Individuals from Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture living in the United States. Latinos share a common history, cultural background, and the Spanish language (Census Bureau, 2017).

- **VFRC-** Vacaville Family Resource Center, which is a one-stop facility providing support and resources to families and individuals at risk since 2003
- **Needs assessment:** A process used to identify important information about the gaps between what an individual is able to accomplish with the resources available, and what is needed to make an appropriate improvement when compared to different groups (Furman et al., 2009).

Statement of Collaboration

The authors of this study are Cruz Rocío Franco Esquivias and María del Carmen Hernández Espino, who worked jointly on this thesis project. We worked collaboratively and shared equal responsibility in all phases of the research process from the conceptualization to the completion of the thesis project.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This literature review provides demographic information on the Latino community in the United States and in more specifically, in Vacaville, California. It addresses factors that contribute to social, cultural, economic, and academic development of the studied population. Authors then introduce the theoretical framework explicating the researchers' conceptualization of this topic through the lenses of Systems Theory and Latino Critical Theory. The authors of this paper will explicate how this project approaches 'needs,' how needs are described in the academia and, how the study falls into a needs assessment project. Additionally, this paper reviews the current literature on the best culturally competent practices with Latinos. Lastly, this review highlights the importance of school social work and the VFRC's involvements in the pursuit of alleviating family needs.

Latinos in the United States

As the second largest ethnic group in the United States, Latino children are the largest minority population in the country, with 60% of the children with foreign-born parents (Bailey, Brazil, Conrad-Hiebner & Counts, 2015). According to the Pew Research Center (2017), Hispanic constitute 17.6% of the US total population with Hispanics having a median age of 28 years, with a median annual personal income of \$24,000, and a median annual household income of \$44,800. Of all Latinos, 49.5% are women, 61.4% are high school graduates, 67% of 25 years old and older are in the labor industry, and 9.7% are uninsured. In the last two decades, this community has grown rapidly and as it grows, their needs also increment. Poverty, one of the main social issues affecting Latinos, is disproportionately existent within Latino households when compared to the general population, as reported in by the US Census Bureau, in their 2011-2015

American Community Survey released in 2016. The Census Bureau estimated that Latinos have a 24.3% poverty rate, an 8.8% higher than the general population.

Poverty and low SES are factors impacting one's life in different arenas and having a higher poverty rate than the general population definitely places Latinos in socioeconomic situations that demand attention from social service workers. Latinos face many disadvantages due to economic reasons and also due to immigration and acculturation. Physical and mental health also pose barriers for Latinos as having illnesses complicate the social, academic, and mental development of young Latinos.

When it comes to mental health among the Hispanic community, it is important to consider several factors that might limit access to services. Barba (2015), found that Latinos are less likely to seek mental health services, due to stigma related to mental illnesses and other sociocultural factors. Underutilization of mental health services has been correlated with limited culturally appropriate and bilingual services. In addition, other factors impacting mental health access among Latinos is generational status, English proficiency, immigration status, lack of health insurance, low socioeconomic status, limited resources, and religious beliefs (Kanel, 2002).

Factors Affecting Latinos

There are many factors affecting Latinos' development, but some of the most influential aspects that affect a child's physical, mental, and social development are socioeconomic status, poverty, acculturation and identity formation, immigration, education, physical and psychological health (Garcini et al., 2017). According to the American Psychological Association (APA), socioeconomic status (SES) includes more than income, and also encompasses educational attainment, occupational prestige, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class

(2017). SES is a predictor of a vast of array of outcomes across one's life span and it is important to understand that many individual factors are part of low SES (APA, 2017)

Poverty

Limited economic fluency affects other social aspects, such as not having access to higher education, better health care, and safer neighborhoods (Ayon, 2014; De La Rosa, 2000). Children living in poverty live in neighborhoods with high crime rate, drug use, and under/unemployment, adding barriers on top of poverty, which keeps them from having a possibility of getting out of poverty (Rothe, 2004). Poverty can be a predictor of substance use, child abuse and neglect, witnessing domestic violence, being victims of crime, and having emotional and psychological stress (Ondersma, 2002; Pearlman, Zierler, Gjelsvik, & Verhoek-Oftedahl, 2004). Many low-income children live in a single parent home, with stressful day-to-day life and various types of family structure (Shriberg, 2013).

It is important to highlight that not all those living in poverty have mental health illnesses, abuse drugs, commit crimes or participate in domestic violence or violence at all. Milterr, Ginsburg and Muligan (2012) found that having a strong parent-child bond promotes healthy child development and it is a good predictor for a child's future. Having community connection and support, family encouragement and personal resiliency influence youth in working hard to end generational poverty (Ayon, 2013)

Acculturation and Identity Formation

Rothe (2004) found that acculturation, identity formation, and lack of support systems affects young immigrants because they are not only going through an important developmental stage but they are also trying to figure out their social-cultural position in the US. According to De Anda, Franke and Becerra (2009), Latino children born in the U.S. are exposed to a bilingual and bicultural environment, where they experience different values, customs, and norms at home

and in school. Young Latinos have a hard time navigating two opposite realities and question their identities. The combined cultural and social stressors are among the reasons young Latinos have higher rates of mental health illnesses as well as high number of gang involvement, school suspension and dropout, and drug use (Blanco-Vega, Castro-Olivo, & Merrell, 2008).

Many factors affect children's physical, mental, and social development with poverty being the major factor because it affects many other areas of the children's, and their parents', lives. Particularly for Latinos, poverty has a great impact on children's mental, health, social, and academic development but, immigration history and status as well as acculturation and identity formation are also factors affecting the development of Latinos in the United States.

Immigration

Immigration history and status has an effect on mental health but also in other areas such as physical health, employability, income level, and education. Immigrants leave behind friends and extended family members as well as their sense of belonging to a community with common beliefs, customs, and norms. They leave a predictable environment and the safety of knowing the language needed to communicate confidently (Rothe, 2004). These experiences and the sense of loss, together with experiences of discrimination and racism are some of the reasons why immigrants suffer from depression, anxiety, panic attacks and PTSD (Siemons, Raymond-Flesh, Auerswald, & Brindis, 2017).

Fortuna (2013) reported that their unique experiences pose psychological risks for immigrants, also adding that many children and youths are subject to racial profiling and ongoing discrimination, exposure to gangs, immigration raids in their communities, arbitrary stopping of family members to check their documentation status, being forcibly taken or separated from their families, returning home to find their families have been taken away, placement in detention camps or in the child welfare system, and deportation. Fortuna (2013) states that these

experiences lead to anxiety, fear, depression, anger, social isolation, and lack of a sense of belonging.

Garcini et al., (2017) report that immigrants have additional stressors and challenges such as having physical, verbal, psychological and sexual violence prevalence within their families and communities. In addition to experiencing discrimination, immigrant's experiencing stigmatization, marginalization, isolation, exploitability, victimization, living in unsafe neighborhoods, and socioeconomic disadvantage are aggregate explanations of the prevalence of mental illness amongst immigrants (Garcini et al., 2016; Infante, Idrovo, Sánchez-Domínguez, Vinhas, & González-Vázquez, 2012).

Education

Academic attainment, as well as poverty, influences the future and having a low SES affects educational performance and attainment. Living in poverty does not only affect a child in the above-mentioned ways, but also academically. Children's educational attainment is affected as they attend underfunded schools with low resources, high peer conflict, and limited possibilities to be on a path towards college and higher education. De La Rosa (2000) found that poverty affects a student's academic achievement and that their educational attainment is largely responsible for low-income-earnings, high unemployment levels, and low participation in highly paying jobs in their subsequent years.

De La Rosa (2000) also found that poverty has a direct impact on children's performance due to poor parental involvement, low parental academic achievement level, lack of social support and few social connections outside of their immediate families. Children from low-income families enter high school with average literacy skills five years behind those of high-income students, scoring at least ten percent lower than the national average on national achievement scores in mathematics and reading (Reardon, Valentino, & Shores, 2013). Low

income students are more likely to have higher rates of dropout rates, failing to graduate at five times the rate of middle-income families, and six times that of higher income youth (Hochschild, 2003; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Physical Health

Low economic status affects accessibility to health care, which results in negative health outcomes. Low-income people have insufficient and/or inadequate health care, as it is sometimes impossible to afford basic routine appointments. They do not seek services because of their lack of transportation, long work hours, and language barriers (Fortuna, 2013; Martinez et al, 2015). Missing basic screenings and regular check ups can end up in chronic illnesses and diseases for low-income people such as developing diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and obesity (Chen & Paterson, 2006; Isasi et al., 2016).

Latinos' health is particularly affected due to low economic status. Almost 31 percent of the Hispanic population do not have health insurance coverage, affecting their physical health, and also their other areas such as academic attainment and mental health well-being due to medical conditions (Saenz 2010). Children of immigrants with parents who have limited English proficiency are more likely to have decreased access to healthcare, poorer communication with healthcare providers, and greater parental dissatisfaction with healthcare (Herbst, Bernal, Terry and Lewis 2016). Having limited to no access to health care coverage affects people with low SES in an array of ways besides their physical health. Having no health care coverage increases their chances of having medical complications, which in turn can disturb other areas of the individual such as school and job attendance and performance and social life.

Psychological Health

Similarly to physical health, psychological health is at risk for people with low socioeconomic status. Poor social conditions and low-income level accumulate stressors that

affect their mental health. Among those who live at or below poverty level, depression, anxiety, attempted suicide, cigarette and illicit drug use/abuse, and heavy drinking is higher (Newacheck, Hung, Park, Brindis, & Irwin, 2003). It has been found that aggression levels, hostility, perceived threat and discrimination is higher among youth who live in poverty (Chen & Paterson, 2006). In addition, early childhood experiences such as being homeless, being abused or neglected, having distress in family dynamics, witnessing or been victims of domestic violence, among others, can be traumatic and affect the psychological well being of the individual.

For immigrants, especially Latinos, migration history, loss of connection to their native country, ongoing discrimination, immigration status and deportation are matters that affect them psychologically and these many times leads to mental health illnesses. (Garcini et al., 2016). Latino children are also affected by family immigration history and status, acculturation, and identity formation. These experiences trigger mental health related problems that add to the social needs that poverty and low SES pose on Latinos (Rothe, 2004; Blanco-Vega, Castro-Olivo, & Merrell, 2008).

