

MEXICAN-ORIGIN CHILDREN IN MIXED-STATUS FAMILIES:
WELL-BEING AND PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPPORT

by

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A THESIS

Presented to the Department of Education Foundations
and the Robert D. Clark Honors College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts

April 2024

An Abstract of the Thesis of

Beatriz Lorena Cabrera for the degree of Bachelor of Arts
in the Department of Education Foundations to be taken June 2024

Title: Mexican-Origin Children in Mixed-Status Families: Well-being and Public School Support

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This Thesis examines the challenges that some Mexican-origin children can face in their school lives because of coming from a mixed-status family background. The specific challenges I researched involved exploring how 1) building a community, 2) having a high academic performance, and 3) practicing suitable behavior at school can be shaped by Mexican-origin children knowing that their parents or family members face deportation risks and the impacts of this knowledge on their educational experiences. Based on existing academic literature, each of these areas was greatly affected. Building a community for these students in school is challenging because of a lack of trust and feeling like sometimes their identity stops them from belonging. Their academic performance differed from that of children who come from families with US citizenship and an authorized documentation status (e.g., they performed lower in reading and math). The behaviors of some Mexican-origin children have led them to internalize their feelings and not speak out in classes because they can be scared to reveal their loved one's immigration status.

Informed by existing literature, I wanted to determine if public schools are providing proper, relevant resources for their students and families on school website pages. I decided to focus on only the area of Los Angeles because there is a high population of Latinos, and this

action narrowed my scope to a more manageable individual research project. I looked within the Los Angeles districts and decided on the Los Angeles Unified School District since 73.97% of students identify as Hispanic or Latino. From there, I explored examining schools that are public, that offer Kindergarten-5th grade, and that are in the Los Angeles City area. Using those criteria, I narrowed my study to 143 schools, and of those 143, I generated a random sample of 50 schools.

My results indicated that the schools did not have relevant sources on their websites for Mexican-origin children and their families with mixed-status backgrounds. Based on my analysis of school websites, I found nothing that outlined specific resources or tailored messaging for students or families of mixed status. The language used on these websites was very ambiguous (e.g., creating students to be prepared for the world/college and giving them the tools to succeed on their own). I found no action or additional materials to support their claims. Only two of the 50 schools provided written material that could be classified as relevant for the mixed-status students because they had a “Restorative Justice” program. The Restorative Justice program values inclusive and collaborative practices for trying to create a strong school community for its students. This example actively promotes accepting students’ backgrounds and creating a space where they can be comfortable. To further support this crucial effort, this Thesis concludes by offering several ideas for how schools can provide resources and messaging for students from mixed-status families so that all young people can flourish in public school settings.

Acknowledgments

On my Thesis defense committee, I would first like to thank my Primary Thesis Advisor, Sean Grant, for looking at all of my Thesis drafts, and in return, I was able to create this final product. Without your guidance, I do not think I would have been able to write my Thesis.

The second person on my committee I would like to thank is Catalina de Onís, my Clark Honors Representative. Thank you so much for your help and for answering all my questions about the Thesis process from the beginning to the end. I appreciate all of the time and effort that you put into reviewing all my writing and for helping me brainstorm this Thesis topic.

Finally, to my family and friends, thank you so much for looking over my Thesis along the way and for letting me practice my defense with you.

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Introduction

Knock. Knock. Knock. A sound that is made when a hand connects with a door. A sound that, for some, does not hold any significance besides signaling that someone is waiting to be let in. A sound that is considered second nature and not given a second thought about. Although the sound of the door knocking can bring terror and anxiety for some. Children who have a mixed-status families are often scared of hearing that unexpected knock on the door. The random knock on the door can change their life in an instant because of what is waiting on the other side. What could be on the other side? That unexpected knock could be Immigration officers coming to take one parent or both away because they do not have what is considered “proper” documentation by the United States government.

This Thesis will be researching the ways that having a family of mixed status affects their children with a Mexican-origin background. There are different experiences that could shape Mexican-origin children, and for the first part of this Thesis, I chose to look into how community building, academic performance, and behaviors are affected. The second topic that is researched is seeing if public elementary schools have information posted on their websites or if they have specific staff members on their campus to give support to these children. On average, children spend 8 hours of their days at school for 5 days a week, and it is important that schools provide adequate help for their students.

Research Questions

In my Thesis, I will be answering the following two questions:

1. How does existing academic literature examine how coming from a mixed-status family shapes Mexican-origin student experiences, especially relating to community building, academic performance, and behaviors?
2. If available on the school's website, what and how do the online materials communicate resources for supporting marginalized experiences and equity that are relevant for mixed-status students and their families?

Literature Review

To understand the premise of this paper, a clear definition of what a mixed-status family is should be made. The definition of a mixed-status family used when conducting the research comes from the National Immigration Law Center website. A “mixed-status family” is stated as “a family whose members include people with different citizenship or immigration statuses” (NILC, 2022). The first type of mixed-status family used for this Thesis is a child or minor who is a U.S. citizen with at least one parent who is undocumented and the other parent having a citizenship, green card, or visa. Second, the child is a U.S. citizen, and both parents are undocumented.

For this study, I am focusing on children of Mexican origin. When the term “Mexican origin” is used in this paper, I am using it to describe individuals who identify as Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano/a/e.

In my second research question, I use the term “marginalized experiences,” which are encountered by individuals who “are treated as separate from the main body of society,” and since they are “othered” within society, their needs are disregarded and getting help or opportunities often is not obtainable (Pratt & Fowler, 2022, p. 6).

The age groups of children used in this study vary. The beginning of the study focuses on ages 5 to 18 years old. Later in the study, I focus on only Kindergarten through 5th grade public elementary schools in Los Angeles, California, and collect data on how each school presents information to support mixed-status families. According to the Pew Research Center, as of 2020 Los Angeles had more than 4.8 million Latines than any other state and is the nation’s largest Latine population. For this reason, it makes sense to focus my study in Los Angeles since they have such a big population of individuals who identify as Latine. One can assume that schools

should have good support systems for families of mixed status. While my review is relevant to a specific ethnicity, the information here is not only just for this demographic to learn about. The larger concept framing the study is crucial for everyone because then the marginalization of these and other children can then hopefully stop.

Background- What Is it Like to Live in a Mixed-Status Family?

To get a sense of what it can be like to live with a mixed-status family, my Thesis will explain some of the laws that have been put into place by the United States government and what life, in general, is like for a mixed-status family. On average, “an estimated 4.5 million U.S. citizen children live in families in which one or more parents are undocumented” (Gulbas & Zayas, 2017, p.53). An example of one law is California’s 1994 Proposition 187 law, which restricted undocumented immigrants from the state’s public services (Library of Congress). This means that getting access to public health care is not allowed for individuals who are undocumented. It is unimaginable to think that there could have been families in desperate need of a doctor, but because of the law, they never received the help that they could have desperately needed. Even though it is no longer enacted upon today, Prop. 187 did hurt undocumented and mixed-status families. There are also laws like SB 1070 that make being “illegal” in the United States a state crime (Staff, 2020). As a result, there is “widespread racial profiling by INS agents who typically determined whether someone was an ‘illegal’ based on the person’s last name or how he or she looked or spoke” (Goodman, 2020, p. 138). The laws imposed on these families can create circumstances that make living their lives difficult, and it is unfair to have laws like that threatening their lives.

