A Focused Ethnography Exploring the Experiences of Immigrant Parents' Collaboration with
School Personnel to Support Their Child's Reading Difficulty

by

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Abstract

A strong partnership with immigrant parents can help educators better support students who experience reading difficulties related to complications arising from differing cultural, social, linguistic, and orthographic systems of their native language. Unfortunately, parental involvement is unequally distributed between families due to immigrant status (Baquendo-Lopez et al., 2013). When immigrant parents try to get involved, their efforts are often undervalued and unacknowledged due to a cultural disconnect between parents and school personnel (Baquendo-Lopez et al., 2013; Turney & Kao, 2009). Furthermore, they face numerous unique barriers that are unacknowledged in family-school partnership policies (Antony-Newman, 2019). Using focused ethnography, the current study aimed to understand and describe the lived experiences of immigrant parents' involvement in supporting a child's reading difficulty within the Canadian educational context. Criterion-based, purposeful sampling was utilized to select sample participants, and six participants were recruited to share their experiences related to collaborating with school personnel to support their child's reading difficulty. Data was collected using in-depth, semi-structured interviews, which were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The data was then subject to Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis. Two broad themes were identified: *(a) Factors that Influence Level of Immigrant Parental Involvement and (b) Immigrant Parents' Supportive Literacy Practices.* The findings revealed that participants were willing to collaborate with school personnel to support their child's reading but faced numerous unique barriers to doing so. Nevertheless, all parents engaged in supportive reading practices that were influenced by their cultural and social experiences in both Canada and their native country. This study contributes to the development of inclusive and culturally responsive family-school partnership policies for supporting the reading difficulties of immigrant students.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Sana Rashid. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "A Focused Ethnography Exploring the Experiences of Immigrant Parents' Collaboration with School Personnel to Support a Child's Reading Difficulty", No. Pro00098990, September 2, 2020

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background Information

Canada is a country that greatly values multiculturalism and continues to encourage immigration through federal policies such as the Multi-Year Immigration Levels Plan, wherein the number of immigrants entering Canada is expected to increase each year from 2018 to 2020 (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2017). During these years, approximately one million immigrants will enter Canada as permanent residents (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2017). Therefore, it is expected that the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity within Canada will continue to increase at a rapid pace. Thus, school personnel play a critical role in applying and integrating inclusive policies and research-based best practices to effectively meet the needs of this growing population and successfully integrating them into Canadian schools. A particularly urgent priority for educators is finding effective methods to instruct and support immigrant students who are struggling readers (Volante et al., 2017). Culturally and linguistically diverse students are currently at risk for both under-representation and over-representation in identification and placement in specialized programming, such as receiving intensive reading interventions (Counts et al., 2018). Under-representation in specialized programming often occurs due to educators choosing to adopt a wait-and-see approach before providing additional specialized support to immigrant students who face reading difficulties often due to an inability in distinguishing an academic difficulty from language acquisition concerns (Hibel & Jasper, 2012; Klingner et al., 2006; Samson & Lesaux, 2012). In contrast, other researchers have found that due to cultural and linguistic disparities and differences in academic expectations, educators may hold a biased perspective of immigrant students' academic development which can lead to over-representation of these students in

special education programs (Waitoller et al., 2010). Counts et al. (2018) suggest that home-school partnerships must be established that bridge the gaps between cultural differences and engage parents to collaborate with educators by sharing their cultural and traditional expertise and knowledge to support their child's development. Parents are often the first teachers of their child and play a significant role in developing their literacy skills. When parents collaborate with teachers to enhance a child's reading ability, they can positively impact their child's reading development (Baker, 2003; Senechal & Young, 2008). Thus, a strong partnership with immigrant parents can help educators better support students who experience reading difficulties related to complications arising from differing cultural, social, linguistic, and orthographic systems of their native language.

The Government of Canada (2017) also encourages immigrant parents to support their children's growth and development by getting involved with their child's schooling. However, in Canada, it is the provincial government rather than the federal that is in charge of overseeing the elementary and secondary education departments. The provincial governments across Canada, nevertheless, have incorporated this concept in their educational policies and mandates. For example, the Alberta Teaching Quality Standard mandates teachers to establish collaborative relationships with parents by "providing culturally appropriate and meaningful opportunities for students and for parents/guardians, as partners in education, to support student learning" (Alberta Education, 2018, p. 3). Similarly, the Ontario Ministry of Education (2010) has developed a Parent Engagement Policy to "ensure that parents have a voice at every level of the education system" (p. 19). The British Columbia Ministry of Education also highlighted in their Statement of Education Policy Order that parents must "have the right and responsibility to participate in

the process of determining the educational goals, policies and services provided for their children" (Brummet, 1989, p. D-89).