Latinos in Vacaville

Vacaville is located midway between two major cities in northern California, which are San Francisco and Sacramento, giving it an important location for a growing number of commuters. Equally significant, Vacaville residents work in the businesses within the city and the agriculture fields in the surrounding area. Consequently, there is variety in Vacaville residents, ranging from people earning six digits and higher income to people living below poverty line. This city has a racially and ethnically diverse population, with a growing number of inhabitants identifying as biracial and multiracial in the last decade. The US Census Bureau, using data from the 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates reports that as of July 2016, Vacaville's population is 94,795 with a median age of 37.3 and an 88.4% of its residents having a

high school diploma or higher. The median household income is reported to be \$77,001 and the individuals living below the poverty level is reported to be 10,143 or 10.7% of Vacaville's total population.

Ethnically and racially, the city is diverse with White-Non-Latinos having the highest percentage at 54.6%, followed by Latinos (of any race) with a 22.7%, Black or African American with 9.3%, Asian Americans with a 6.5%, two and three races with a 6% and the remainder 1% includes Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander and "Other." A 50.2 percent of Latinos living in Vacaville are foreign born, and 66.8% of the 50.2% are foreign born not naturalized U. S. citizens. English is the most spoken language with 81% of habitants speaking it, Spanish is the second most spoken with 11.4%, Asian and Pacific Island languages with 5.6 and Indo-European and other languages have the remainder 2%. Of those who speak Spanish, only 67.8 % speak English very well (American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2016).

Twenty-two, almost twenty three percent of the 94,795 individuals living in this city are Latinos, that is, 21,552 habitants. Of this number, 15.5% are living below the poverty level, a 4.8 % higher than the general population living in poverty in Vacaville. The percentage of Latino with a high school diploma or higher is 71.5% in comparison to a 94.4% of their White counterparts. Similarity, 10.4% of Latinos have a bachelor's degree or higher, versus a 25.1% of Whites with a bachelor's degree. Educational attainment is important as it predicts economic status (De La Rosa, 2000).

This information reported throughout the U.S Census illustrates the importance of identifying the unique needs of Latinos in this city so that agencies providing social services can better serve this community. The VFRC is already addressing some of the needs of the Latino community and of the community at large. It is necessary though, to understand what the specific

needs are for the Latino community, to help the VFRC staff strengthen current or create new services to support and enhance the service recipients' social, emotional and psychological needs.

Theoretical Framework

When working with the Latino community, one theoretical approach that provides a more holistic perspective of the person in an environment is Systems Theory. Systems theory originated in the field of sociology; however, Ludwig von Bertalanffy introduced the theory to social work in the 1950s (BCSSS, 2018). Systems theory aims to explain how human behavior is affected in relation to the influence of multiple interrelated systems (Priest & Denton, 2012). A system consists of a group of individuals such as families, local agencies, social support, and other subsystems influencing an individual's behavior or situation. Each system has reciprocal relationships between its subsystems, which work together towards balancing the whole. This approach is based on the idea that a system is composed of individual needs, expectations, rewards and characteristics of people within the system (Taylor, McDonough, & Schrenkel, 2013).

Systems theory is useful when working with families as it looks at the micro, mezzo and macro support of an individual. By working and strengthening one part, a positive impact on the other subsystems will follow. Assessing a family under the systems theory lens provides an opportunity to understand family dynamics and support, communication, patterns and history, as it uses ecomaps and genograms to facilitate change. Some systems can have closed boundaries, which many Latino families fall into especially when looking at their strong family cohesiveness. Other systems have open boundaries, where they are willing to receive support/influence from outside systems, such as schools, community agencies or services. Systems theory highlights the mutual relationships among individuals, groups, and organizations changing the environment. For

instance, an individual has others around him/her such as family, friends, school, work, spiritual practices, culture are in constant in an individual's life (Priest & Denton, 2012).

According to Furman, et. al. (2009), social workers need to be aware of the range of subsystems contributing to someone's behavior. Lack of social and emotional support within the Latino community might be a factor to the development of high antecedents to distress and unresolved issues. It has been noted that many Latino families tend to have a close boundary system, making it more difficult to provide services. The VFRC has been assisting the Latino community through a cultural sensitive client centered lens.

In addition to systems theory, this project uses Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit) as a way to look at the Latino community needs and the way service providers, especially social workers, ought to work to support change in life conditions of Latinos. Latino Critical Theory helps conceptualize the reality many Latino live based on their social experience. LatCrit has its foundation on Critical Race Theory (CRT), which arose in the 1970's following the civil rights movement (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Valencia, 2008). Lawyers, legal scholars and activist began noticing that racial and social progressed had slowed and a more subtle and covert form of racism had started. CRT challenges the white paradigm and recognizes the distinct realities of people of color (Taylor, 1998). CRT brought light to the dominant narrative and fallacy of race equality, explaining how people of color do not have the same opportunities as Whites. CRT recognized that white and/or whiteness was a social construct norm and standard, which placed black/blackness as the 'other' (Kiehne, 2016). Major concepts to CRT are race, racism, and power relations that have a negative effect on people of color, marginalizing them in a white normative society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

LatCrit is closely related to CRT, as LatCrit shares many of the above-mentioned concepts giving the Latino/Hispanic experience a conceptualization and an explanation for the

disparities they experience in the US society. LatCrit emphasizes that Latinos are marginalized and underrepresented in many social spheres and, at the same time, seeks to identify and uncover ways in which so call race-neutral policies affect this community (Villalpando, 2004).

Similar to CRT, LatCrit aims to describe how problematic social hierarchies and inequalities are for the Latino/Hispanic community. However, in contrast with CRT, LatCrit addresses differential racialization and various intersections of oppression for a population that is very diverse itself (Valdes, 2005). LatCrit expands from CRT as it exposes and challenges discrimination and oppression based on race but also based on nativity, generation status, language, socioeconomic status, gender, and sexuality (Kiehne, 2016). For example a Latina might experience multiple forms of discrimination as a result from being a woman, living in poverty, being an immigrant, having an accent, and being homosexual, all of which are additive which add to her overall needs. LatCrit promotes social justice and equality, consistent with the professional values of the social work profession (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2017). This theory helps academia, and social service workers, understand the challenges Latinos/Hispanics experience and the complexity of their social location, keeping in mind that race is not the only identify that puts them at a disadvantage.

Community Needs

This survey project aims to identify the major needs of the Latino/Hispanic community in Vacaville by surveying the VFRC's service recipients, but to accomplish this, an explanation of what researchers mean by needs is warranted. There may be confusion in the difference between a need and a want and service providers ought to have clear this distinction in order to provide adequate and effective services to the identified population or group. According to Yuen, Terao, and Schmidt (2009), the distinction between a need and a want lays what one has to have in order to live versus something someone desires but it is not essential to survive. For example, a need is

fundamental like water, food and shelter versus a want being a luxury or a desire need not to survive such as owning a television, having your nails done, and getting the latest cell phone.

Furthermore, Abraham Maslow (1943) proposed a hierarchical way of looking at human needs. He used a pyramid like figure to show the order of needs that an individual should have in order to reach its full potential as a human being. The needs described by Maslow include: basic psychological needs, safety and security, love, esteem and self-actualization. Maslow ranked the needs to help understand what are the priority needs for survival as a human being, highlighting the importance of different areas not just physical. It is with this diverse understanding of human well being that this project aims to find out the various needs of Latino.

Yuen, Terao, and Schmidt (2009) explain the four different types of needs used by human service providers when identifying the needs of a target population. The four basic needs are normative, felt, expressed, and comparative. A *normative* need refers to a condition or status that are below the recognized social standard. For example, if a community/county has a high percentage of families living under the poverty line, additional funding could be allotted to fund programs such as Cal-Fresh and Head Start, to ameliorate the families' economic needs. The second need is a *felt* need and it refers to the group's self desire or want, based on their own understanding of standard of living. An example of a felt needs is a youth group asking an community center to offer boxing classes rather than karate, based on the fact that youth participating in the services prefer boxing over karate.

Expressed need is the third type of need and it indicates the beneficiary's or member of the target group's effort to satisfy his or her needs. For instance, a group of parents advocating for college prep classes in a school board meeting could be an expressed need. An expressed need is most commonly presented documented, after a needs assessment has been completed and the findings are presented in a well-organized report recognizing the voiced concerns of the targeted

population. A second way to establish an expressed need is by looking at waitlists in social service agencies as these lists represent the need in the community for the agency's services.

Lastly, the fourth need is a *comparative* need and it is defined as the instance when someone's condition is comparatively worse off and/or less desirable than the condition of someone else. For instance, Latino families have a comparative financial need, as their poverty rate is 4.8% higher than the general population's poverty rate in Vacaville. The four types of needs are equally important in assessing and discovering the major needs of the targeted population. It is often hard to use all four types to do a needs assessment, thus human service agencies pick the one type that can most accurately help do their study.

For this study, writers have chosen to use the expressed needs definition, using the participant's input to help voice out and put to light their major needs. Using the expressed need lens, researchers will do a needs assessment study for the Vacaville Family Resource Center.

Needs Assessment

As previously mentioned, needs are found based on an individual's experience compared to society's expectations. In other words, compared to the dominant culture's well-being, Latino families face challenges achieving similar well-being and conditions (Furman, et. al., 2009). A needs assessment is used to identify vital information about what an individual is able to accomplish with the current resources available, and what factors could contribute to the improvement of those accomplishments. It is important, as it provides information on what is needed by an individual, group, family, or population.

A needs assessment can contribute to the development of new services and programs appropriate to meet the needs of the participants. As mentioned above, the four different types of needs include normative, felt, documented and comparative needs (Yuen, Terao, & Schmidt, 2009). Social workers, organizations, and other professionals rely on the use of a needs

assessment when working with individuals, groups, populations and communities, to identify and attend the most and/or urgent needs. A needs assessment is a tool that helps prioritize necessities, while taking appropriate action on clients' requests (Yuen, Tarao, & Schmidt, 2009).