Furthermore, the environment created by “immigration laws currently serve to legitimize society’s harmful treatment of undocumented and temporarily protected immigrants” (Abrego, 2019, p. 3). The families cannot do anything to stop the awful treatment they receive because the law will not protect them, and they risk drawing authorities' attention to themselves, which they do not want. Trying to stay quiet is something that is often done within mixed-status families. To avoid the process of not being deported, parents do not talk about their documentation status. Fear influences how parents interact “with their children and what they told their children about immigration, citizenship, and undocumented status” (Gulbas & Zayas, 2017, p. 59). This risk sometimes leads to children being left in the dark about their parent’s situations. Alternatively, in some cases, “even when parents do not verbally explain what is going on, children may be picking up cues and building patterns in their mind to make sense of their worlds” (Abrego, 2019, p. 9). The children grow to understand that their parent’s immigration status is something not to be talked about with anyone. There are instances of children explaining about not even “having a plan in place that would help guide and assist [them] about what to do in the event that a parent was arrested and detained” (Gulbas & Zayas, 2017, p. 60). A narrative about being silent then gets produced. It makes some children who have citizenship, while their parents do not, feel powerless and fearful of getting caught by authorities (Gulbas & Zayas, 2017). Trying to live a “normal” life gets complicated. The “children’s daily lives are organized around the very real possibility that their undocumented parents could one day be detained and deported” (Gulbas & Zayas, 2017, p. 55). This uncertainty, a reminder for some, never leaves their minds, and living a life like what was described above is undoubtedly unjust, and their battles should not go unnoticed or unheard. In my Thesis, I will further explain some other struggles the children may face with a mixed-status family and other struggles that weigh on their shoulders.

The Effects of a Mixed-Status Family on the Child's Education

Difficulties from the home life that many young people experience follow them into their education. In my Thesis, I will talk about how, in the school setting, the themes of creating communities, academic performance (ex., test scores, grades, motivation to do homework, participation, and attendance), and behaviors of Mexican-origin children are affected by their parents' documentation. There is so much in the children's lives that are affected by having a mixed-status family, and to try to answer my research questions in my Thesis, I had to focus on specific areas. If I tried to look at every potentially affected aspect, I could bring in information that is irrelevant and have so much information that everything blurs, thus losing the main focus. By narrowing my search, I am answering the questions rather than just addressing an issue.

Building a Community

In my literature review, I will be examining how Mexican-origin children try to build a community for themselves with the people they see daily (e.g., with classmates, teachers, or their friends). Building a community for these children is extremely hard based on what the literature has revealed so far. When it comes to their parent's documentation status, "deliberate efforts to silence thoughts and emotions prevented children from having a space, either with family or friends, to process their fears, anxieties, and worries" (Gulbas & Zayas, 2017, p. 60). Having to stay silent creates a wall for the children that cannot be torn down. Mexican-origin "children make deliberate choices about when and why to talk about citizenship at home and at school" (Figueroa, 2017, p. 487). It restrains the children when trying to create a community in school. Since, in the back of their minds, they cannot risk revealing and having their families taken away from them. Hence even though the "children are exposed to multiple environments, including

their families, schools, and neighborhoods...the family is often viewed as the principal and most immediate social contact for children's development. Because children are dependents, many sources of risk and resilience stem directly and indirectly from their families” (Landale et al., 2015, pp. 4-5). It is evident that the children love their parents and other family members because they have always been there in their lives. So, for some Mexican-origin children, they are going to put them first and try to protect them the best way they know possible, by staying quiet.

The pressure of staying quiet, though, can be increased in classroom environments. The “classroom interactions can position immigrant children as outsiders to the social norms of the school and society” (Figueroa, 2017, p. 495). The children start to question their place in society and, as a result, feel unwelcome or as if they don’t belong. That is why “teachers play an important role in creating classroom contexts in which undocumented students disclose or withhold their legal citizenship status” (Figueroa, 2017, p. 493). Based on how a teacher talks about citizenship, it can make the children feel more welcome or isolated. The teacher needs to realize the amount of influence they can have when the children are trying to make a community for themselves. At best, “educator support [has to be] left to the goodwill and open-mindedness of individual teachers instead of forming part of [the negative narrative of immigration status]” (Figueroa, 2017, p. 494). When the world around these Mexican-origin children can be sending signals to them that they do not belong, it makes feeling accepted even harder. Most often for Mexican-origin “children’s identities, feelings of self-worth, friendships, and relationships with school-based adults are compromised as they become aware of the hostile and disparaging portrayal of unauthorized immigrants in the media, as well as of the common stigma associated with being undocumented” (Hamilton et al., 2019, p. 14). It is all in the community around them,

and trying to build connections or roots can then become challenging when no one around is welcoming. Mexican-origin children start connecting the dots around how not having what is considered to be “proper” immigration status by the mainstream it can make them be viewed in a different light. As a result, “they start making these decisions early in their educational trajectories, when they are as young as 10 and 11 years old, and these choices are significant because they both reflect and in turn affect student participation in school” (Figueroa, 2017, p. 487). Subsequently, having the teacher be unbiased and open-minded in situations relating to immigration status can aid these children when they are trying to be a part of a community or make one of their own. Trying to navigate building a community can be challenging for Mexican-origin children, and that struggle that most young people are facing can potentially be apparent in their academic performance.

Academic Performance

Another part of the school setting that I will investigate in my Thesis is the academic performance of Mexican-origin children in mixed-status families. In general, research has shown that “English language learning children, typically children of immigrants, are less likely to be proficient in math and reading, be enrolled in pre-kindergarten programs, and graduate from a U.S. high school when compared with English-only learners” (Brabeck et al., 2016, p. 239). Knowing that, on top of knowing a parent's immigration status, it adds additional barriers to academic success for children of Mexican origin. Studies have proven that “poor parental work conditions and parental psychological distress, which have been linked to unauthorized status, are associated with lower academic achievement” (Brabeck et al., 2016, p. 239). The impact of a parent can be detrimental to the child's education because some children look up to their parents

and want their parents to be proud of them. Having “parental engagement with the child’s school, [is] a positive predictor of achievement and school completion [and] is often a challenge for immigrant parents, particularly if unauthorized” (Brabeck et al., 2016, p. 239). It’s a challenge because maybe the parents do not have an opportunity to step away from work, or maybe they fear the risk of their status being revealed increases when going to school. As a consequence, “immigration policies and practices permeate children’s daily lives, including their experiences at school, in ways that affect their identities as well as performance in school” (Brabeck et al., 2016, p. 239). It is a ripple effect of consequences happening that individuals who have not thought about how documentation status could affect Mexican-origin children’s academics.

Research has revealed “that children with an unauthorized parent received, on average, 1.5 fewer years schooling compared to children of authorized immigrant parents” (Brabeck et al., 2016, p. 239). Having fewer years in school can create a gap between their peers who have families authorized documentation status by the United States government because they are getting less time to learn things or be exposed to educational environments. Studies done by Brabeck et. al reveal that “Mexican immigrant children score lower in reading and math at school entry than children from immigrant groups with smaller proportions of unauthorized parents, and lower than children from other low-income racial/ethnic groups” (2016, p. 239). At the beginning of their education experiences, these disadvantages become apparent, and not having a solid foundation, in the beginning, can affect some of these students’ education in the future. When children reach middle childhood (ages 6-12), it “is a critical time for the development and consolidation of basic academic skills, and this subset of children in immigrant families, according to these data, is at a disadvantage. The finding that middle childhood children

in mixed-status families systemically perform lower in reading, math, and spelling is particularly troubling given that positive school-based achievement during middle childhood can have implications for immigrant children's future academic and life trajectories" (Brabeck et al., 2016, p. 245). Having a mixed-status family causes some Mexican-origin children to have a more difficult time as they go through their education because they are not getting the proper support needed. While yes, some "immigrant children possess resources that may contribute to high academic achievement, including bilingual ability, which has benefits for cognitive functioning, high academic aspirations, and more positive attitudes toward school" (Brabeck et al., 2016, p. 245), it is clear that Mexican-origin children's education status is being affected by coming from a mixed-status family background. Even though there are benefits to knowing a second or multiple languages, that does not make up for the disadvantages they are facing overall in their academic performances.