Unfortunately, despite these policies and mandates, researchers have found that parental involvement is unequally distributed between families with an immigrant status (Antony-Newman, 2019; Baquendo-Lopez et al., 2013). When immigrant parents try to get involved, their efforts are often undervalued and unacknowledged due to a cultural disconnect between parents and school personnel (Baquendo-Lopez et al., 2013; Turney & Kao, 2009). Furthermore, they face numerous unique barriers that are often unacknowledged in many current family-school partnership policies (Antony-Newman, 2019).

Statement of Purpose

There is a lack of empirical information on how immigrant parents collaborate with school personnel to support a child's reading difficulty. Thus, the overall purpose of this focused ethnography was to understand and describe the lived experiences of immigrant parents' involvement in supporting a child's reading difficulty. An in-depth exploration of immigrant parents' literacy practices can provide valuable insights on how to effectively incorporate their cultural needs in family-school partnership policies and overcome the unique barriers that this population of parents may face. Furthermore, this study contributes to the development of strategies through which educators can learn how to access and implement the knowledge and resources that immigrant parents have to offer on literacy acquisition. Additionally, this study builds on the understanding of the experiences of immigrant parents within the Canadian educational contexts since much of the research in the scholarly literature is based on the American educational context (Antony-Newman, 2019). The central research question of this study is:

1) What are the experiences and perceptions of recent immigrant parents whose children have been identified as having a reading difficulty?

Furthermore, the following sub-questions were also explored to guide the data collection, analysis, and interpretation process of the study and further enhance the understanding of complexities and nuances related to the main central question:

1) What services and resources do immigrant parents perceive to be available?

2) What are the greatest challenges for immigrant parents when partnering with school personnel to support a reading difficulty?

3) What actions do immigrant parents take to work towards an effective partnership with school personnel?

Researcher's Background and Perspectives

My interest in this topic stems largely from being an immigrant student myself and witnessing the difficulties that my parents faced in collaborating with my youngest sister's teacher. I recall my mother saying to me, "Please fill this reading IEP goal form out for your sister so that I can return it to her teacher." This was a request I had heard one too many times and a feeling with which I was all too familiar. I knew that partnership with parents is truly important, but I wondered why my parents struggled with doing so. I constantly questioned why my mother was so unsure of her abilities to share her concerns openly, and why she was worried that her responses would not meet the expectations of the teacher. I also pondered whether my mother's sentiments were unique or if other immigrant parents felt similarly challenged when working with their child's teacher.

Nevertheless, I also saw how both my mother and father worked extremely hard at home to support their children's reading development. For example, my mother once researched

numerous reading resources and ordered hundreds of dollars' worth of reading material for my youngest sister to support her reading development. During my own childhood, I recall that my father always took time out of his busy schedules to take us to the public library, which was an extremely cherished resource in our family. We would haul back many books to enjoy for the next few days within which I would be completely immersed. In fact, those library visits in my childhood are one of my fondest memories that I believe truly nurtured my love of reading.

Once I became a teacher myself, I aspired to incorporate inclusionary policies in my classroom to ensure that my students' and their families' educational realities were positive and as optimal as possible. I wanted to remove barriers to involvement for my students' families and offered multiple methods of communication to my students' parents, such as newsletters, face-to-face conversations, and email. I tried my best to encourage them to share their comments and concerns about their child's progress with me and tried to consistently seek their input in instructional strategies and tools. Despite my efforts in engaging families and students, I noticed a particularly stark difference in the involvement and communication of native-born parents compared to immigrant parents. As an elementary teacher who was passionate about literacy development, I wanted to know how I could encourage immigrant parents to become partners in enhancing the literacy abilities of their children who were struggling readers. I knew that the home environment plays a major role in the development of students' literacy skills and recognized that immigrant students who were struggling readers could especially benefit from consistent reading support in both their home and school environments.

Thus, while completing my program in the Department of Educational Psychology, I chose to investigate the experiences of immigrant parents in supporting their children who experience reading difficulties and of their collaboration with school personnel related to it. I am

particularly passionate about this topic due to my personal life experiences. I hold a unique view of the problem as I have experience collaborating with diverse parent groups as an elementary school teacher and as a child of immigrant parents, have also witnessed the challenges that immigrant parents often face while collaborating with school personnel. Hence, I have clearly presented my assumptions, experiences, and preconception in this section as a form of researcher reflexivity. Moreover, I consistently endeavored to use unbiased language when presenting and discussing my participants' experiences, beliefs, and practices to ensure their voices were shared as accurately as possible.