Service Recommendations for Latinos

Services to Latino students, and their families, must address the various needs that Latinos families experience in the United States while using Latino's strengths and resiliency factors to guide service providers. As explained, Latinos have an array of social, economic, health, and emotional needs that may challenge human service providers in service delivery. Literature in the topic suggest that it is imperative for services providers to do case management, work with a *familismo* approach, advance social justice, be culturally competent, integrate family's support systems into treatment, provide services in the community, take into account acculturation, immigration history and status, identity, bilingualism and socioeconomic status (Ayón, 2014; Organista, 2009; Rothe, 2004).

Familismo

Research by Ayón (2014) highlights that *familismo* is a protective factor which helps clients do better in treatment and bear with the many difficulties they face as they feel supported by their family members. Guilamo-Ramos et al., (2007) defines *familismo* as the importance of having strong family loyalty, solidarity, closeness, getting along with and contributing to the well-being of the family, not just economically but socially and emotionally as well.

Calzada, Tamis-LeMonda & Yoshikawa (2013) state four main components of *familismo*. The first belief is that family comes before the individual. Therefore, individuals are looked at as a member of a unit and not as sole individuals. The second belief is the emphasis on familial interconnectedness where family members are physically and emotionally close to one another. The third is the belief in family reciprocity. Family reciprocity refers to mutual dependency

among one another. The fourth and final familial component is familial honor. In addition to the four main components to *familismo*, authors identify five components on how *familismo* manifests or shows. These components are: financial support, shared daily activities, shared living, shared childrearing, and immigration.

Understanding the value Latinos put on family and family cohesiveness is essential when working with Latinos, as this is a protective factor and a very important aspect of Latino's resiliency to the difficulties they face. Family centered practice is the best model when working with communities who place a high value on family. Therefore providers should consider integrating nuclear family members as part of the treatment and doing family interventions, demonstrating understanding of family value. As Ayón (2014) and Calzada, Tamis-LeMonda & Yoshikawa (2013) highlight, familismo has been linked to positive health outcomes, increase academic efforts in young Latinos, and better psychological adjustment for students who migrate to the United States and who move around frequently.

Case Management

Research suggests that human service providers ought to engage in doing case management and linkage to services within the community, connecting families to additional resources that support client's needs that might not be covered by the human service worker's agency. Case management is characterized by assisting clients with their biological, social psychological, and environmental needs that influence their development (Fortuna, 2013; Walsh, 2008). Linking immigrants to social and cultural services can maximize the results of treatment.

Service providers need to case manage their clients, connect them and advocate in these areas; education, mental and physical health and immigration, among other systems in culturally and linguistically appropriate manner (Organista, 2009). Case management ties Latinos to new agencies and personnel who they can trust and consider part of their community. As Latinos see

that their community support increases, they begin to have a sense of belonging, feeling and hoping that things will get better, and experiencing minimized needs (Walsh, 2009; Organista, 2009).

Latino Focused Model

Organista (2009) researched for best practices for Latinos in need of social work services illustrates the various, but necessary steps human service providers have to take into account when working with Latinos. The proposed model practice includes a 2 X 4 matrix model focusing on two practice service level providers, the generalist and the specialized, and the four areas in which these providers have to support the student and the family. These four areas are: increase service availability and access, assess problems in the social and cultural context, select culturally and socially acceptable interventions, and increase service accountability.

These areas are important so that the services provided to Latinos are culturally and socially appropriate and services are successful. Organista (2009) argues that if service providers adapt this model for Latinos, service recipients will not only be better assess but will also respond better to services and, ultimately, achieve their goals. Reaching out to Latinos in their environment and providing services specialized to their needs is the only way to ensure services will substantially impact this community.

Social Justice Advancement

Organista (2009) elicits service providers to use empowerment as a tool to motivate Latinos and help them make changes to their social conditions, and he borrows Lum's framework for understanding and working with diverse groups and justice issues. Lum (2003) explains the necessary skills, besides having knowledge and commitment to working with diverse populations, to fully support peoples of diverse cultural backgrounds. These skills include having the ability to create a profile specific to the family one is working with, engaging in a way in which the family

feels supportive and understood, ability to view problems in a non-pathological manners and more as an ‘unmet need’ understanding that the problems are way to cope with life stressors, institutionalizing competent social services by incorporating diversity into agencies, and utilizing evidence-based practices. These skills not only take into account the social factors that might be affecting the family, but they also include culture and language, assuring diverse clients receive appropriate and effective services to help their immediate needs and achieve social justice.

Language Competency

In addition to providing case management, having specialized skills when working with a diverse population, advocating for social justice, and including family in treatment, human service providers have to be linguistic and culturally competent when working with Latinos. Service providers need to be know the Spanish language and if not fluent, they have to a least be able to provide interpreter services to assure language is not an impediment to a good communication which is imperative for rapport building and trust formation.

Understanding the importance of informal and formal communication and the differences between “*tu*” and “*usted*” is also essential when working with Latinos. *Tu* conveys formality, familiarity, a level of intimacy, or equal education level as the person one is communicating with. On the other hand, *Usted* signifies a more respectful way of talking to someone, such as a newly introduced person, an elder, or someone considered of higher rank. Service provider ought to use the *Usted* formal way of communication for the purpose of demonstrating respect when initially meeting adult clients or parents of youth and only using *tu* when authorized to do so. Demonstration of knowledge of *tu* and *usted* demonstrates language and cultural competency. (Finno-Velasquez, 2013; Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010).

Biculturalism, Acculturation, and Identity

Rothe (2004) states that understanding biculturalism, acculturation level, reasons for immigration, immigration status and immigrant trauma is essential for providing adequate and effective social services to Latinos. Knowing the acculturation level and identity formation of their clients gives the service provider a higher chance to build rapport and be trusted. The service provider could also serve as a liaison between the client and the mainstream culture, assisting Latinos in understanding certain cultural norms in the US and helping them decide if these norms coincide with their values and/or how to adapt or cope with the differences.

Rothe (2004) broadens the knowledge of sociocultural dynamics within the Latino community, highlighting the importance of understanding biculturalism as many young Latinos maintain cultural connectedness to their parents' country of origin while also acculturating into the US society. These youths could experience a clash of cultures as they experience different expectations in their home from those in their schools and the greater society. Being culturally competent or fully aware of cultural barriers specific to Latinos helps providers assist their clients when/if they experience a sense of confusion and lack of belonging during their identity formation. Providers can support youth's identity validation and reaffirmation that includes both, an old and a new culture, legitimizing their belonging to two cultures equally important to them.

Understanding or being open to understand the sociocultural barriers and struggles that Latinos experience is essential for human service providers. Practicing the skills proposed in the current literature is imperative to guarantee that effective and appropriate services are delivered, and that barriers and struggles are minimized for the Latino community.

School-based Social Work

School is a designed place for children to engage in academic learning, but enjoy the environment, develop friendships and social skills. For most children, school represents a safe

and stable environment, where they can find a system of support and consistency (Ayasse & Stone, 2015). Social workers have been part of the school setting since the early 1900s, playing vital roles to provide services to assist children achieve their full potential and increase their protective factors (Villareal, Cox, & Alvarez, 2016). School-based social work has been the link connecting school, home, and community (NASW, 2012). The goal of social work is to remove barriers in education and assist students improve their academic achievement, while meeting their social emotional needs (Boyd-Webb, 2011).

Performing various psychosocial functions in a micro, mezzo and macro level within the education system, social workers aim to meet the physical, emotional, and mental needs of students in the classroom (NASW, 2012). Some roles include, but are not limited to providing effective interventions, advocating for children, educating parents and school personnel, facilitating groups and collaborating with community agencies for the wellbeing of the student (Boyd-Webb, 2011; Frey, et al., 2012). The National Association of Social Workers provides guidelines, or standards for practice, professional development, and administrative support for schools (De Anda, Franke, & Becerra, 2009).

Social work in school settings has changed from casework services aiming change in the person, and less emphasis in the school environment in the 1990s (Allen-Meares, 2013) There is a greater focus on externalizing the problem, rather than on the person (Phillippo & Stone, 2011). According to Frey et al. (2012), social work was poorly understood in some schools due to a bureaucratic traditional education system. Students face numerous individual, school and community risk factors that affect their ability to succeed in the school system (Jensen & Fraser, 2016; Phillippo & Stone, 2011). According to the NASW (2012), support services and interventions are more effective through an impact within their environment. Having a school-

wide system of support and a community collaboration through a multidisciplinary approach has shown the outcomes for students' success.

Social Work in Vacaville's Schools

There is a high need for school-based mental health services and support in many school districts such the Vacaville Unified School District (VUSD). According to Diaz, Center Director VUSD serves nearly 12,400 students from 18 different schools, from diverse school grade levels. VUSD has adopted the school-wide multi-tiered system of support to empower their students and remove barriers in education. The most recent approach used in several schools in Vacaville is the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS). As part of the school curriculum, PBIS aims to teach students through modeling and reinforcing positive social behavior. Students are encouraged to use appropriate behaviors and are rewarded for them (PBIS, 2018). The Vacaville Family Resource Center has partnered up with the local school district to provide mental health support for students and their families. VFRC has provided assistance to address the needs affecting the students' wellbeing, assisting families at risk through individual and group counseling, mental health and risk assessments, case management and referrals to outside resources (G. Diaz, personal communication, October 10, 2017).

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This study used a survey questionnaire to conduct a needs assessment of the needs of Latino/Hispanic families utilizing the services at the Vacaville Family Resource Center in Vacaville, California. The VFRC distributed and collected the surveys to all their service recipients in the months of October and November 2017. Authors input and analyzed data in program for statistical analysis called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to assess the overall service utilization and needs of the participants. Basic descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe the respondents' responses and to test difference and correlations between variables. This chapter discusses the methodology used in the current study. The research question, study design, sampling procedures, data collection procedures, instruments used, data analysis, and protection of human subjects will be further examined.

Research Question

This study was conducted to get a better understanding of the basic needs of the Latino/Hispanic community in Vacaville, CA utilizing the services at the Family Resource Center, with special focus on those families who have school age children (6 to 18 years old). Authors hypothesized that families would report a high need in mental health services and financial assistance.