Behaviors

The last part of the children's education I had an interest in researching in this Thesis paper was the child's behavior. It is essential to know that "children's behavioral functioning is generally regarded as a significant developmental outcome that has complications for adjustment later in life" (Landale et al., 2015, p. 4). In general, when children internalize, "internalizing problems involve expressions of anxiety, depression, and low self-worth as well as social withdrawal, excessive need for attention, and dependency" (Landale et al., 2015, p. 4). Or, in general, children can externalize "behavior problems [that include] rule breaking and displays of irritability and aggression" (Landale et al., 2015, p. 4). I know this kind of information has already been studied about behaviors in general, but there is no doubt that Mexican-origin

children's behaviors are affected by their parent's immigration status. Evidence suggests that for some children, "these problems are precursors of illegal substance abuse, antisocial outcomes, poor school achievement, and high school dropout" (Landale et al., 2015, p. 4). Dealing with the knowledge of knowing that, at any moment, your parent or family member could be deported causes an unbelievable amount of stress or anxiety. Unfortunately, getting the help that Mexican-origin children need is a struggle. The U.S. government went from trying to apprehend migrants at the border to now changing their efforts to finding migrants already residing in the United States. Those efforts made by the U.S. government "have led some unauthorized immigrants to feel unsafe participating in their communities, undermining community-based social networks, and have eviscerated trust between immigrants and local police" (Hamilton et al., 2019, pp. 6-7). Children feeling unsafe in their homes and then going to school can cause them to want to live a life of invisibility.

One way Mexican-origin children can act in the classroom to try to go unnoticed is to be silent during discussions. The "classroom silence is sometimes understood as a cultural practice inherent to historically marginalized populations; this essentializing notion can reinforce deficit thinking that considers silence evidence of students' lack of interest in academic learning" (Figueroa, 2017, p. 496). These children's silence, for some, is intentional because it can be a way to process the situation or to not reveal something about themselves that would lead to details about their parent's immigration status. As children respond in different ways to these very difficult situations, it is important to look into what school staff members provide for support, and it is this focus that motivates my Thesis project.

Motivating Educators to Support Students

A hope that I have is that future educators in schools will try to critically engage with their own school community and determine whether needed student support may be missing and what necessary actions to take in response. Hopefully, these educators, from reading this Thesis, will feel motivated to try to create a support system for children of mixed-status families. In doing so, I believe that the children could feel more welcome in their school community. The students will see that the school cares for their well-being and that the staff are there to help them if they need it. The students could then potentially see that they are not alone in the situation they are in, that there are others going through similar experiences as they are, and that the school staff is there to listen to their fears or struggles. The families of the students can also possibly feel more at ease showing up to school activities or parent-teacher conferences, knowing that the school does not care for the kind of documentation status they have.

My motivation for this study was to make sure that I could be the best teacher that I could be. I have learned in my previous education classes that in order to try to be the best teacher I am, I need to understand my student's identity and accept that identity in the classroom. Often, students are asked to leave their identities at the door, and the educational system still privileges a one-size-fits-all approach that doesn't recognize different families or cultures. For my future classroom, I do not want my students to feel that way. I want my students to feel like their identities can follow them into the classroom and be proud of who they are. Allowing and representing a student's identities in my curricular offerings and teaching approaches will only enhance the classroom space. My students will be more motivated to participate and learn.

But how can I do all of this if I do not educate myself? If I want to make sure that I can support my students and make them feel welcome, I need to enlighten myself on the type of

community I will eventually be teaching in. I want to teach in the Los Angeles area because that is the place I grew up in, and all my family is there. To try to make my lessons the best possible for my students, I need to learn about the environment they could be coming from and how it can either affect or enrich their learning. I need to be conscientious about the different identities in the classroom. I know that not every student will be given an equal education, but I want to try to make it as fair and honest as possible in my classroom. I can make these steps by putting in the time and effort to research on my end about students' different identities. This research I do for my Thesis is putting me in the right direction to make sure I can be prepared for my future students. I know that Los Angeles has a large population of individuals with a Mexican-origin background. One of my prospective students could have a mixed-status family, or a future colleague of mine could have one, and I will now know how to properly support that student or supply my colleague with the proper information on how to help them. As teachers, our learning will never stop once we educate others. We continue to learn alongside our students, which I will continuously be doing when I am an educator.

Methods (Research Approach)

I collected data for the sections about Mexican-origin children's ability to build a community, academic performance, and behaviors from existing papers. The databases used to find these kinds of sources were Google Scholar, JSTOR, ProQuest, and databases indexed in the University of Oregon Library search engine. To try to find specific sources, I chose the advanced search method. I used some of the Boolean Operators like "and" and "not" to try to exclude keywords in my search. I also used parentheses () to clarify the search terms. The following searches were made into each database: ((mixed family status Mexican origin children) AND (schooling effects)), (((Mexican origin child) AND (education)) AND (effected by mixed-status family)), (((Mexican children) AND (mixed-status families)) AND (school performance)), (((mixed-status family effects on Mexican origin children) OR (communities)) OR (school)), (Mexican origin children) AND (mixed-status families) AND (academic behavior), (Mexican origin students with mixed-status families) AND (creating communities), (((Mexican-origin children) AND (existing support)) AND (mixed family status)).

From those searches, I found many articles to look through. To make the process more efficient, specifically in JSTOR, I would use the toolbar "Refine Results." In the "Refine Results," I would look at the Academic content and click journals, book chapters, or research reports. I also reviewed Subjects and clicked Education or Latin American Studies. Lastly, I looked at the language category for what I would want the articles to be written in and clicked both English and Spanish to expand my search. In the University of Oregon library, I clicked on the research guides and clicked on subjects like Education, Latin America Studies, or Academic/Interdisciplinary. From there, I was provided with a bunch of different databases to use. That is how I found the database ProQuest. When using the advanced search method in

ProQuest, I went to their section of “Refine Results” to limit the search. I clicked the filter scholarly journals, books, Dissertations & Theses, Language and Subject. While this method of search did narrow the sources popping up, I still made sure to find the relevance of each one. To determine each writing's relevance in every database, I made sure to click the “Sort by Relevance” option. I also reviewed the number of times that the writing was cited. If the article was cited less than 20 times, I did not include it in my study.