Overview of Thesis

This thesis is presented in five chapters. This current chapter provides an overview of the general topic of study, the context within which this study was developed, the purpose of the study, and outline of the thesis structure.

Chapter 2 consists of a literature review which provides a comprehensive overview of the related scholarly literature. Current theoretical models widely incorporated in the field are also discussed, as well as their implications for use with immigrant populations. Finally, this chapter also identifies the gaps in the current scholarly literature and emphasizes the need for the current study.

Chapter 3 outlines the interpretive framework within which this study is embedded and provides a rationale and outline of the qualitative research method employed in the study. Additionally, the details of the research process are highlighted, such as participant recruitment, data collection, and data analysis procedures and tools.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study in the form of a discussion of the themes that emerged from the data analysis. Each theme is discussed in depth and accompanied with textual evidence from participant interviews.

Chapter 5 consists of a discussion in which the results are interpreted and connected to relevant scholarly findings and theoretical frameworks. Implications of the results, suggestions for future research, and limitations of the study are also presented.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Within this chapter, I will provide a comprehensive overview of the related scholarly literature to establish a contextual understanding of the current research in the area of immigrant parental involvement for supporting a child's reading difficulty. I will begin by reviewing how scholars have chosen to conceptualize the term parental involvement and the impact of these varied definitions on research findings and the translation of research to practice. Next, I will review the literature that analyses the impact of parental involvement on a child's academic achievement, specifically focusing on the findings related to literacy acquisition. Furthermore, I will identify the current research-based models of parental involvement that are utilized as theoretical frameworks in this field and address the implications of using these models with immigrant parent populations. Finally, I will elaborate on the recent research specifically focusing on immigrant parents' school involvement experiences and emphasize the need for the current study within the immigrant parental involvement discourse.

Defining Parental Involvement

Providing a robust and comprehensive operational definition of parental involvement has been a challenge for scholars as is evidenced by the multiple approaches and definitions utilized in the scholarly research literature. In fact, the perceived meaning of the term parental involvement may vary among the multiple stakeholders in education such as parents, school administrators, and teachers as well (Young et al., 2013). As a result, the conceptual definitions used in research in this field are often devised by researchers due to the lack of consensus on what parental involvement is in multiple contexts for multiple heterogeneous parent groups (Young et al., 2013). Fan and Chen (2001) affirm this sentiment and highlight that "despite its intuitive meaning, the operational use of parental involvement has not been clear and consistent"

(p. 3). Wilder (2014) explores this topic by grouping the types of definitions used for parental involvement. These definitions vary from inclusive and general, such as "the dedication of resources by the parent to the child within a given domain" (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994, p. 238) or "parents' or caregivers' investment in the education of their children" (Lorocque et al., 2011, p. 116) to ones that specify explicit practices that exhibit parental involvement. Kohl et al.'s (2000) Multidimensional Model of Parental Involvement is an example of how researchers define parental involvement in terms of more specific practices. This model includes three specific dimensions: (a) parents' helping with school activities, (b) exposing the child to learning activities, and (c) remaining informed on the child's progress and learning.

Unfortunately, a consequence of adopting diverse definitions that are too specific include miscommunications of parental involvement expectations and roles among the various stakeholders in education. For example, empirical evidence suggests that parents and educators view parental involvement differently (Anderson & Minke, 2007). Teachers generally view parental involvement as more school-based in which parents are physically involved in activities at the school, whereas parents generally view involvement in terms of facilitating learning by getting children to school on time and helping them stay safe in their learning environment (Anderson & Minke, 2007). Young et al. (2013) assert that definitions for parental involvement should be devised in collaboration with school stakeholders to clarify the expectations associated with parental involvement and enhance communication amongst the stakeholders.