Study Design

The current research study used an exploratory research design. An exploratory research design intends to explore the topic and research question, if there is one, and does not intend to offer final and conclusive solution to existing problems within the population being studied. This type of research is usually conducted to study a problem that has not been clearly defined yet, and forms the basis of more conclusive research. It can help in determining the research design,

sampling methodology, and data collection method of subsequent research, as it is effective in laying the groundwork that lead to future studies.

This study used an assessment questionnaire survey. The questionnaire survey was a one-page quantitative and qualitative questionnaire that was given to VFRC service recipients during the months of October and November 2017. All participants answered the de-identifiable questionnaire and returned it to the VFRC staff. The needs assessment addressed basic socio-economic and mental health needs as well as academic and cultural needs. Although the data was collected over a period of two months, this study had a cross-sectional design because data was collected only once from each participant. While this thesis study focused on Latinos, the needs assessment itself was for everyone who received services from the VFRC during the months of collection.

Sampling Procedures

The study sample used for this study was convenience, as the sample was comprised of Vacaville residents who participated in a program or service at the VFRC in the months of October or November 2017. The VFRC staff requested participation from every service recipient they saw during the collection time. There were seven dates where VFRC staff went out to public spaces (i.e. schools, libraries, etc.) to sign families up for the Christmas Wish program. Eighty percent of the surveys were collected at the Christmas Wish Program sign up dates and the remained 20% was collected from participants who received services at the VFRC offices in the entire two months of survey collection.

Given that the study used a convenience approach means that the findings may not be generalized to the overall population of Latinos in Vacaville or the Latino community at large. It is important to note that although authors gained knowledge of the needs expressed by the

Latinos surveyed in this study, the current study may only contribute to existing knowledge rather than generalizing findings to experiences to service recipients in different resource centers.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collected by VFRC included both qualitative and quantitative data. Prior to collecting data, both researchers contacted Gloria Diaz, LCSW VFRC's clinical service administrator and Ana Isabel Montaña, MSW VFRC staff member. Authors met with Ms. Diaz and Ms. Montaña to discuss the purpose of the study and to invite the VFRC to collaborate. Both, Ms. Diaz and Ms. Montaña supported the proposed study, agreed to collaborate with authors, and suggested the collection time to be October and November 2017 as there is a high number of service recipients during this time. Researchers drafted and turned in a formal proposal in June 2017. Researchers were provided a letter of support on behalf of the Vacaville Police Department's Family resource Center in July 2017.

VFRC staff collected surveys in October and November 2017. The staff collected surveys at their offices and at different public spaces in the city of Vacaville where they provided services. These public spaces were: Markham Elementary, Padan Elementary, Hemlock Elementary, Fairmont Elementary, Vacaville Public Library Town Square, and Vacaville Public Library Cultural Center. Staff provided informed consent form that explained the research study, what it meant to give implied consent, the risks and benefits to participate, and both researchers' contact information. Participants were also informed of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses and the importance of not to write any identifiable information on the questionnaire, such as their name or signature.

When the VFRC staff distributed the one-page questionnaire, they asked participants to drop off the completed questionnaire at the locked box. Their participation was voluntary and surveys and informed consent forms were provided in English and Spanish. Participation time

was estimated to have taken less than five minutes per participant. There were no incentives given and the researchers had no contact with the respondents. The data was collected through VFRC staff, kept at the VFRC, and then given to authors for statistical analysis at the end of November. Authors were given completed questionnaires without any identifying information. The total number of respondents was 229, but for the purpose of this study analyzing the needs of the Latino participants, only 198 surveys met criteria and were analyzed for statistical reporting.

Instrument

The data collection tool is an assessment questionnaire modeled after a school social work needs assessment study (Appendices A-D). It was further revised and developed by the researchers and support from VFRC clinical service administrator, Gloria Diaz, LCSW, and VFRC social worker Ana Isabel Montaña, MSW. The questionnaire was developed to capture specific information needed to assess service utilization and needs of VFRC service recipients. The questionnaire was designed to cover the health, psychological, economic, and social needs, which were the main Latino needs according to literature review.

The questionnaire used asks the respondent to racially identify themselves, to provide number of members in household, if the parent is a single parent, how many, if any, children ages 6 to 18 live with the respondent, and, it asks the participant to rate how their children are doing academically. Question number 6 asks the participant to check the services they currently receive at the VFRC and question number 7 asks the participant to check all the services they themselves need or are likely to need in the future. Question number 8 asks the participants to check all the services they are most likely to use in the future. Lastly, question number 9 offers the participant to write in any services they would like the VFRC to provide.

The options of services and programs were chosen based on the services the VFRC provides or has provided in the past. Additional services were included for question number eight

based on available services in community provided by other agencies. Upon completion of the study instrument, it was translated into Spanish by both authors then edited and back-translated into English. Instrument and informed consent were also reviewed and back-translated from Spanish to English by a bilingual person, not one of the two authors of this study, to achieve equivalence between the two languages. Ms. Diaz and Ms. Montaña, bilingual in Spanish and English, provided feedback with regards to the questionnaire relevance and accuracy to capture the intent of this study. Both, English and Spanish questionnaires are included for reference following chapter 5.

Data Analysis

A previously discussed, the data gathered from the current exploratory study research design included quantitative and qualitative data. Upon receiving the completed questionnaires from the VFRC staff at the end of November 2017, the researchers input quantitative data into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program for statistical analysis. Researches extracted returned questionnaires that met criteria for focus of study, Latino/Hispanic families, and began creating frequency tables regarding participants' number of children, current service use, and future service use consideration. In addition researchers analyzed frequency of single parent home versus non-single parent home in this Latino community.

Researches used basic descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, such as Chi Square, to explore and describe the correlations and differences among various tested variables. In addition, researchers used multi-response analysis, based on the structure of the assessment, to quantify the services most needed. The qualitative portion of the research study, question 9, was analyzed through independent content reviews and analysis by the two researchers. After the data was sorted and organized, researchers reviewed and identified common patterns, directions, and trends. They then compared and contrasted their findings to arrive at a common analysis. Through

this process, researchers were able to gain a better understanding of the expressed needs of the participants.

Protection of Human Subjects

Authors contacted the VFRC in the month of May 2017 to propose the needs assessment study in their center and invite them to collaborate. A research proposal was drafted and given to Ms. Gloria Diaz, the center's clinical service administrator, on June 13, 2017. Ms. Diaz then passed the proposal to the Vacaville Police Chief, John Carli, for final approval. Ms. Diaz communicated the confirmation of their partnering with researchers and their center's support on July 3, 2017 (Appendix E). Authors then submitted the Humans Subjects Application to Sacramento State University on August 8, 2017, which included copies of the completion of the CITI training requirement for Master's student investigations. The California State University, Sacramento, Division of Social Work Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects approved this research study August 23, 2017 as a minimal risk study due to the possibility that participants could experience discomfort while answering questions.

In order to ensure that participants did not become emotionally affected when completing the questionnaire, authors made every effort possible to include questions that would not cause any more discomfort than that experienced during an ordinary conversation about the topic. Furthermore, every participant was given an Informed Consent form that provided the local counseling information in case they felt emotionally triggered by any question. Participants were also advised to speak to VFRC staff if case they needed emotional support, as VFRC are trained professionals to provide this type of support. The level of experiencing discomfort was also decreased by surveying adults 18 years of age and older. There were no personal identifiers in the questionnaires thus eliminating the probability of being identified and further causing any risks.

There were no monetary incentives for participants in this study. However, the study provided benefits to society. Participants had the opportunity to express, without judgment, their current and foreseen needs. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to access the findings provided by both researchers to the VFRC. Furthermore, the findings could give the VFRC staff basic information to further investigate what needs their service recipients have and potentially assist them in new program development and implementation as well. The overall benefit that the current study has on society is that it provides a strong foundation for the need to advocate for the needs of the current population being studied.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter will discuss the overall and specific findings as a result of analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. Researchers have provided tables to assist in explaining the findings. Included in the findings are participants' average family size, their children's academic achievement, current VFRC service utilization, their opinion on VFRC services they are likely to need in the future, services in the community they are more likely to use in the future, and whether single parent households are more prevalent than double parent homes. In addition, researchers report the findings on the participants' responses to the qualitative (open ended) question of the survey. Findings from multiple-response analyses, descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, and significant correlations will also be discussed.

Background

As previously discussed, Latinos are the second largest ethnic group in the United States, making up 17.6% of the total U.S. population. Poverty is the major social issue affecting Hispanics, as it outweighs all to other social aspects that pose as barriers to Hispanics. The poverty rate among Latinos is 24.3%, indicating a presence of need for this community. Our literature review highlighted the barriers and challenges Latinos face due to their unique experience in the United States. Researchers have identified protective factors for Hispanics, with family values being primary protector (Rothe, 2004; U. S. Census Bureau, 2015).

Using the findings from the literature review, and with information gathered during communication with VFRC staff, researchers created an assessment questionnaire (See Appendices A-D) modeled after another school social work needs assessment study. In Vacaville, California, Hispanics make up 24% of the population with a poverty rate of 15.5%, and the VFRC has been providing services to low income and in-need community members since 2003

(G. Diaz, personal communication, October 10, 2017). Although Latinos' poverty rate in Vacaville is much lower than Hispanics' national poverty rate, it is higher than the Vacaville general population poverty rate of 10.7%. Researchers aimed to study the level of need of Latinos who have school age children, 6 to 18 years old, and who are utilizing the services from the VFRC. The VFRC service recipients were asked to participate in the study by the VFRC staff during the months of October and November, 2017.

Respondents and Language of Choice

A total of 229 service recipients participated in the study. Among them, 86.5% identified as Hispanic or Latino, as shown in Table 1. Of the 198 respondents who identified as Hispanic, 12 identified as bi/multiracial, 6 identified as Hispanic-Caucasian, 1 identified as Latino-American Indian/Alaska Native, 4 identified as Latino-African American and 1 as Hispanic-Other.