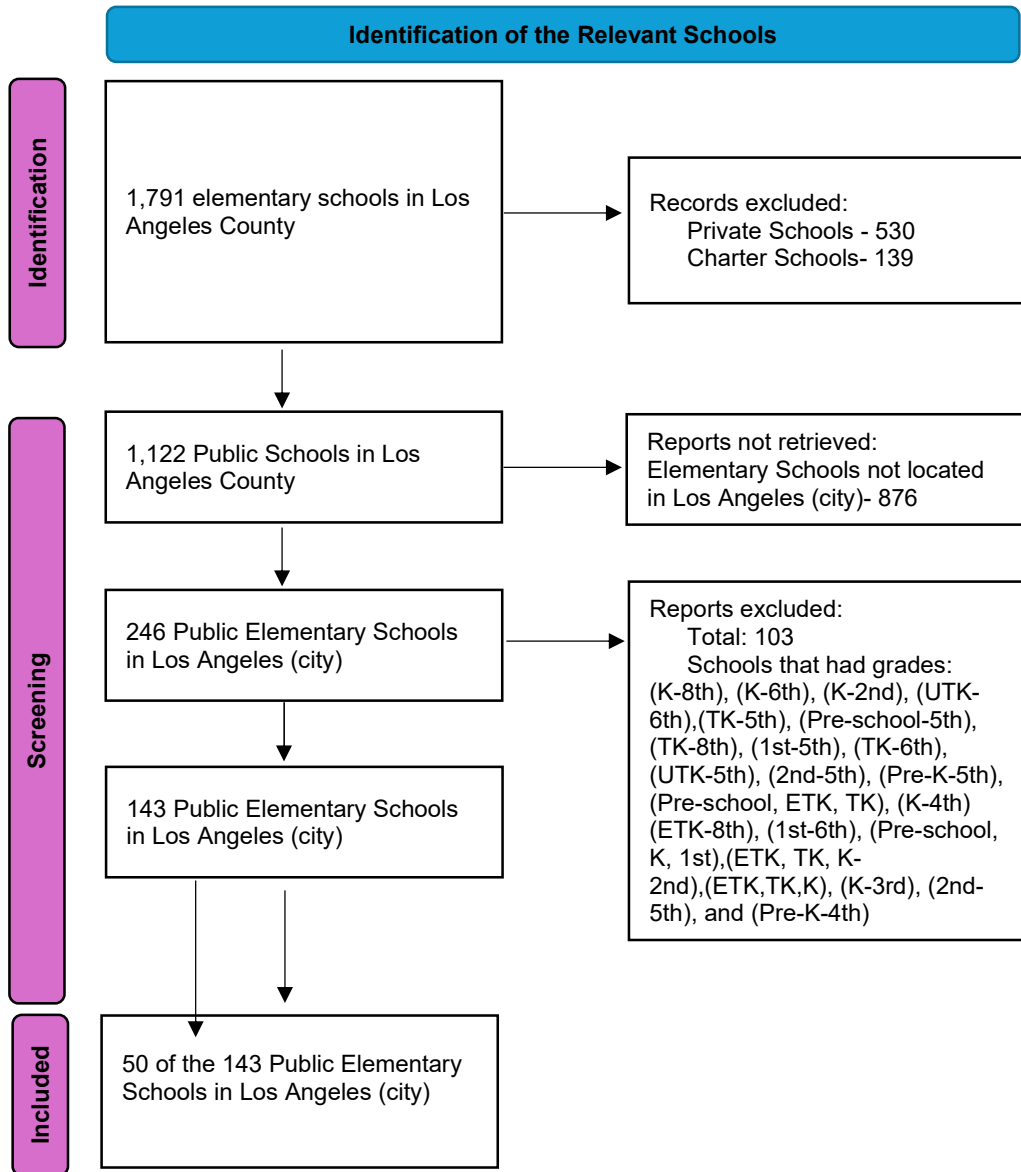
For the sections on background, academic performance, behaviors, and building a community, the information gathered was very general. The types of keywording that the articles had to have were “Mexican-origin children” and “mixed-status family.” The location of where the studies took place was not very specific. I made sure that they were done in the United States and not in another country. As for the children’s ages, for those sections, I gathered information about Mexican-origin children who ranged from ages 5 to 18 years old.

When it came to looking at the specific support provided, I made that search very limited to Los Angeles, California. Every city and state each have different programs, and to do a general search like that would be too large for this Thesis, and that is why I condensed the scope to the LA area. To try to narrow my search, I focused on public elementary schools and typed into Google “List of Los Angeles public elementary schools with high Mexican-origin populations.” I then selected the website Los Angeles Almanac, <https://www.laalmanac.com/education/ed05.php>, which has a list of the ethnic distribution of students by school districts in Los Angeles County. A list of districts popped up and the percentages of each ethnicity that attends the district. I looked into the column “Hispanic or Latino” and chose to focus on percentages higher than 70%. The 70% was chosen with the hope that more resources would be provided for the demographic of students, although the number

does not guarantee that there will be support provided for these students. The Los Angeles Unified District had a percentage of 73.97% of students who identify as Hispanic or Latino. I researched Los Angeles Unified District because I wanted to have a high sample for this study and decided to choose one with a high percentage. I then went back to Google with the question “public elementary schools in the Los Angeles district” and clicked this website: <https://schools.latimes.com/by-grade-range/elementary/county/los-angeles>, which listed all the private, charter, and public schools in Los Angeles Unified District (LAUSD). I then collected all the schools listed on the website and copied them and what type of school they are onto an Excel sheet. I had a total of 1,791 schools in total from the LAUSD. I then took only the schools listed as a public school and then had 1,122 schools. I then looked into the locations of the schools and decided to only look at the ones located in Los Angeles City. It narrowed my list down to then having 246 public elementary schools located in the Los Angeles City area. Once having this list, I went through each school and found what grade levels each school had. Since I am focusing on only Kindergarten to 5th grade, I omitted any schools that had any other grade levels. That meant that (K-8th), (K-6th), (K-2nd), (UTK-6th), (TK-5th), (Pre-school-5th), (TK-8th), (1st-5th), (TK-6th), (UTK-5th), (2nd-5th), (Pre-K-5th), (Pre-school, ETK, TK), (K-4th) (ETK-8th), (1st-6th), (Pre-school, K, 1st), (ETK, TK, K-2nd), (ETK, TK, K), (K-3rd), (2nd-5th), and (Pre-K-4th) were all eliminated. I decided to exclude those other grades because the LAUSD district considers 6-8 grades as middle school and their elementary schools to be Kindergarten through 5th grade. I was left with a total of 143 Kindergarten through 5th grade public elementary schools located in the Los Angeles City area. Wanting to make a list of only looking at 50 schools from the 143 that would be unbiased, I used the website <https://www.random.org/>. The website makes a list and creates a random sequence of numbers. This was done with the

intention that the selected schools would be as random as possible. I copied and pasted all 143 schools and then took the first 50 from that list to be a part of my study. These steps are shown in the PRISMA diagram down below:

PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for new systematic reviews which included searches of databases and registers only



From: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021;372:n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n71

For more information, visit: <http://www.prisma-statement.org/>

Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram

This figure explains the process and steps involved in finding 143 public elementary schools in the Los Angeles City area out of 1,791 schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

I asked the following questions for each school:

1. *Did the website use relevant information towards mixed-status families? (Yes/No)*
 - a. *If yes, what information was posted?*
2. *Was the language accessible with clear explanations provided? (Yes/No)*
3. *Was the information easy to find? (Yes/No)*
4. *Did the school write their information in both English and Spanish? (Yes/No)*
5. *If present, what did each school's vision and mission statement express?*
6. *If applicable, what other notable items existed?*

To gather all of my information, I used an Excel spreadsheet to keep everything organized and readable based on the above questions.

For the first question, “Did the website use relevant information towards mixed-status families,” if I answered “yes,” that meant that the school provided essential information.

Specifically, I looked for websites that provided:

- information about basic needs (ex. where to get food, be able to talk to someone, etc.)
- information saying that regardless of their immigration status, they are welcome to come to school activities.
- different resources about what their children could be going through and giving advice on what families could try to do to help their children.
- any additional material that clearly communicated support.

If nothing along the lines mentioned in the area above appeared, then I answered “no” to that question.

For the third question, the definition of “language accessible” that I used to answer the question “yes” examined if the website used:

- language that did not require needing to look certain words up to understand what is being said.
- wording that is culturally resonant with what is used in local communities.
- everyday words that are less technical or academic.

If the wording used on the website did not follow the criteria mentioned above, then the answer was “no.”

For the fourth question about “information easy to find,” I considered the following elements when selecting “yes”:

- not having to click various links to find information.
- information can be found at the bottom or top of the school website.
- a section along the lines of “information for mixed-status families” was provided on one of the top tabs of the school website.
- typing into the search box of the school’s website about mixed-status families resulted in resources appearing on the screen.