Research on Parental Involvement and Children's Academic Achievement

Because the literature evaluating the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement is immense, meta-syntheses that combine and analyze the findings of multiple meta-analyses on this topic are beneficial in providing extensive information in a

compact format. Wilder (2014) conducted such a meta-synthesis to evaluate the overall impact of parental involvement on children's academic achievement. One of the unique aspects of this study is that Wilder (2014) included in the analysis an exploration of how the inconsistencies in the definitions of parental involvement impact the findings. Meta-analyses that examine the impact of parental involvement on academic achievement published within the last 20 years in peer reviewed journals were searched for in major online databases and 9 meta-analyses were included in the study (Erion, 2006; Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2003; Jeynes, 2005; Jeynes, 2007; Jeynes, 2012; Patall et al., 2008; Senechal & Young, 2008). Wilder (2014) reported that positive relationships between parental involvement and academic achievement were found across the studies despite the studies adopting multiple, varied definitions for the term parental involvement. Moreover, Wilder (2014) found that parental involvement plays a significant role in children's academic achievement regardless of grade level and ethnicity. This is a critical finding because it suggests that parental involvement can be utilized to decrease academic achievement gaps between different ethnicities (Jeynes, 2005). However, the results also revealed that the impact of involvement was stronger for certain ethnic groups. For example, Jeyne's (2003) meta-analysis found that parental involvement benefitted African American and Latino children more than Asian American children. Thus, Jeynes (2003) suggests that additional research is needed to understand why certain types of parental involvement are more or less beneficial for certain groups. Wilder (2014) similarly highlights the need for additional parental involvement strategies that acknowledge the unique cultural characteristics of parents and children of different ethnicities.

Finally, Wilder (2014) also analyzed the impact of using multiple, varied assessment methods to conceptualize and identify academic achievement. Although the diversity in

assessment methods used in the studies did not impact the relationship found between parental involvement and academic achievement, it did impact the strength of the relationship. However, the results for which type of assessment method would be most beneficial were inconclusive. For example, Wilder (2014) found that some studies reported stronger impact if standardized tests were used and speculated that this may be due to standardized tests being more comprehensive than teacher-created assessments. Other studies reported higher impact for parental involvement when assessments methods such as teacher ratings or grade point average were considered. Wilder (2014) believed that this could be explained by parents focusing more on classroom-based assignments and trying to meet the teachers' specific academic expectations. Nevertheless, Wilder (2014) presumed that utilizing global measures of achievements, which can be understood as universal assessment methods that clearly present the positive and negative trends in learning such as grade point average, may demonstrate a significantly stronger impact than what has been reported in most studies.

Research on Parental Involvement and Literacy Acquisition

A number of studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between parental involvement and children's reading development. Senechal and Young (2008) conducted a meta-analysis to focus specifically on the impact of parent-child activities on improving the reading skills of children in Kindergarten to Grade 3. The studies were selected carefully to help identify the extent of the relationship between parental involvement and children's literacy acquisition. Thus, the researchers sought to find experimental and quasi-experimental intervention studies that (a) were published in peer reviewed journals with a clear control group, (b) included over 5 participants, and (c) reported statistics that could be utilized to calculate effect sizes for inclusion in the meta-analysis. A total of 16 research articles met inclusion criteria and were included in

the study representing 1340 families. Senechal and Young (2008) used effect sizes (Cohen's d) as the main statistics to compare and integrate the findings from the studies. When the results from all 16 studies were combined, a moderately large effect size (0.68) was found for the association between parental involvement and children's literacy acquisition. The intervention studies from the meta-analysis were also analyzed based on involvement type: (a) Read to Child (n=3), (b) Listen to Child Read (n=6), and (c) Parent Teach Child Literacy Skills (n=7). In the Read to Child category, interventions focused on effective strategies for reading aloud to the child such as choosing appropriate books, keeping the child interested, initiating appropriate dialogue, and completing book-related activities. In the Listen to Child Read interventions, parents were taught how to give certain types of feedback while listening to their child read, such as encouraging the child to use context or phonics cues and providing specific types of praise. The Parent Teach Child category incorporated interventions in which parents were explicitly taught how to provide specific reading skill instruction. Of these three categories, the Parents Teach Child interventions had the greatest effect size (1.15), followed by Listen to Child Read which had a moderate effect size (0.51). The Read to Child interventions did not have a significant effect on reading acquisition, but Senechal and Young (2008) acknowledged that the number of studies that met inclusion criteria in this category were very limited (n=3) and cited other scholars who did find positive effect sizes for reading to a child (Bus et al., 1995; Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994). They highlighted the need for additional experimental research in this specific area. Nevertheless, the findings from this study clearly highlight the positive role that parents can play in supporting the literacy acquisition of their children. Some vital findings from this study that have major policy implications were that the socioeconomic level of the child's family and grade level of the child did not impact the intervention results. Moreover, the

studies identified included both students who were typically developing and students with reading difficulties. It is critical to note that the findings did not differ between the varied type of readers.