Table 1

Hispanic/Latino Distribution of Participants

Hispanic/Latino	Frequency	(%)
NO	31	13.5
YES	198	86.5
Total	229	100.0

The 13.5 % (n=31) of respondents who identified as Non-Latino/Hispanic were excluded from most of the data analysis, as this study intended to assess service needs by the Latino population. Analysis for the Non-Latino respondents was made and utilized to compare to analysis for the Latino respondents when the differences were significant. The majority of participants chose to complete the survey in Spanish, with only 19.7% (n=39) completing the survey in English. This is significant because it showed that most of the Latinos receiving services at the VFRC are more comfortable communicating in Spanish. This finding is at odds

with census numbers regarding the primary language spoken in Vacaville. The 2011-2015 American Community Survey reported that 81% of Vacaville residents speak English and only 11.4% speak Spanish, yet in this study 80.3% of respondents preferred to use Spanish.

Household Compositions

Study findings showed that 37.4% of the 198 Latino respondents have a family size of 4 members, followed by 26.8% of them having 5 family members. The vast majority, 85.8% of the respondents (n=170), have children who are of school age, 6 to 18 years old. These findings show that families have young children who are part of the school system. They also highlight the importance of school social work to develop programs for children and youth that facilitate these youths' academic, as well as other individual and family, developments.

There is a significant difference between single parent homes and non-single parent homes, as shown in Table 2. Over 60% (n=122) of the Latino families responding to the survey are composed of two parents. This figure is comparable to the national figure of 69% of children age 18 or under live in two parent families, according to the United States Census Bureau (2016). The percentage of two parents homes for non-Hispanic families receiving services at the VFRC was 34.4% (n=8). This is significant because this shows that Hispanic families receiving services at VFRC follow the national trend, while non-Hispanic families do not. Hispanic families, even though they have comparable percentages of two parent households to the national percentage, have more need for services as evidenced by the disproportionate number of Latinos accessing VFRC services (n=198) when compared to non-Hispanics (n=23).

Table 2

One Parent Household

One Parent Household	Frequency	(%)
NO	122	61.6
YES	76	38.4
Total	198	100.0

Academic Support Needs

The majority of participants reported having children who are either academically excellent/above average or average. These combined percentages equaled to 90.9% in comparison to a very low 9.1% of those participants who reported having children who are academically struggling and trying (Table 3). An interesting point, and perhaps an area of exploration for future research, is the fact that no one respondent reported having a child who is academically doing poorly or failing. Further studies could help clarify if this study finding is consistent with the literature review stating that Latinos put a high value on education, or if parents are not aware of their children's academic performance, or if, perhaps, the finding demonstrates a social desirability effect.

Table 3

Children's Academic Achievement

Children's Academic Achievement	Frequency	(%)
Excellent/ Above Average	81	46.3
Average	78	44.6
Struggling & Trying	16	9.1
Poor/Failing	0	0
Total	175	100.0

Utilization of Current Services

There were significant correlations found during the data analysis for this study. Based on a multiple responded analysis, data shows three main services offered by the VFRC were utilized most frequently by Latinos. The services most utilized were counseling/therapy services, financial assistance, and youth activities with a total of 31.3% each (Table 4, n=44). The data collection was done in October and November during the period in which the VFRC hosts its Christmas Wish Program. The Christmas Wish program assists low income families with services

and goods during the end of the year holidays. This might have impacted the utilization of other services within the center and the data collection. Data reveals counseling, financial assistance, and youth activities are the most utilized services among Latino families besides Christmas Wish. Almost 80% of the participants utilized services from the resource center for their Christmas Wish Program. The use of the Christmas Wish Program shows a correlation to the financial need among families utilizing the center.

Table 4

Current Service Utilization

Current Service Utilization	Frequency	(%)
Counseling/Therapy	10	31.3
Financial Assistance	10	31.3
Youth Activities	10	31.3
Parent Support	6	18.8
Referral Resources	5	15.6
Basic Needs	3	9.4
Total	44	137.5

Future Service Needs**Financial Assistance Services**

While current services utilization is relatively balanced, future potential utilization was skewed towards financial assistance more so than counseling and youth activities. This shows that financial insecurity causes a higher concern for many families in Vacaville, more so than other concerns such as mental health issues. Researchers expected higher utilization of counseling and therapy services among Hispanic families in Vacaville, especially among those families with limited resources and utilizing services from the center. When compared to other services needed in the community in the future, most participants prioritized financial assistance needs, such as utility support, food assistance and bus passes (Table 5). These immediate needs are survival necessities that have a great impact on the physical emotional wellbeing of families.

Consistent with our second hypothesis for this project, data shows a need for financial assistance to lessen economic hardship in families with children in school. On a multiple response analysis, utility assistance was reported as the highest necessity with a 43% (Table 5). This shows the current social problem of poverty and limited resources in the community. Financial assistance was categorized into several services such as clothing, utility, food assistance, budget planning, and free bus passes. Multiple-response frequency analysis shows that participants from two parent homes responded to the likelihood of needing more financial assistance services than participants from single parent households, with the exception of single parent needing more food assistance.

Furthermore, families reported public transportation support as important within the financial assistance services. Approximately 29.8% participants expressed the need for support with public transportation in Vacaville. Participants identified that it is needed in the community and the high likelihood of utilizing affordable public transportation services. The third most needed financial assistance service is food assistance, needed by almost a third of participants. Although food assistance is not the highest need reported, this finding is critical, as nutrition is vital for development and stable health among school age children and adults. Current findings are consistent with previous literature, where multiple risk factors, such as finances, transportation costs, and food costs directly affecting the family as a whole.

Mental Health Services

Data collected through a multiple-response frequency analysis shows the likelihood of participants to use mental health services in the future. Mental health was divided into different types of services, including individual, group counseling, stress management support, and the REACH program, which provides support to adolescents in Vacaville. Stress management support ranked as the highest future need among Latinos, followed by individual counseling and

confidential support groups. The percentage of individuals requesting stress management services shows that Latino families are faced with several risks factors and stressors directly affecting their well-being and experience. However, many individuals might not know that the center also provides mental health services and might not be utilizing them appropriately.

Table 5

Future Services Needed

Future Services Needed	Frequency	(%)
Utility Assistance	49	43
Links to Resources	40	35.1
Free Bus Passes	34	29.8
Food Assistance	34	29.8
Clothing	26	22.8
Stress Management	22	19.3
Individual Family Counseling	21	18.4
Parenting Classes	21	18.4
Confidential Support Group	12	10.5
Budget Planning	12	10.5
Bilingual Bicultural Staff	12	10.5
Healthy Relationships	10	8.8
REACH Youth Coalition	9	7.9
Case Management	5	4.4
Total	307	269.3

Academic Support for Children

Families participating in this study indicated their individual current and future needs, as well as the perceived needs of the Vacaville community as part of the last question in the data collection tool. One major finding regarding community needs is the request by Hispanic families for academic support for their children. Approximately 44.7% of all participating families indicated a need to receive academic tutoring for their children. Participants also reported the desire for after-school programs for their children rating the highest community need, with 38.6%, indicating the importance Latino families place on education (See table 6).

A cross tabulation analysis between academic performance and the need for academic support shows that families with children in school performing excellent/above average report a

higher likelihood of utilizing services to increase educational attainment (47%), on a higher scale than families whose children are performing average (32%) and below average (15%). More educational resources, such as tutoring, after school programs, and children/youth recreational activities are needed by both single-parent and two parent households.

Consistent with the literature, Latino families place a high value on education and have high academic expectations for their children (De Anda, Franke & Becerra, 2009). Findings of this study reflect the educational aspirations of Hispanic parents and their desire for their children to receive support in education.

1. Academic Tutoring, 43.3%
2. Adult English Classes, 39.6%
3. Afterschool Program, 36.6%

English Classes for Adults

Another finding of this needs assessment study is the high percentage of participants indicating the need for adult English classes in the community. Latino families in this study indicated a desire for learning English, with 46.5% on a multiple response frequency distribution analysis (See Table 6). Although during the data collection most participants in this study completed the Spanish version of the survey, this finding shows their willingness and desire to be part of the mainstream culture by learning the language and participating in the community. Consistent with the literature, some Latino families experience language barriers, which it might limit their accessibility to community resources (Finno-Velasquez, 2013). Providing the support to meet their needs can empower and promote Latino families.

Employment Assistance

Another major finding within this study was the high percentage of participants requesting assistance with youth and adult employment in the community. Approximately 21.9%

of VFRC's participating families indicated the need in finding a job for themselves, and another 19.3% for youth employment (n=427). This finding is correlated with the needs for financial assistance. Because many families are struggling financially, it is important for parents and older children to be in the workforce to support their families.

Table 6

Community Needs

Community Future Needs	Frequency	(%)
Adult English Classes	53	46.5
Academic Tutoring	51	44.7
After School Program	44	38.6
Recreational Activities	39	34.2
Immigration Support	38	33.3
College Planning	30	26.3
Mentoring for Children	27	23.7
Finding Job Career Fair	25	21.9
Youth Employment	22	19.3
Finding Affordable Child Care	22	19.3
Credit Recovery	19	16.7
Homelessness Assistance	15	13.2
Sexual Assault Harassment	12	10.5
Interview Resume	11	9.6
Conflict Mediation	7	6.1
Substance Abuse	5	4.4
Race Diversity Challenges	4	3.5
Support for LGBT	3	2.6
Total	427	374.6

Child Care, Mediation, and Other Services

Additionally, another multiple response frequency analysis showed 19.3% of participants observed the need for accessible and affordable child care in the community in a frequency analysis. As existent literature shows, some of the risk factors affecting Latinos is poverty (Salcido, 2007). Many families experience difficulty affording child care services in the community due to several reasons, including limited resources available. Furthermore, almost half of the participants in this study indicated a need for more services in regard to conflict

meditation, and substance abuse in the city of Vacaville. Nearly 6.1% of families surveyed perceived a need for conflict mediation to resolve issues among the community. (See table 6).

Correlations among Services Needed

Crosstab analyses of the service items needed found no statistically significant correlation; however, several of the correlations appear to have clinical practice significance. These correlations include the finding that those participants utilizing financial assistance were more likely to need utility support, counseling services, academic tutoring, and adult English classes.