If the viewer could not find that kind of information listed above and instead had to search various times or click many links to try to find resources about mixed-status families, then that was considered hard and a “no.”

Transparency and Openness

In the first Excel sheet I created, I had listed all 1,791 schools located in LAUSD.

The second Excel sheet then showed all 246 public elementary schools in the city of Los Angeles, and each one had its grade levels to the right of its name.

The third Excel sheet had a list of only the 143 public elementary schools located in the Los Angeles area with grade levels Kindergarten- 5th grade. In order to only focus on K-5 and not (K-8th), (K-6th), (K-2nd), (UTK-6th),(TK-5th), (Pre-school-5th), (TK-8th), (1st-5th), (TK-6th), (UTK-5th), (2nd-5th), (Pre-K-5th), (Pre-school, ETK, TK), (K-4th) (ETK-8th), (1st-6th), (Pre-school, K, 1st),(ETK, TK, K-2nd),(ETK, TK, K), (K-3rd), (2nd-5th), or (Pre-K-4th), I input this formula into excel formula “fx= COUNTIF(B2:B247, “K-5”)”. That formula ensured I would generate a list of schools K-5 and that was how I reached my total of 143 schools.

This fourth Excel figure created is the list of all 143 K-5 public elementary schools located in the Los Angeles area that the website <https://www.random.org/> generated. The first 50 schools highlighted in red are the ones that were included in this study.

Aldama Elementary	K-5	Leo Politi Elementary	K-5
Alexandria Avenue Elementary	K-5	Lincoln Elementary	K-5
Alta Loma Elementary	K-5	Lorena Street Elementary	K-5
Ambassador School of Global Education	K-5	Loreto Street Elementary	K-5
Angeles Mesa Elementary	K-5	Los Angeles Elementary	K-5
Ann Street Elementary	K-5	Los Feliz Elementary	K-5
Annandale Elementary	K-5	Lovelie P. Flournoy Elementary	K-5
Aragon Avenue Elementary	K-5	Loyola Village Elementary	K-5
Arlington Heights Elementary	K-5	Macarthur Park Primary Center	K-5
Ascot Avenue Elementary	K-5	Magnolia Avenue Elementary	K-5
Aurora Elementary	K-5	Main Street Elementary	K-5
Baldwin Hills Elementary	K-5	Manhattan Place Elementary	K-5
Belvedere Elementary	K-5	Mar Vista Elementary	K-5
Betty Plasencia Elementary	K-5	Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary	K-5
Birdielee V. Bright Elementary	K-5	Marvin Elementary	K-5

Brockton Avenue Elementary	K-5	Mayberry Street Elementary	K-5
Buchanan Street Elementary	K-5	Melrose Avenue Elementary	K-5
Budlong Avenue Elementary	K-5	Micheltorena Street Elementary	K-5
Bushnell Way Elementary	K-5	Miramonte Elementary	K-5
Cahuenga Elementary	K-5	Monte Vista Street Elementary	K-5
Canfield Avenue Elementary	K-5	Montebello Park Elementary	K-5
Carson-Gore Academy of Environmental Studies	K-5	Multnomah Street Elementary	K-5
Carthay Center Elementary	K-5	Ninety-Fifth Street Elementary	K-5
Castle Heights Elementary	K-5	Nora Sterry Elementary	K-5
Cesar Chavez Elementary	K-5	Normandie Avenue Elementary	K-5
Charles H. Kim Elementary	K-5	Norwood Street Elementary	K-5
Charles W. Barrett Elementary	K-5	One Hundred Eighteenth Street	K-5
Charnock Road Elementary	K-5	One Hundred Ninth Street Elementary	K-5
Cienega Elementary	K-5	One Hundred Seventh Street Elementary	K-5
City Terrace Elementary	K-5	One Hundred Sixteenth Street Elementary	K-5
Clifford Street Elementary	K-5	One Hundred Twelfth Street Elementary	K-5
Clover Avenue Elementary	K-5	One Hundred Twenty-Second Street Elementary	K-5
Coliseum Street Elementary	K-5	Palms Elementary	K-5
Commonwealth Avenue Elementary	K-5	Queen Anne Place Elementary	K-5
Compton Avenue Elementary	K-5	Quincy Jones Elementary	K-5
Dayton Heights Elementary	K-5	Raymond Avenue Elementary	K-5
Delores Huerta Elementary	K-5	Ricaro Lizarraga Elementary	K-5
Eastman Avenue Elementary	K-5	Ritter Elementary	K-5
Elysian Heights Elementary	K-5	Rosewood Avenue Elementary	K-5
Esperanza Elementary	K-5	Rowan Avenue Elementary	K-5
Estrella Elementary	K-5	San Pascual Avenue Elementary	K-5
Fairburn Avenue Elementary	K-5	San Pedro Street Elementary	K-5
Farmdale Elementary	K-5	Saturn Street Elementary	K-5
Fifty-Ninth Street Elementary	K-5	Selma Avenue Elementary	K-5
Fifty-Second Street Elementary	K-5	Seventy-Fourth Street Elementary	K-5
Figueroa Street Elementary	K-5	Shenandoah Street Elementary	K-5
Florence Griffith Joyner Elementary	K-5	Sixth Avenue Elementary	K-5
Ford Boulevard Elementary	K-5	Sunrise Elementary	K-5
Forty-Ninth Street Elementary	K-5	Tenth Street Elementary	K-5
Forty-Second Street Elementary	K-5	Third Street Elementary	K-5
Frank Del Olmo Elementary	K-5	Twentieth Street Elementary	K-5
Franklin Avenue Elementary	K-5	Twenty-Eighth Street Elementary	K-5
Gardner Street Elementary	K-5	Union Avenue Elementary	K-5

Garvanza Elementary	K-5	Valley View Elementary	K-5
Gates Street Elementary	K-5	Van Ness Avenue Elementary	K-5
Glassell Park Elementary	K-5	Vermont Avenue Elementary	K-5
Grand View Boulevard Elementary	K-5	Vernon City Elementary	K-5
Grape Street Elementary	K-5	Virginia Road Elementary	K-5
Griffin Avenue Elementary	K-5	Wadsworth Avenue Elementary	K-5
Hancock Park Elementary	K-5	Walgrove Avenue Elementary	K-5
Harmony Elementary	K-5	Warner Avenue Elementary	K-5
Harvard Elementary	K-5	Weigand Avenue Elementary	K-5
Hillcrest Drive Elementary	K-5	West Athens Elementary	K-5
Hillside Elementary	K-5	West Vernon Avenue Elementary	K-5
Hobart Boulevard Elementary	K-5	Westport Heights Elementary	K-5
Hoover Street Elementary	K-5	Wilshire Crest Elementary	K-5
Humphreys Avenue Elementary	K-5	Wilshire Park Elementary	K-5
Ivanhoe Elementary	K-5	Wilton Place Elementary	K-5
John W. Mack Elementary	K-5	Winter Gardens Elementary	K-5
Joseph A. Gascon Elementary	K-5	Wonderland Avenue Elementary	K-5
La Salle Avenue Elementary	K-5	Woodcrest Elementary	K-5
Lenicia B. Weemes Elementary	K-5		

Figure 2: 143 K-5 Public Schools in the LAUSD

This Figure shows all the names of the 143 K-5 schools, and the order of the list was created by www.random.org. The ones in red are the 50 schools I chose to include in this research because they were the first 50 at the top of the list.