Baker (2003) also asserts that parental involvement in reading enhances student motivation to read by creating a positive affective climate that is perceived as enjoyable by the child. When parents create a climate of reading and support their child's reading (i.e., by providing reading materials, reading to their child, or modeling positive reading behaviors), children spend more time reading for enjoyment (Braten et al., 1999; Greaney & Hegarty, 1987; Neuman, 1986; Rowe, 1991; Shapiro & Whitney, 1997).

Kelly-Vance and Schreck (2002) conducted a study to analyze the impact parental involvement has on student reading outcomes within a school reading program. This program provided parents with numerous opportunities to participate in reading-based activities with their children such as encouraging in-school read-aloud by parents and participation in after school reading events. Parents were also provided with daily reading material for their children and school library hours were extended. Parents were asked to track the amount of time they spent with their child reading to send back to school at the end of each month. At the end of the six-month reading program, results showed that participation in this program increased the reading rate and accuracy of the students significantly when compared to control groups (Kelly-Vance & Schreck, 2002).

McConnell and Kubina (2016) also reported the positive impacts of parental involvement in a child's reading skills, in their multiple baseline intervention study. They recruited parents of kindergarten students who were identified as at-risk for reading difficulties to participate in

conducting reading lessons for fifteen minutes a night for five to seven weeks. Three children and their parents participated in the intervention. Parents were provided with instruction on how to provide the reading lessons at home using the Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons program. The use of a multiple baseline research design accounted for maturation effects and enabled the monitoring of each participants' progress. Students' word reading was tested daily by analyzing the correct number of words read in 30 seconds on a sentence sheet at school during the baseline (minimum of 4) and intervention phase. During the baseline measurements, none of the children read any of the words correctly in the sentence sheets provided. This stable baseline demonstrated that the students were not receiving the explicit phonemic instruction needed to improve their decoding skills. During the intervention, split-middle design analysis showed that all participants experienced a moderate (average of 3 words read correctly) to rapid (average of 5 words read correctly) increase in word reading accuracy. Four weeks after the completion of the intervention, experimenters returned to the school to test the students' word reading over a period of three days. The maintenance data reported that all of the participant students continued to read thirty days after the intervention with high levels of accuracy (range of 4-9 words read correctly) (McConnell & Kubina, 2016). In fact, one students' maintenance results were higher than any of his previous scores during the intervention.

More recently, Gerzel-Short (2018) found that parental involvement in supporting a child's reading ability can positively impact parents as well by enhancing their problem-solving skills, increasing feelings of competence, and empowering them to advocate for their child's needs. Gerzel-Short's (2018) qualitative study examined the collaborative efforts of parents whose children were receiving a reading intervention within the Response to Intervention framework. The findings of this study revealed that once families felt more comfortable

collaborating with the teachers, they became more engaged in the process, skilled in identifying the needs of the child and began advocating for their child to further enhance their development (Gerzel-Short, 2018).

Theoretical Models of Parental Involvement

Since the 1970s, scholars have synthesized and analyzed research findings to develop conceptual models of parental involvement. In this section, I will identify the models of parental involvement which have crucial implications for parental involvement policies and future research. Moreover, I will identify issues related to applying these conceptual models to immigrant parents' involvement.

Freire's (1970) Banking Model of Schooling

In 1970, Freire began to critique the Banking Model of Schooling which refers to a model of schooling that assumes that a teacher transfers their knowledge and skills into their students. This model views children as empty vessels who are required to simply absorb knowledge as it is transmitted, is very teacher-centered, and views all children as identical types of learners (Goodall, 2017). Goodall (2017) argues that although Freire's critique and the research findings framed within his model helped influence the shift from teacher-centered learning to more student-centered learning, school policies and practices related to parental involvement have lagged behind and still align with the Banking Model of Schooling. Goodall (2017) identified specific practices in schools that illustrate this such as: authority residing mainly with the teacher in parent-teacher interactions, limited acknowledgment of parent's knowledge and expertise, and parents being required to adopt a teacher's plan for their child and implement it accordingly. Goodall argues that adopting a Freirean approach to parental involvement policies may create more equitable experiences for students' parents. However, Baquendo-Lopez et al. (2013) argues

that there are still limitations to this approach. They are concerned that such policies may ignore existing power dynamics between teachers and diverse family types in schools, such as immigrant families. Thus, they argue that such an approach may actually negatively impact parents by deceiving them into feeling empowered in their role although they continue to remain in unequal power relations within the education system.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Model for Human Development