A chi square analysis showed a statistically significant correlation between participants receiving financial assistance services and requesting individual and family counseling ($X^2=4.499$, $df=1$, $p=0.034$). Even when participants experience the need for mental health services, due to experiencing financial hardship, families prioritize economic services as a survival need. Additionally, statistical significance was also found between those utilizing counseling services and requesting stress management support ($X^2=11.281$ $df=1$, $p=0.001$). In other words, because participants experience constant stressors on a daily basis, these families have indicated their desire to receive more specific support in how to manage their stress levels.

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative portion of the study allowed respondents to write in what services they would like to receive from the VFRC rather than from other agencies/programs in the community. Using the conventional content analysis approach (Hsien & Shannon, 2005), both authors independently reviewed and analyzed data content. They then met and discussed their findings, organized and grouped the findings by major themes. Authors arrived to a consensus that the data ($n=35$) reflected three major themes; education, family support, and financial

assistance. Within each of these three themes, there were a few services that were expressed with more frequency than others. Please see Table 7 below.

Table 7

Most Requested Services by Respondents

	Education	Family Support	Financial Assistance
Most Requested Services	Academic Tutoring Parenting Classes English Classes College Planning GED & Adult Classes	Childcare Adult Health Care Legal Support	Food Bank Bus Passes Diaper Program

Data reflected that education was the most mention area of service that called into the respondent's narrative comments. Despite the respondent's need for education support, their desire to have their children do well in school and to advance academically themselves, there are challenges that do not allow respondents to focus on receiving this services such as having financial hardships. Respondents extended commitment to seek financial security support leaves them with little time to find little or no education support, as much as they desire to invest more time in academic advancement. Finding in this study showed that financial support, in various forms, was the most utilized and service to be utilize in the future, which proves that respondents are more preoccupied in dealing with current economic crisis and the emotional and psychological effects of economic uncertainty rather than increasing education support.

Surprisingly, and despite current literature describing factors affecting Latinos' mental health, respondents' requests for mental health was not significant, as only one respondent requested stress management classes and one more requested psychological help. Perhaps respondents consider physical and social well being more important than emotional wellbeing. Study findings provided evidence of the need for future research in this area, to help understand the reasons Latinos do not see mental health services as a major need when current literature

shows that, due to the many factors affecting Latinos, mental health support is desirable to help manage and cope with difficult experiences.

Julian-A Composite Latino Service Recipient at VFRC

Julian is an 11-year-old Spanish and English speaking Latino American boy attending 6th grade at a local middle school in Vacaville, California. He lives with both of his parents and sister, Ana, and is an excellent/above average academic student. Ana, who is in 3rd grade, is an average student in school and attends his same school. His family is receiving services at the VFRC; their mother signed Julian and Ana up for Christmas Wish, a program where children get free gifts for Christmas if the family qualifies due to financial hardship. The family has also received financial assistance from the VFRC in the past, in the form of a one-time cash stipend, so they could afford their electricity bill and rent. Furthermore, Julian and his sister have participated in the youth activities program run by the VFRC sister organization. Julian's parents have experienced financial insecurities recently and will need financial and food assistance as well as help obtaining bus passes. These parents will most likely also seek VFRC support to get linkage to other community resources and get all their basic needs met.

Despite the admirable academic performances by Julian and his sister, the parents will utilize the following services in the Vacaville community: academic tutoring, after school program, recreational activities for the children, and college planning. Julian's parents value education and they will seek supportive services/programs in the community that will help their children increase their academic performance and chances of being admitted to college. Additionally, Julian's parents will participate in adult English classes, to better support their children's academic development and better communicate in the English language as their primary language. While their language of comfort is Spanish they wish to be fluent in English.

Lastly, Julian's parents will participate in programs providing immigration support.

Julian is doing great in the school setting, however the lack of basic needs that his family experiences puts a toll on him and his family members' mental health. Julian could also benefit from counseling/therapy services, to help him and his family understand and cope with the effects of their social and financial needs. Luckily for him, the VFRC offers individual and family therapeutic services, giving Julian and his family the supportive environment in which to thrive. Julian and Ana's chances of graduating high school are very high and they will go on to college, but the family needs support now to assure Julian and Ana's future will have less financial and social needs than they have heretofore had all of their short lives.

Summary

This study collected data from 198 participants who self-identified as Latino with an average family size of 4, in a two-parent household with an average of 2 or 3 school age children, 6 to 18 years old. This study showed that most respondents felt more comfortable using the Spanish language. Analysis reflected that VFRC service recipients currently benefit from the Christmas wish program as well as financial assistance, mental health, and youth activities. They selected utility assistance and links to resources as the services they would most frequently use in the VFRC in the future. Furthermore, adult English classes, academic tutoring, and afterschool programs were the services/programs in the community that respondents thought they would utilize in the near future. Lastly, qualitative analysis suggested that education, family support, and financial assistance are areas in which respondents would like to receive more support and services from the VFRC.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the project and a discussion of the major findings. It also discusses how study findings supports or contradicts the literature review. The authors address the study hypotheses and whether or not they were proven. In addition, implications to the social work field are discussed as well as the study limitations. Recommendations and suggestions for future studies are presented based on the study's findings.

Summary of study

This study assessed the needs of the Latino community in Vacaville who utilized the services of the VFRC. More specifically, this study analyzed VFRC Latino service recipients who have school age children, 6 to 18 years old. The purpose of this study was to explore and gather relevant data that could assist VFRC in developing appropriate services for the Latino community. The study used a descriptive research design and attempted to gather information to prove or contradict author's hypotheses. The hypotheses was that families would report a high need in mental health services and financial assistance.

The study survey used a one-page quantitative and qualitative survey that was given to VFRC service recipients in the months of October and November 2017 at the VFRC offices and at public schools and libraries where VFRC staff provided services. Participants received informed consent form, answered a de-identifiable questionnaire and returned it to the VFRC. The needs assessment addressed basic socio-economic, and physical and mental health as well as academic and cultural needs. It asked the current services they utilize and the services they foresee utilizing in the future. Additionally, the qualitative question allowed respondents to write in services they would like to receive from the VFRC rather than other agencies in the community, giving precise information to what types of services they would like VFRC to offer.

A total of 229 respondents participated in the study, with 198 identifying as Latino. For the purpose of this study and assessing the needs of the Latino community, analysis was focused on the 198 respondents. With the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program for statistical analysis, the authors used multi-response analysis, based on the structure of the assessment, to quantify the services most needed. Authors also used basic descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to explore and describe the correlations and differences among various tested variables.

Discussions and Conclusions

Significant findings were revealed in both quantitative and qualitative data analysis of this study. As a result of the authors' interest in contributing to a broader understanding of the needs Hispanic families experience receiving services from the center, the focus of this study is on the Latino community. Out of those self-identified as Latinos, only 85.8% of the participating families reported having children between 6 to 18 years old attending local schools. The findings also showed more than 60% of the participants residing in an average household of four to five individuals. More than 61% of participating families were composed of two parents.

Correlated with the literature review and the unique experience of many Latinos, findings revealed numerous challenges families face on a daily basis. In addition, it showed some of the strengths and tools these families have. Some of the highest needs reported are correlated with poverty. It is estimated that Hispanics make up almost a quarter of the total population in Vacaville at 24%, Latinos have a 4.8% higher poverty rate of 15.5% when compared to Vacaville's general population (Census Bureau, 2017). Since 2003, the VFRC has been providing support with basic needs to those families at risk. Some of the services provided include outreach and community activities, child abuse prevention, parenting classes, case management, and

mental health and counseling services in local schools. Additionally, the center collaborates with local community agencies to provide outside referrals.

As mentioned before, this needs assessment study was conducted during October and November. The end of the year months typically are correlated with one of the Center's main events to assist families during the end of the year holiday season. The VFRC works with community sponsors to coordinate and facilitate presents to children from low socioeconomic status families. Through their Christmas Wish Program, the center aims to assist financially disadvantaged parents in providing goods and services during hardships. Quantitative data analysis showed more than 80% of participants were utilizing the Christmas Wish Program during data collection. This indicates the high likelihood of individuals needing financial support to provide gifts to their children in the holidays.

Another major finding is the even distribution of current service use between three services offered through the center. Within the data frequency analysis, 31.1% of individuals indicated the current use of counseling and therapy services, financial assistance and youth activities. Both mental health services and financial assistance were hypothesized to be the highest needs among the Latino community in Vacaville, which was correlated with the current use. Consistent with the literature, data analysis within this study indicated that financial hardship can lead to other critical conditions causing distress in the family and in the community. Poverty can act as a predictor of several risk factors including child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, limited educational opportunities, limited resources, and psychological and emotional stress, (Ondersma, 2002).

Furthermore, participants reported their highest needs to be correlated with economic challenges. More than one third of participants identified themselves as more likely to benefit from utility support, links to community resources, food assistance and free bus passes. The

highest service requested was utility support, which is one of the emergency services offered within the VFRC. An interesting finding was discovered using a frequency analysis, the showed that two-parent homes were more likely to need more financial assistance services than single parent homes, but that single-parent homes were more likely to utilize food assistance than two-parent homes. Consistent with the literature review, this shows that even when individuals might be in the workforce, due to other factors affecting the family's situation, such as language barriers, immigration status, and acculturation among others, financial insecurity continues to be present (Calzada, Tamis-LeModa & Yoshikawa, 2013; Haack, Kapke, & Gerdes 2016). Public transportation support was indicated as an important service needed, which is another need related to financial support. Through a qualitative data analysis, financial assistance was also identified as one of the major needs within the Latino community. For the last question in the data collection, participants were asked to identify services they would like to see offered through the center to support the community. Participating families indicated education, family support and financial assistance as essential services needed in Vacaville.