Originally, for my second research question, I had written, “What do Los Angeles, California, public elementary schools post on their school websites about supporting children of mixed-status families? Do any public elementary schools designate specific staff members to support students from mixed-status families, and if so, what do these support roles involve?” This focus area helped to start my initial research. As I tried to find the answer to that question, I asked these two questions for each school:

1. *Was there information supporting mixed-status families posted on the website? (Yes/No)*
 - a. *If yes, what information was posted?*

2. *Was there a specific title for a staff member who is designated to support students from mixed-status families? (Yes/No)*
 - a. *If yes, did the website list the kind of support provided by the designated staff member?*

For the first question about “support being provided on the website for mixed-status families,” if I answered “yes,” that meant that the school provided essential information. Specifically, I looked for websites that provided:

- information on how they can get food or other necessities if they are struggling.
- information acknowledging that all people are welcomed and encouraged to attend school events regardless of documentation status (teacher conferences, school games, book fairs, etc.).
- different resources about what their children could be going through and giving advice on what families could try to do to help their children.
- any additional material that clearly communicated support.

If nothing along the lines mentioned in the area above, then the answer to that question would be “no.”

When it came to answering the questions, I realized that for question one, it was a challenge to classify if the school was considered a yes or no. It created a challenge because the language that the schools were using was very ambiguous, and there was nothing I found that was specifically for the mixed-status students or their families. Instead, schools presented information about resources for providing help, tools, etc., for the school's general population. The only information they posted that was relating to students' or families' immigration status was found in the school's “Discrimination Policy.” When finding that source and then clicking

on it, it would take the user to the Los Angeles Unified School District website, and on their website, it went into detail about what each school in this district cannot discriminate against. So, since most schools in my study only provided that link, it was clear that it wasn't them saying what and who they do not discriminate against but instead the district saying it. It led me to change my question: *If available on the school's website, what and how do the online materials communicate resources for supporting marginalized experiences and equity that are relevant for mixed-status students and their families?* This question was more specific to the kind of information I was finding, and as a result, it made it clearer to classify if the school did or did not have relevant resources on its website provided for mixed-status students and their families.

For the second question, *“Is there a specific title for a staff member who is designated to support students from mixed-status families? (Yes/No) a. If yes, did the website list the kind of support provided by the designated staff member,”* I removed this focus because a lot of schools did not have listed the names of any of the staff members; this lack of information would have resulted in a list of staff members named, and only a very small few had the staff members names and positions listed. I feel like not many schools wanted to list that kind of information out of safety, and I completely understand. As a result, I feel like I could not answer that question because there was not proper information supplied, and rather than answering “no’s” for schools that did not have that information, I decided to remove the question.

Results

For the first question on the Excel sheet, “Does the website use relevant information towards mixed-status families? (Yes/No),” there were only 2 schools out of 50 that were classified as a “Yes,” which is 4%. The names of those two schools are Angeles Mesa Elementary and Tenth Street Elementary.

Those two schools were classified as a “Yes” because they had the program “Restorative Justice.” On both of the school’s websites, the pages provided a clear explanation for what “Restorative Justice” is: “Increasingly used in U.S. school districts and worldwide, restorative practices promote trust and respect in relationships, setting the foundation for teaching and learning. In addition, the practices provide meaningful opportunities for students to develop self-discipline and positive behavior in a caring and supportive environment” (Angeles Mesa Elementary school website). Even though it is not explicitly said that it is for Students or families that have a mixed-status family, these two schools have a program in place that is meant to create a community and relationship between teachers and students. The schools Angeles Mesa Elementary and Tenth Street Elementary have a plan to build trust between students and staff and are working towards a community where everyone feels accepted and belongs. They are focusing on more than just preparing the students for college or making them well-prepared and responsible individuals for their communities.

The other 48 of the 50 schools were classified as “No,” which is 96%. These 48 schools were not given a “Yes” for providing relevant information because there were no links that I found to be useful in providing mixed-status students and families any extra help, and their schools used ambiguous language and talked about all students as a whole. One thing that I could find in 40 of the 48 public elementary schools was that they all had a section called “Helpful

Resources.” This could be located at the bottom of the page or, in some schools, at the very top of the tabs. Underneath the “Helpful Resources” was then another link or tab called the “Non-Discrimination Policy” that could be clicked on. When clicking on “Non-Discrimination Policy,” it would then take me directly to the Los Angeles Unified School District website page. Once on that page, it had the “Non-Discrimination Policy” that states that all schools in the LAUSD must follow. It then went into great detail and gave a list of discriminations that are not supported, and for some of them, it gave a deeper explanation. For example, when one of the topics listed was gender/sex, there was a further explanation provided in parentheses saying said, “(including gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding/lactation status and related medical conditions)” (LAUSD website). Among those topics listed was “Immigration Status” and nothing else was said besides providing information to contact certain people in the district to ask questions, concerns, or issues with the “Non-Discrimination Policy.” In some schools, instead of taking you to the LAUSD website page when clicking on the “Non-Discrimination Policy,” it would lead you to a tab on the school's website that had information about the “Non-Discrimination Policy” just copied and pasted directly from the LAUSD website page. To be clear, the two schools, Angeles Mesa Elementary and Tenth Street Elementary, were classified as a “Yes” because of their “Restorative Justice” program that they have in place. It is not because these two schools also had a “Non-Discrimination Policy” link that would take them to the Los Angeles Unified School District website. The other 8 schools out of the 48, which is 16.67%, had nothing posted specifically for families or students of a mixed status family. They did not even have any information about the “Non-Discrimination Policy.” These eight schools were Wilton Place Elementary, City Terrace Elementary, Walgrove Avenue Elementary,

Compton Avenue Elementary, Mayberry Street Elementary, Castle Heights Elementary, Rosewood Avenue Elementary, and Norwood Street Elementary.

For the second question: “Was the language accessible with clear explanations provided? (Yes/No),” the results were 44 of the 50 public elementary schools that were given a yes, which is 88%. Of these schools, 44 schools were given a “Yes” because each one used language that was less technical or academic. For some of the words that were a bit more complex, like the term “Restorative Justice,” it provided a clear explanation for what the schools meant. As for the “Non-Discrimination Policy,” there were clear examples given for what schools do not support, and for some words that can cause one to look up the answer, there were clear explanations given about what the term meant right after it was stated. The other eight were given “N/A,” which is invalid, instead of a “No” because when answering the first question, they had no applicable information for mixed-status students or families. Due to that answer, the question of asking if they provided clear explanations about mixed-status students or families did not make sense to say “No” since there was nothing specified in the first place. These six schools were Wilton Place Elementary, City Terrace Elementary, Walgrove Avenue Elementary, Compton Avenue Elementary, Castle Heights Elementary, and Rosewood Avenue Elementary.

The third question asked on the Excel chart was, “Was the information easy to find? (Yes/No).” Forty-four of the 50 schools were given a “Yes,” which is 88%. These public elementary schools were given a “Yes” because it never involved clicking various links to find the information, and it could be found at the bottom or top of the school website. The other 6 schools were given a “N/A” instead of a “No” because, once again, those same six schools listed before (Wilton Place Elementary, City Terrace Elementary, Walgrove Avenue Elementary, Compton Avenue Elementary, Castle Heights Elementary, and Rosewood Avenue Elementary),

did not have any information to begin with that was relevant for mixed-status students or their families.