In 1979, Bronfenbrenner proposed his Ecological Model for Human Development which was seminal in enhancing practitioners' understanding of children's development and has been utilized as a framework for many parental involvement research studies. This model identifies children as surrounded and impacted by multiple layers of relationships that significantly influence their development and learning (Burns et al., 2015). His model is presented in a hierarchy of circles that are constantly interacting with one another as well as with the child who is at the center of the model (Hertler et al., 2018). The closest circle, known as the *microsystem*, comprises of both the school and the family and has a direct impact on the child's development. This includes the child's day-to-day interactions that form their realities, perceptions, and experiences through which they learn and develop (Paat, 2013). When members of the microsystem interact, connections in the *mesosystem* form which also influence the child's development. The meso-system consists of the meaningful linkages between the multiple groups in a child's microsystem that can jointly influence a child's development. For example, Paat (2013) suggests that in the meso-system of family and school, collaboration of parents with specialized personnel such as social workers can improve an immigrant child's schooling experience by facilitating a better understanding for the parents of the country's educational system. The inclusion of these interactions as a specific level indicates the significance of

collaboration amongst major influencers in the development of a child. Parental involvement creates coherence within this level to most optimally improve a child's learning outcomes. Moving outwards, the *exosystem* consists of other groups of people who may indirectly affect the child's development, such as neighbors or parents' work colleagues. For example, a stressful interaction with a colleague at work may affect the communicative behavior of parents with their child in the evening after work. Finally, the *macrosystem* consists of the culture and norms that form and shape the way of living of all individuals within a society.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model emphasizes the importance of both school and families in the development of a child (the microsystem), as well as the influence of the interrelationships between the components of the microsystem with one another (i.e., teachers and families interacting with one another which forms the mesosystem). Sheridan and Gutkin (2000) argue that children cannot be served effectively if their difficulties and challenges are decontextualized from their environments. They argue that this is often seen in the medical model, which is widely accepted in society, in which the 'deficiency' of the child is diagnosed and treated without considering the significant role that the child's environment has on their development and growth. According to Sheridan and Gutkin (2000) the traditional medical model is insufficient, and they stress that we must recognize the significance of family, schools and their interrelationship in the development and growth of the child. Although this model highlights the significance of interrelationships, which often serve as a basis for many parental involvement research studies and policies, it does not identify why the groups choose to be involved or the methods through which they do so. Yohani et al. (2019) also highlight that the impact of culture on a child's development is inadequately addressed in this framework as it is only referenced as an indirect influence within the macrosystem.

Figure 1. Visual representation of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model for Human Development.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995) Model of Parental Involvement

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995) Model of Parental Involvement identifies why parents become involved in their child's learning. Their research identifies the key aspects that influence parental involvement, which are role construction, sense of efficacy, perception of invitation to be involved, and life-context variables.

Role Construction. Role construction is a socially constructed category that can change and is often influenced by the parents' cultures and expectations of individuals who are viewed as important by the parents. It involves parents' beliefs in the role that they play in their child's education. Thus, if a specific culture values parental involvement, parents are more likely to believe their role is to participate more often in their child's educational activities. However, if parental involvement is frowned upon in a specific culture and the teacher is viewed as the individual mainly responsible for conducting and supervising educational activities, then parents are less likely to be involved.

Sense of Efficacy. A sense of efficacy refers to how capable parents believe they are in helping their child based on their perception of how well they can help their child succeed in school. If a parent has a high sense of self efficacy, they are more likely to be involved in their child's education. A sense of efficacy is also a socially constructed factor. The social nature of these categories indicates that interactions with individuals, such as teachers and administrators, who parents recognize as important can persuade and influence the perceptions of parents in each category and consequently impact parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Perception of Invitation to be Involved. The third component consists of parents' perceptions of invitation to be involved. If parents perceive the culture and climate of the school to be welcoming, they are more likely to be involved. Because involvement in school can enhance the academic performance of students, it is particularly important to ensure that the school climate is welcoming and inclusive to encourage school involvement of families of children who are at-risk for lower educational outcomes (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). However, Calzada et al. (2015) report that school-wide family engagement efforts may not be sufficient in successfully improving parents' involvement; rather, teachers' efforts at the classroom level must also be considered. They suggest partnering with and learning from immigrant families as a critical element for improving parental involvement in this specific population.