As mentioned in the literature review, there are several factors that might limit mental health access for many Latino families. Latinos are less likely to seek services than the dominant culture due to stigma around mental health, immigration status, language barriers, lack of health care insurance, among other social factors (Kanel, 2002). Although mental health services were not identified as the main priority among Latino families in this study, almost a third of the participants are currently receiving mental health support from themselves or their children at local schools. One of the hypotheses for this study was the expected high need for mental health services among the Hispanic community. Compared to other needs reported such as financial assistance, mental health is not being utilized as frequent as other services. However, we found a high percentage of individuals reported their desire to receive stress management support. This

finding shows that although there are many factors affecting access to mental health services, Latino families have identified a need to receive these kinds of services from the center.

Additionally, we found that the Latino community has a high values education. Consistent with literature, even when many parents themselves do not have high educational achievement, Hispanics want their children to receive a better education (Suk Hwang & Vrongistinos, 2010). Within this study, approximately more than 40% of participants indicated the importance of educational support for their children and themselves. The high likelihood to request academic support from the center shows the desire to succeed in school. Occasionally, many parents are not well equipped with tools to support their children academically, such as helping with their homework; however, Latino families are asking for help from the community to provide more educational support even when their children are doing well and average in school.

This study was conducted in English and Spanish. It was interesting that the majority of the Latino participating families chose the Spanish version of the survey. This shows that most individuals feel more comfortable in their native language. However this is correlated to our next finding in adult education. There is a high need among adults to receive English classes at the center. Participants in this study indicated a desire to be proficient in the dominant language and be able to integrate better in the community. Within the qualitative piece of this needs assessment, one of the highest services requested was educational support for families. Within this needs assessment, we were able to identify some of the highest needs reported among Latino families with children reserving assistance from the resource center.

Limitations

It is very important to identify the risk and protective factors affecting Latino families in order to provide more effective and comprehensive services to meet the social, emotional and

mental needs. Within this needs assessment we aimed to bring up to light the major needs Latino VFRC service recipients experience in an attempt to contribute to existing literature. However, there are several limitations to this study that need to be considered. One of the limitations of this study was the timing of the data collection. Data was collected for two months before the end of the year, which was correlated with most of the sign-up dates for the Christmas Wish Program in December. As mentioned before, in collaboration with local sponsors, the VFRC assists disadvantaged families in the community with presents and goods during the holiday season through their Christmas Wish Program. Approximately 80% of the surveys were collected during some of the sign-up events, where the VFRC staff goes out to the community. The remaining 20% of the data was collected at the center location. Because data was collected close to the holiday season, many families with children might have had a greater impact in their financial stability.

In addition, for the qualitative portion of this study, only 35 out of 198 participants completed the last open-ended question. Within the multiple response survey, participants were invited to share their ideas about the kind of services they needed the most. Although it is unclear the main reasons behind the low participation for the qualitative piece of the study, the authors also noticed that some of the surveys were incomplete in other areas. Some assumptions for the low participation are related to literacy and cultural dynamics. During data collection, one of the researchers met with the VFRC staff to pick up the completed surveys from the center. VFRC staff shared with researcher that some participants could not understand the survey because of their level of education. Although the surveys were in both languages English and Spanish, due to the limited reading and writing abilities among families, participation was greatly impacted. This is another limitation to our findings, as participants experienced difficulties completing the surveys.

Moreover, when asked about the current services used with the VFRC, many participating families were not aware that the Christmas Wish Program and/or some of the school mental health services were provided through the center. Many participating families are not aware of the available community resources and all the services the VFRC provides to the community. This information should be taken into consideration when working with Latino families, as they may not be aware of what the community has to offer or might not know how to access those resources. Another possibility that could be correlated with the low participation is the cultural dynamics, in which many individuals due to several factors tend to rely on their family before asking for help outside of the home. Some of these families might feel intimidated by agencies, which affects their awareness of available services.

Implications for Social Work

As service providers, it is vital to recognize appropriate intervention and have cultural humility when working with diverse populations. The field of social work adheres to core values and ethics that guide workers to improve their service delivery in working with individuals, families, groups and/or the larger systems. The six core values of the social work profession are the essence of the work, service, social justice, dignity and worth of person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2017). Additionally, as social workers it is important to give voice to those individuals who are marginalized and excluded in the larger society by advocating, providing support and present their contributions to the communities they are part of. Within this study the authors aimed to give a voice to those Latino families, with children in school and receiving services from the VFRC, to express their greater needs that have impacted their lifestyle and well-being.

Through Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit), we are able to see how the needs among this population are correlated with other outside influences, such as socioeconomic status, oppression,

language, acculturation and identity formation in the community. This theory shows the actual experience of underrepresentation in several aspects based on the dominant culture expectations (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). LatCrit also helps explain how social workers can provide service to Latino families at risk to support and change the current life conditions and provide social justice to these population. Guided through the core values and looking this population through the LatCrit theory, there is much work to be done in order to assist these families.

To better understand these “outside influences,” it is vital to understand the culture’s influence and the protective factors this community processes to fulfill the importance of human relationships and dignity and worth of person of every individual served. Some of the strengths and protective factors of the Latino families include the value placed on family, and the importance of family unity that serves as a system of support. Unlike the dominant culture, which tends to value individuality, when working with the Latino community, *familismo*, or family loyalty, solidarity and cohesiveness are vital socially and emotionally for this population (Ayón, 2014). It is important to acknowledge that every individual within the family plays an important and active role in the Latino culture. For instance, children and teenagers are expected to also be part of the system of support created in the family, which explains Latino’s resiliency and hope towards a positive future.

The family’s role in supporting the younger generations was exposed as part of this needs assessment study and it is consistent with existing literature. It is important for social workers to be aware that Latino parents might not have the necessary tools and/or education to support their children in school or extracurricular activities; however, these individuals have a great sense of responsibility toward the family unit. For instance, many of the needs reported in this study were aimed to provide more support to children and youth.

This shows the vital role resource center, such as the VFRC play in the community. It does not only provide monetary assistance to individuals, but it also takes into account the cultural and linguistic aspects of Latino families to provide support. The social work profession aims to help individuals understand how to help themselves or being empowered. The needs identified within this study provides information based on first-hand experience to service providers and social workers to guide the improvement and development of a more appropriate service delivery to assist this population. The VFRC has been providing temporary assistance to families in need, which has had a positive result. However, more preventative services could be utilized to empower Latino families with children and prevent many more families be at risk for basic and survival needs. As part of social work, it is important to look into the intermediate outcomes of services and what changed in the individual or family with the current services provided. It is also essential to look into the end outcomes of a service provided to families that is reflected in a greater impact in the community. This is key to empower individuals and help them utilize their own tools to help themselves.

Recommendations

As discussed previously, this study focused on exploring and assessing the needs of the VFRC Latino service recipients. All respondents received at least one service from the VFRC in the months of October and November 2017. Data analysis concluded that the VFRC is a great resource place for those who need immediate support, especially for those who need instant financial assistance for utility bills. Data also confirms that the VFRC is doing an excellent job connecting with Latinos in the Vacaville community, as 86.5% of all respondents identified as Latinos.

It is recommended that future studies be conducted to further investigate what specific services provided by the VFRC make a greater impact on Latino service recipients. For example,

a comparison study between those who only receive financial or utility support versus those who receive financial and utility support and stress management counseling. Additionally, the authors recommend the VFRC provide more services on site, whether these are provided by their own staff or by other community agencies utilizing the VFRC office space. Lastly, it is recommended that the VFRC partners more intensively with schools so that services provided at the VFRC are more widely available to Latinos in the greater Vacaville community. This study documents how much Latinos value, want, and need educational support and the VFRC could respond to this need with more collaboration with schools and other community agencies.

Given that the VFRC is an organization with a proven capacity to reach out to the Latino community in their city, it is recommended that the VFRC look into increasing their involvement with this community and become more of a community center, rather than a crisis center or immediate respondent to their client's needs. By becoming more of a community center, the VFRC could help the Latino community mobilize at more mezzo-and macro-levels to advocate for policy changes that could help alleviate, at a social level, the needs of the Latino community in Vacaville. Moreover, if the VFRC becomes more of a hub for the Latino community, Latinos could use the VFRC space to promote cultural traditions, cohesiveness, and values. An evolution of the VFRC could promote and encourage Latinos to improve their financial, social and emotional situation by seeing their successful peers who provide an example.

Conclusion

Latinos families face challenges all around the U. S. but in Vacaville, California, Latino families have unique needs that impact their socio-economic and mental wellbeing. The current research study aimed to assess the needs of the Latino families, with school age children 6 to 18 years old and who utilize the services of the VFRC. Researches tried to find out if the families utilizing services at the VFRC had a need for mental health services and financial support.

Overall findings from the current study add to the literature on socio-economic needs among Latino families. This study provides a picture at the needs of Latinos in the Vacaville community and proves that further research is needed in order to gain a better and more thorough understanding. In addition, this study provided evidence that Latino families value education and will benefit from services that will enhance their academic achievement. Similarly, the analysis of this study showed that families have immediate financial support needs and that these needs take leading importance over other needs, including mental health and academic.

Furthermore, it is recommended that social workers and service providers at the VFRC take on a more active role in creating a safe space where Latino families can obtain support, congregate to exercise cultural practices and, at the same time, advocate for mezzo-and macro-policy changes that will change social-economic conditions that create challenges and barriers for the Latino community.

Appendix A

Vacaville Family Resource Center (VFRC) Family Needs Assessment 2017

The purpose of this study is to identify needs in order to develop services that better serve our community in the city of Vacaville. **This is an anonymous survey, please, DO NOT provide your name. Thank you!!**

1. How do you identify yourself? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino | <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaska Native |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian/White | <input type="checkbox"/> African American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) _____ |

2. How many family members including yourself live in your household? _____

3. Is your household a single parent home? Yes No

4. Do you have children 6-18 years old living with you? Yes No

If yes, how many? _____

5. How are your children doing academically in school? (Check one)

- Excellent/Above average Average Struggling & Trying Poor/Failing

Comments: _____

6. What services are you currently receiving from the VFRC?

(Check ALL that apply)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling/Therapy | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent support | <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Basic Needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Wish | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Explain) _____ | |

7. What other services from VFRC do you need or are you likely to need in the future?

(Check ALL that apply)

Mental Health

- Teen-to-teen Mentoring-REACH
- Individual and Family Counseling
- Stress management support
- Confidential Support Groups
(Anger management, grief loss, depression, etc.)