The fourth question, “Did the school write their information in both English and Spanish? (Yes/No),” the number of schools that were given a “Yes” was 43 of 50, which is 86%. Those 43 schools had a link at the top right-hand corner that allowed for not only the website to be in English or in Spanish but also various other languages that the school website could change to. The number of other languages was 132. These languages were:

Afrikaans	Georgian	Luganda	Slovak
Albanian	German	Luxembourgish	Slovenian
Amharic	Greek	Macedonian	Somali
Arabic	Guarani	Maithili	Spanish
Armenian	Gujarati	Malagasy	Sundanese
Assamese	Haitian Creole	Malay	Swahili
Aymara	Hausa	Malayalam	Swedish
Azerbaijani	Hawaiian	Maltese	Tajik
Bambara	Hebrew	Maori	Tamil
Basque	Hindi	Marathi	Tatar
Belarusian	Hmong	Meiteilon (Manipuri)	Telugu
Bengali	Hungarian	Mizo	Thai
Bhojpuri	Icelandic	Mongolian	Tigrinya
Bosnian	Igbo	Myanmar (Burmese)	Tsonga
Bulgarian	Ilocano	Nepali	Turkish
Catalan	Indonesian	Norwegian	Turkmen
Cebuano	Irish	Odia (Oriya)	Twi
Chichewa	Italian	Oromo	Ukrainian
Chinese (Simplified)	Japanese	Pashto	Urdu
Chinese (Traditional)	Konkani	Persian	Uyghur
Corsican	Korean	Polish	Uzbek
Croatian	Krio	Portuguese	Vietnamese
Czech	Kurdish (Kurmanji)	Punjabi	Welsh
Danish	Kurdish (Sorani)	Quechua	Xhosa
Dhivehi	Kyrgyz	Romanian	Yiddish
Dogri	Javanese	Russian	Yoruba
Dutch	Kannada	Samoan	Zulu

Esperanto	Kazakh	Sanskrit	
Estonian	Khmer	Scots Gaelic	
Ewe	Kinyarwanda	Sepedi	
Filipino	Lao	Serbian	
Finnish	Latin	Sesotho	
French	Latvian	Shona	
Frisian	Lingala	Sindhi	
Galician	Lithuanian	Sinhala	

Figure 3: 132 Languages on the School Websites

This Figure has all the names of the languages you can change the school website to besides English and Spanish.

Among the 43 schools, some schools even went one step further. Nine of 43 schools not only had their whole website change to multiple languages besides English, but they also had flyers posted that were provided in Spanish or Chinese. These nine schools were: Wadsworth Avenue Elementary, Leo Politi Elementary, San Pascual Avenue Elementary, Miramonte Elementary, Charnock Road Elementary, Union Avenue Elementary, John W. Mack Elementary, Tenth Street Elementary, and Aurora Elementary.

Of the 7 schools that were given a “No,” four of them only had their information in English. There was no option to change the website to another language, and any flyers that were posted on the website were in English. These four were Walgrove Avenue Elementary, Mayberry Street Elementary, Castle Heights Elementary, and Rosewood Avenue Elementary. For the other three “No’s” given, each one had a reason behind it. The first school, Wilton Place Elementary, was a “No” because all of the main information on the page was only in English. Although there was some information that could be found in Spanish, Korean, and English because it had flyers in those languages posted on the school website. The second school, City Terrace Elementary, was a “No” because it had all of the main information posted on the school

in English, and the only information that could be found in both English and Spanish was the flyers posted on the school website. The last “No” given was for Compton Avenue Elementary School because all of the main information on the school website was posted in English. Only in a very few sections did the elementary school have some parts of the English translated into Spanish right below it.

In the last column on the Excel sheet, “If applicable, other notable items,” some of the things that schools had that I thought should be noticed were a Dual Immersion program (English and Spanish) (English, Spanish, and Korean), a Gifted and Talented Program (GATE), an English Learner program, links for mental health, a School-Wide Positive Behavior & Intervention Support (PBIS), mission and vision statements, and links for teaching Black History.

All of this information talked about above is represented in the Excel sheet called 50 School Data Collection.

Discussion

Having the “Restorative Justice” program is an excellent step in the right direction. Having this information available shows and helps the community live up to the standards outlined in a Restorative Justice program. The main goal of Restorative Justice, as stated in the “Results” section, involves “practices [that] promote values and principles that use inclusive, collaborative practices for being in a community. Restorative Justice practices help schools create and maintain a positive school culture and climate” (Angeles Mesa Elementary school website). Restorative Justice can give the tools to try to change the school environment and result in positive school experiences for students.

However, having this kind of program is not enough. All of these 50 schools could use more explicit language or direct information for the different kinds of students or families that they might have. When looking to see if there was information posted on all the school websites for mixed-status families, I found nothing. There were no links specifically directed toward students or mixed-status families, nor links that focused on basic needs. For instance, if they needed help trying to find available food, wanting to see if there is a guidance counselor that their kids can talk to, having statements actually made by the school that your citizenship status should not stop the parent from feeling like they can’t come to campus activities, etc. There needs to be more specific language used on their school's websites because then how can these students or families find the help that they might need?

Too much ambiguous language is being used on these 50 schools’ websites and providing a link to the “Discrimination Policy” made by the Los Angeles Unified School District that schools claim they follow is not enough. The lack of specific resources not mentioned for mixed-status families is problematic because it shows that there is no specificity or careful attention.

Below are examples of vague language that can be found on school websites. These are lines pulled from mission and vision statements made by schools:

- Melrose Avenue Elementary’s mission statement: “Through a science and engineering focused curriculum, we teach students to think creatively and solve the world's problems.”
- Cahuenga Elementary’s vision statement: “We are committed to provide a safe learning environment where children can reach their fullest potential to become well-rounded, productive, and responsible citizens of the future.”
- Canfield Avenue Elementary’s mission statement: “They become life-long learners, responsible citizens and caring individuals who have a deep understanding of the multi-cultural society in which we live.”
- Compton Avenue Elementary’s mission statement: “Our mission is to lay the foundation for students to be productive and responsible citizens in the diverse and ever-changing society in which they live.”
- Figueroa Street Elementary’s mission statement: “Figueroa Street Elementary will inspire students to become global citizens who will maximize academic achievement by utilizing 21st century skills in order to become college and/or career ready to contribute to society.”

These general claims are part of a liberal inclusion model that sounds good on paper, or in this case, on a website, but they do not have clear connections to specific material actions committed to root change. Which also contributes to a Eurocentric viewpoint because as “schools continue to position Western education as the center of legitimate knowledge, and any other knowledge as additional and insignificant. Eurocentric curriculums teach Black and

Indigenous students that their lives and the lives of their ancestors are not worth learning about, while simultaneously teaching White students that they are highly valued in spaces of knowledge and power” (Ugwuegbula, 2020. With these general claims that are being made, these schools are not taking into account other students who have a different identity from white. The claims made do not show the specificity or the complexity of the different races and identities that can be found within the school’s community. Much of the studied online material does not actually function to actively advocate for people who are marginalized and facing an oppressive system disproportionately. It can make some students who are known to be marginalized to be considered an afterthought and not have any action behind it on a day-to-day school day. Professor Lorgia García Peña explains, “while Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other minoritized students have been part of [...] education for centuries, they have always been a minority. They are presumed to be a ‘selection,’ always imagined as exceptions” (2022, p. 15). They are seen as additions to students who are nonminority, and for that reason, the issues that minoritized students are facing are not being actively supported. More of an effort should be made to outline resources and initiatives for students of mixed-status families on the school's websites. If what school staff members have on their websites reflects what they are teaching their students, then there should be instruction on citizenship.

I believe that one of the ways that all these schools can do better is in the younger grades, where there are usually lessons given about how families can look different. These lessons go along the lines of one family can have two mommies, one family can have two daddies, one family can have only a mommy, and so on. What is also talked about is the diversity that families can have. Another way of enriching these lessons should also involve talking about how some families can have different immigration statuses. I can see how this topic can be challenging

when teaching younger kids in school, and because of that, I do not think that younger grade levels, like Kindergarten through 2nd grade, have to dive really deep into this topic, but at this age, basic conversations can begin. As I mentioned earlier in the “Literature Review” section, “teachers play an important role in creating classroom contexts in which undocumented students disclose or withhold their legal citizenship status” (Figueroa, 2017, p. 493). Based on the environment around citizenship status, this situation could have the possibility of making the children feel more welcomed or more isolated. The teacher can hold a lot of power in the environment of the classroom and with that power comes a great amount of responsibility. For that reason, a time to first start talking about citizenship should be when the students are young because then little seeds are planted in their minds about citizenship and how each person can have a different status, but that does not mean that because of those statuses they are deemed as less significant. The students who come from mixed-status families can potentially feel more welcomed, and those children who do not have much knowledge about those situations can learn and hopefully become empathic to those kinds of situations.