Life-context variables. The final category in Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995) model is life-context variables, which include aspects such as socio-economic status and time required of the parent to commit to a child's education, which also influence if and how parents choose to be involved in their child's schooling. For example, parents who have multiple jobs will naturally have less time to be involved in their child's schooling. Similarly, a family with a

lower socioeconomic status may not be able to access the appropriate resources needed to fully engage in the learning activities expected by the school personnel (e.g., accessing an educational application on the iPad).

Epstein's (2010) Parental Involvement Framework

Epstein's (2010) model is a widely referenced model, which has evolved from findings of multiple parental involvement studies. Epstein's (2010) Parental Involvement Framework identifies six categories through which parents may choose to be involved in their child's schooling and partner with school personnel. These include: (a) parenting, (b) communicating, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision-making, and (f) collaborating with the community. In the sections below, I will provide a brief description of each category:

Parenting. The aim of this category is to help families develop a home environment that is conducive to learning. For example, support from school personnel may be provided to families to access nutrition, mental health, or educational services. Epstein (2010) identifies the strategy of allowing and facilitating opportunities for parents to share information about their culture and the child's specific needs as necessary to effectively meet the needs of diverse families within this category.

Communicating. This refers to developing effective forms of communication that are utilized to communicate a child's progress, school-related information, or any concerns that arise. Examples of such forms of communication include parent-teacher meetings, informative newsletters, email or other online communication platforms. Some of the challenges that may arise when communicating effectively with diverse parent populations include ensuring it is structured in a manner that facilitates two-way communication and including appropriate methods of communication for parents with limited English reading and speaking ability

Volunteering. Recruitment of volunteers in school is organized to enable parents to share their time and expertise. Some examples of such activities include volunteer programs to assist teachers in the classroom or parent patrols in school safety programs. This recruitment, according to Epstein (2010), facilitates a welcoming climate for parents. Some challenges in this category include providing appropriate training to parents, acknowledging parent efforts, and scheduling in a manner which allows parents with varied work schedules to participate.

Learning at Home. In this category, school personnel collaborate with families to help them learn how to assist students with and encourage participation in learning activities at home, such as homework and other curriculum-related activities. This may include communicating homework policies, providing curriculum information to parents in advance, and including parents in the child's academic goal setting.

Decision Making. This category emphasizes the importance of including parents' voices in school-decision making. Multiple methods can be utilized to achieve this, such as participation in parent organizations, creation of advocacy groups, and by providing information on local elections for school representatives. One of the major challenges identified for this category include ensuring participation and representation of diverse parent groups (e.g., varied races, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds).

Collaborating with Community. In this final category, parents and school personnel utilize community services to enhance students' learning outcomes. For example, schools may provide information to parents regarding educational, recreational, and social programs and services offered in the community (e.g., summer camps or tutoring). Moreover, schools may choose to partner with organizations in the community to offer specific programming and supports. Some of the challenges associated with successfully implementing this include

ensuring equitable opportunities for children from diverse families and informing parents appropriately about these opportunities.

Although this model is based on empirical evidence, it has been criticized by researchers for fostering a school-centric approach and failing to incorporate the impact that factors such as race, class, and immigration have on parental involvement (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013; Bower & Griffin, 2011). Because the strategies in this model are created and implemented by the school, the involvement of parents is permitted to occur in a manner that is defined by the school rather than the parents (Bower & Griffin, 2011). Moreover, the strategies developed in this framework are based on school findings from middle class, European-American cultures (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013; Bower & Griffin, 2011). Therefore, there is a critical need to identify and consider diverse cultural norms given the increasing ethnic diversity of Canadian classrooms.

School Involvement Experiences of Immigrant Parents

Turney and Kao (2009) analyzed data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Studies Kindergarten Program to understand how immigrant and native-born American parents of various ethnicities were involved in their child's schooling. Their sample included 12,954 parents of kindergarteners. The measures analyzed included an index of parental involvement, a survey of barriers to school involvement, and information on race and immigration status. Their results revealed that immigrant parents face the most barriers to involvement of all parent groups. Moreover, within-race group analysis of parental involvement (e.g., native born Asians compared to foreign born Asians) revealed that immigrant parents are much less involved in their children's schooling compared to native born parents of the same ethnic community. Turney and Kao (2009) discuss that this lower involvement may unfortunately result in penalization of

parents by teachers who identify minimal involvement as lack of engagement in a child's educational progress. The findings from this study suggest that there are significant unique barriers to involvement, such as not feeling welcome at their child's school or meetings being conducted in English, which transcend race and ethnicity that uniquely impact families with a recent immigrant status. Interestingly, they also reported that immigrant parents' time in the United States and English-speaking ability was positively associated with level of involvement in schools. Turney and Kao (2009) stress that immigrant parents face unique barriers to involvement and are in fact the most disadvantaged group when it comes to parental involvement; therefore, their children suffer the consequences of policies that fail to acknowledge and lower these barriers.