Financial Assistance

- Clothing
- Utility assistance
(rent, electricity, water)
- Budget Planning
- Food Assistance
- Free Bus Passes

Social Services

- Case management
- Bilingual/bicultural
- Links to
community resources
(Health care, anxiety,
Housing, Cal-fresh,
WIC)

Family Support/Assistance

- Parenting classes/tools
- Healthy relationships/Domestic violence education

None

8. What services in the community are you most likely to utilize in the future? (Check ALL that apply)

School Activities

- Academic Tutoring
- Recreational Activities
- College/Career Planning Assistance
- After school program
- Tutoring/Mentorship for

Family Support

- Finding affordable child care
- Sexual assault/harassment education

Employment

- Youth Employment Assistance
- Interview/Resume building workshops
- Finding a job/Career fair
- Credit recovery
- Adult English classes

Social Services

- Immigration Support Services
- Race and diversity challenges and celebrations
- Homelessness assistance

Mental Health

- Substance abuse
- Conflict mediation
- Support for LGBTQ community

None

9. What other services would you like the VFRC to provide in the future?

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY. YOUR VOICE MATTERS!!
We will report the results back to the community in Spring 2018

Appendix B

Centro de Recursos Familiares de Vacaville (VFRC) Evaluación de Necesidades Básicas 2017

El propósito de este estudio es obtener su opinión para poder desarrollar servicios que ayuden mejor a nuestra comunidad en la ciudad de Vacaville. **Esta es una encuesta anónima, por favor NO escriba su nombre. Gracias!!**

1. ¿Como se identifica usted? (Escoja uno)

- Hispano/Latino Indígena Americano/Nativo de Alaska
 Blanco Afroamericano
 Asiático/Islands del Pacifico Otro (liste) _____

2. ¿Cuantos miembros de su familia incluyéndose a usted viven en su hogar? _____

3. ¿Es usted padre/madre soltero/a? Si No

4. ¿Tiene hijos de entre 6-18 años viviendo con usted? Si No ¿Cuántos? _____

5. ¿Cómo les va a sus hijos académicamente en la escuela?

- Excelente/Mejor que regular Regular Difícil y tratando Mal/Reprobando

Comentarios: _____

6. ¿Que servicios está usted recibiendo del VFRC? (Marque todo lo que aplique)

- Consejería/Terapia Ayuda Financiera Actividades para jóvenes/niños
 Apoyo para padres Referencia a servicios Necesidades básicas
 Deseos navideños Otro (Explique) _____

7. ¿Que otros programas del VFRC necesita o cree que pueda necesitar en el futuro? (Marque TODO lo que apliquen)

Salud Mental

- Mentoría de joven a joven
 REACH
 Consejería individual y familiar
 Apoyo con el manejo de estrés
 Grupos de apoyo confidencial (manejo de estrés, ira, luto, depresión, ansiedad)

Ayuda Familiar

- Clases/herramientas para padres
 Clases de relaciones saludables/violencia domestica

Ayuda Financiera

- Ropa/vestimenta
 Ayuda económica para pagos (renta, luz, agua)
 Ayuda para presupuesto y ahorrar dinero
 Ayuda con alimentos
 Pases/vales de autobús gratis

Servicios Sociales

- Coordinación de servicios especializados para sus necesidades
 Personal del centro bilingüe/bicultural
 Conexión a recursos de la comunidad (plan de salud, vivienda, Cal-fresh, WIC)
 Ninguno

8. ¿Que servicios en la comunidad necesita o cree que pueda necesitar en un futuro? Marque TODO lo que aplique

Actividades Escolares

- Tutoría académica para estudiantes
- Actividades recreativas
- Universidad/ Planeación de carrera
- Actividades para después de escuela
- Tutoría/mentoría para niños

Ayuda Familiar

- Localizar cuidado de niños barato
- Información y educación sobre agresión y acoso sexual

Empleo

- Ayuda para conseguir empleo (menores de edad)
- Ayuda para hacer curriculum y preparación para entrevistas
- Buscar trabajo/ Feria de trabajo
- Ayuda para mejorar crédito
- Clases de inglés para adultos

Ninguno

Servicios Sociales

- Apoyo con servicios de inmigración
- Dificultades raciales y celebraciones de diversidad
- Ayuda para los que no tienen hogar/vivienda

Salud Mental

- Consejería de abuso de sustancias
- Mediación de conflicto
- Apoyo a la comunidad LGBTQ

9. ¿Que servicios le gustaría que el VFRC proveerá en el futuro?

GRACIAS POR COMPLETAR ESTA ENCUESTA. SU VOZ CUENTA!!
Reportaremos los resultados a la comunidad en la primavera del 2018

Appendix C

Consent Form

Exploring the needs of families with children ages 6-18 years old receiving services from the Vacaville Family Resource Center (VFRC)

You are invited to participate in a survey study regarding the needs experienced by families in Vacaville. Our names are Cruz Rocio Franco and María Hernández, and we are graduate students at California State University, Sacramento, Division of Social Work. In cooperation with the Vacaville Family Resource Center, we would like to identify the various types of needs experienced by Vacaville families with school-age children and who are receiving services at the Vacaville Family Resource Center.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to fill out a survey, which consists of a few questions regarding any needs you and your family have. Your participation in this study will last no more than five (5) minutes. There are some benefits to this research, particularly identifying the major family needs in the Vacaville community. This research will serve the staff at the Vacaville Family Resource Center as a guide to plan and implement services/resources to better serve families. If your participation in the survey triggers emotional distress and need to talk with a professional counselor, please call a VFRC counselor at (707) 469-6600 or the Solano Mental Health Hotline at (707) 428-1131.

All information collected that is obtained in connection with this study will be treated as anonymous and confidential. No name, address, or phone number will be collected.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You have the right to refuse participation. Your refusal will not jeopardize your ability to receive services at VFRC.

If you have any questions about the research at any time, please contact us at cruzfranco@csus.edu and mh3464@csus.edu, or our thesis advisor Dr. Francis Yuen, at fyuen@csus.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu.

Your return of the completed questionnaire implies your consent to participate in this study. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED SURVEY TO THE STUDY'S LOCKED BOX

Appendix D

Forma de consentimiento

Explorando las necesidades de las familias con niños de 6-18 años de edad recibiendo servicios del Centro de Recursos Familiares de Vacaville (VFRC)

Usted esta invitado a participar en una encuesta de investigación sobre de las necesidades básicas que las familias experimentan en la ciudad de Vacaville. Nuestros nombres son Cruz Rocío Franco y María Hernández y nosotras somos estudiantes de maestría en la división de trabajo social en la Universidad Estatal de California en Sacramento (California State University, Sacramento). En cooperación con el Centro de Recursos Familiares de Vacaville, nos gustaría identificar los diferentes tipos de necesidades experimentadas por las familias de Vacaville que tienen hijos en escuelas, y quienes están recibiendo servicios en el Centro Familiar de Recursos de Vacaville.

Si usted decide participar, le pediremos que llene la encuesta, la cual consiste en algunas preguntas acerca de sus necesidades y las de su familia . Su participación en este estudio no durara más de cinco (5) minutos. Hay varios beneficios en esta investigación, particularmente la identificación de las necesidades más importantes para las familias de la comunidad de Vacaville. Este estudio ayudara al personal del Centro Familiar de Recursos en Vacaville como guía para planear e implementar servicios y recursos para servir mejor a las familias. Si su participación en esta investigación le trae emociones de angustia y necesita hablar con un profesional, por favor hablele a un consejero de VFRC al (707) 469-6600 o a la línea directa de Salud Mental en Solano (Solano Mental Health) al (707) 428-1131.

Toda la información obtenida en conexión con este estudio será manejada como anónima y confidencial. No se pedirá su nombre, dirección o número telefónico.

Su participación en este proyecto es voluntaria. Usted tiene el derecho de negarse a participar. Su negación a participar en este estudio no afectara de ninguna manera los servicios que está recibiendo en VFRC.

Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de este estudio, por favor contáctenos a cruzfranco@csus.edu y mh3464@csus.edu, o contacte a nuestro asesor de tesis Dr. Francis Yuen, fyuen@csus.edu. Si tiene preguntas acerca de sus derechos como participante en el proyecto por favor llame a la Oficina de Asuntos de Investigación, en la Universidad Estatal de California, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, o al correo electrónico irb@csus.edu.

Su retorno de la encuesta contestada implica su consentimiento para participar en este estudio. Gracias por su tiempo y cooperación.

FAVOR DE REGRESAR LA ENCUESTA COMPLETADA A LA CAJA CON CONDAD.

Appendix E



ESTABLISHED 1850

CITY OF VACAVILLE

650 MERCHANT STREET
 VACAVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95688-6908
 www.cityofvacaville.com
 707-449-5100

LEN AUGUSTINE
 Mayor

DILENNA HARRIS
 Vice Mayor

CURTIS HUNT
 Councilmember

MITCH MASHBURN
 Councilmember

RON ROWLETT
 Councilmember

July 3, 2017

Dear CSUS Division of Social Work Research Review Committee:

The Vacaville Police Department's Family Resource Center (FRC) will be partnering with CSUS MSW Students, Maria Hernandez and Cruz R. Franco on their thesis research project: Exploring the needs of families with children 6-18 years old, receiving services from the Vacaville Police Department's Family Resource Center: Latino population perspectives. We are providing our support for this project.

During the months of October and November 2017, the Vacaville FRC staff will provide their clients a one-page survey encouraging them to complete on a voluntary basis. Staff will collect the surveys in a locked box for safe keeping. We recognize that the human subjects review protocol will be strictly followed. Participants' involvement will be completely voluntary and all information collected will be treated as confidential information. We understand that this thesis project will not cause any psychological, mental, or socio-economic risk to the participants. If needed, the Vacaville FRC has mental health professionals to assist participants.

We look forward to reviewing the study's findings and incorporating any outcomes into better serving our community.

Sincerely,

Gloria Diaz, LCSW
 Clinical Services Administrator
 Vacaville Police Department

cc: John Carli
 Chief of Police

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