To aid in those earlier discussions, there are compelling children’s books that talk about citizenship and can put it into terms that younger children can easily understand better. One children’s book in particular is called *Am I Blue or Am I Green? / Azul o verde. ¿Cuál soy yo?* This text is written by Beatrice Zamora and is illustrated by Berenice Badillo. Zamora’s writing aims to educate children about the different experiences an immigrant family could face (Camacho, 2021). The plot of the book follows a Mexican-origin child who is a U.S. citizen and has two parents who are migrants from Mexico. The nameless child refers to his parents as Mami and Papi. Colors are a major part of this storyline and help explain the identity struggles the child faces with his and his parents. The child gives explanations for how they see themselves as blue,

red, and white, while his parents are green, red, and white. His home life is filled with traditions of Mexican culture, whilst the world outside of his house is filled with the customs of America. He enjoys both of his worlds, but in the back of his mind is the fear of the parent's documentation status. The child tries to grapple with the fact that he has citizenship that grants him different privileges than his parents, who do not have documentation. Some of the book's themes that are experienced by the child and that other children of mixed-status families could be facing are:

- figuring out their sense of belonging,
- knowing their parent's documentation status, which can create heavy feelings and a sense of responsibility,
- living in the shadows,
- grappling with other topics like language ability.

This children's book is one that teachers should think about reading to their students because there is a possibility that one of them can be a child from a mixed-status family, and regardless, every child should know about these experiences. Children spend the beginning of their lives in school for multiple hours every day, which is such a key developmental period for them. They need to have a safe space, hopefully relax, and have a chance to take some slow, deep breaths. It is unimaginable pressure to keep quiet about their family's situation that they are carrying on their shoulders. To make everyone feel accepted, teachers can start by creating a community in their classroom by reading *Am I Blue or Am I Green? / Azul o verde. ¿Cuál soy yo?* and by having conversations with their students about documentation status and being aware of their biases because they hold much power in shaping what children think and how comfortable they feel in the classroom. Big topics should not be shied away from discussions in the classroom

since students could be dealing with these big topics outside of school. So, starting with the topics of citizenship with younger students might lay the foundation for what they could think of when thinking about citizenship in the future when they are older. These lesson plans that are created can then be posted to the school websites, just like how some tabs exist for teaching Black History. This tab could be outlined explicitly saying “Mixed-Status Students and Families” and have these lesson plans and resources that are relevant to them to know about or that they might need. The nameless child in the children’s book expresses the need to have his place of belonging. He articulates, “My favorite color is aquamarine. Blue and green all mixed together. Aquamarine is shimmering oceans with bright sandy beaches that belong to everyone” (Zamora, 2021, pp. 29-30). I hope that educators and caregivers will share the important ideas and feelings expressed by this book’s protagonist, including by consulting this StoryMap that I created about this bilingual text in an Honors College Latine Testimonios course (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c142e698109c4896acac9e57299ab016>).

Limitations and Openings

This study had five limitations, which also may be viewed as openings and points for future critical engagement. First, the data collection was done by a one-person coder. There was no way of someone double-checking my work or getting to compare to see if the results were the same for everyone. Second, the only schools that were used in this study were public elementary schools with grades kindergarten through 5th grade. Any schools that had TK, UTK, etc., and were charter or private were not included in this study. Third, I only stuck to one ethnicity, Mexican-origin people. This study did not take into account other people's nationalities and ethnicities who could be attending these schools and if there was relevant information there to support them. Fourth, this study only included public elementary schools and did not look at any schools that were middle or high school. Maybe the results could have resulted in more support for the older kids because maybe there is a stigma that older kids need the extra support because they understand more of what is happening, whereas the younger kids may not understand what is happening and, for that reason, they may not need that extra support. Fifth, the location of the schools was only in the Los Angeles City Area. Thus, maybe in other cities, there could have been more support provided in other areas where the Latino or Hispanic population might be lower, and for that reason, there is more of an effort to provide those students and families support. While these points can be viewed as limitations, they also create space for highlighting the contributions of this study and the openings it creates for future research.

Implications and Future Research

The findings in my Thesis bring to light a lack of written support for Mexican-origin students and their family members posted on school websites. Existing literature has shown that Mexican-origin children coming from a mixed-status family background can have more of a challenge time in school settings. Because of that, they should be given the proper tools to feel like their identities can belong and be supported in their schools.

Based on my findings, I have some ideas that schools could add to their websites for mixed-status families and students. One items that could be added as a tab is a section where families could find out more about resources for their immigration status and situations:

- If families need immigration legal help, this website allows for them to search by the state they reside in: <https://www.immigrationlawhelp.org>
- This link tells families about their rights and it gives a pdf in English, Spanish, and 6 other languages: <https://www.ilrc.org/resources/know-your-rights-and-what-immigrant-families-should-do-now>
- This link helps visitors to be aware of fraud: <https://www.ilrc.org/resources/anti-fraud-flyers>

Another section to have could provides information about the well-being of students and families:

- If there is a free reduced lunch program for students in the school, then talking about how immigration status does not affect that is important.
- This link provides tips on how to help students with breathing: <https://childhood101.com/fun-breathing-exercises-for-kids/>

- This link discusses healthcare coverage options:

<https://www.cms.gov/marketplace/technical-assistance-resources/health-coverage-options-immigrants.pdf>

There also could be a section that has books on or relating to this topic because then children who are going through these issues can see that they are not alone:

- *Am I Blue or Am I Green?/ Azul o verde. ¿Cuál soy yo?* by Beatrice Zamora
- *Areli Is a Dreamer* by Areli Morales
- *Where Are You From?* by Yamile Saied Méndez

For future research, there are multiple projects that can build on my research or be taken in a different direction. One example that can continue my research is by opening up the search to more than only 50 schools. Instead, the data could include all 143 public elementary schools in the Los Angeles city area or just have a different cut-off because with a larger number of schools in the study, there could be other schools that do supply relevant help. There can also be different questions asked instead of the ones that I asked. Then there is the possibility that those questions could be answered with more “Yes” responses than what this study found.

This research can also be taken in a different direction, and this could be focusing on students and their families of different nationalities and ethnicities besides Mexicans. For instance, individuals who have origins of Guatemalan, Salvadorian, Puerto Rican, could be the main focus of the study instead. New research could also include testimonios. This effort can include interviews with individuals in particular official roles in the school system or interviews with the main individuals who are focused on in the study. This research did not include that element. Additionally, this research could take place in a different location where there can be a high population of individuals who identify as Latino or Hispanic or look at locations where

there are low numbers. Maybe by having lower numbers then, more support or more careful attention would be placed on individuals who identify as Latino or Hispanic since there might not be a sense of community for them.

Conclusion

In my Thesis, we learned from the existing literature that Mexican-origin children who come from mixed-status families do indeed encounter obstacles in relation to community building, academic performance, and behaviors. Knowing these challenges, there should be better support provided by schools to assist these students in their academic endeavors. Since they spend around eight hours a day, five days a week, in schools, there should be support systems put into place to help them with their needs. The evidence I have found from the school websites suggests that Mexican-origin students and their families need those relevant resources. There should be action behind the words that school officials and other members say when they claim they are trying to make the environment welcoming, supportive, and inclusive.

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