Given the heterogeneity among immigrant parents, findings of meta-syntheses can provide an empirically grounded overview of the impact that immigrant status has on parental involvement. Antony-Newman (2019) analyzed 40 qualitative and quantitative studies on immigrant parental involvement in his meta-synthesis to identify: (a) the impact that immigrant status has on parental involvement and (b) the unique challenges that immigrant parents face. Of these studies, 23 studies represented data from the USA, 5 from Canada, 2 from Australia, Cyprus and Switzerland and 1 each from Israel, the Netherlands, UK, and France. Additionally, most of the studies focused on one specific immigrant group, such as Latinos (Ramirez, 2003) or Chinese immigrants (Dyson, 2001) rather than multiple immigrant groups.

The findings revealed that pre-migration experiences with schooling have an impact on how immigrant parents assume their role in helping their child, which is mainly through home-based involvement; however, school personnel in Western countries tend to view school-based involvement more favorably through activities such as attending meetings and volunteering

(Andrews, 2013; Tang, 2015; Thomas-Duckwitz et al., 2013; Zhong & Zhou, 2011). Thus, due to the cultural disconnect between immigrant parents and school personnel, parents' home-based involvement may often be unnoticed and under-valued. Communication differences add to the invisibility of immigrant parents' involvement in schools. Due to unfamiliarity with the new education system and lack of experience on how to communicate in a culturally appropriate manner with teachers in their new country, immigrant parents are often viewed as either too involved or not involved enough. Moreover, they prefer to communicate for academic purposes only and not necessarily to support school initiatives. For example, Dyson (2001) found that Euro-Canadian parents prefer face-to-face conversation of a social nature, whereas Chinese Canadian immigrant parents prefer more formal written communication related specifically to their child's academic progress. These differences in communication strategies and preference for home-based involvement make immigrant parents less visible in the school community resulting in their interests and needs to often be ignored.

Barriers to Involvement for Immigrant Parents

Two of the unique barriers to involvement for immigrant parents that were identified in this synthesis were language barriers and unfamiliarity with the school system (Antony-Newman, 2019). Turney and Kao (2009) highlighted in their study that parents who did not speak English were more likely to report having meetings at inconvenient times, feeling unwelcome in the school, and that meetings conducted in English were barriers to their involvement. When immigrant parents do try to communicate, teachers often express difficulty in understanding them, which results in frustration (Sohn & Wang, 2006). Thus, many immigrant parents prefer to communicate with written forms of communication if they are able to do so.

Furthermore, unfamiliarity with the education system of the new country can deter many immigrant parents from actively getting involved in their child's schooling (Antony-Newman, 2019). Despite the fact that immigrant parents hold high aspirations for their children, they often do not possess the resources to effectively help their children due to unfamiliarity with the curriculum, little understanding of their child's progress in school, or limited formal schooling themselves. Inflexible work schedules and unemployment can also be barriers for this extremely vulnerable group (Antony-Newman, 2019).

How Immigrant Parents Support Literacy Acquisition

Despite these numerous barriers, many parents still strive to be involved in their children's education. Antony-Newman (2019) stressed the need for additional research which highlights successful parental involvement experiences. Understanding immigrant parents' positive experiences can provide school stakeholders with a better understanding of their socio-cultural perspectives and enable them to adjust school-family partnership policies accordingly. Li (2006) argues that it is critical to incorporate social and cultural contexts within literacy instruction for immigrant students with diverse backgrounds to provide them with an optimal learning experience. Moreover, Li (2006) affirms that there is a critical need to bridge the knowledge gap between immigrant parents' supportive literacy practices and the lack of recognition these practices receive from school personnel, often due to limited understanding of immigrant families' rich and diverse cultures and traditions.

Although no studies were identified that directly address the experiences of immigrant parents' involvement related to addressing reading difficulties, several studies have analyzed how specific immigrant groups support their children's reading skills. For example, Miano's (2011) 3-year ethnographic study demonstrated how Mexican immigrant mothers in America

build literacy networks to enhance their children's reading skills through daily life activities. These activities include reading bills, writing addresses, identifying landmarks and signs, reading books in native languages to parents and siblings, and even helping parents in their own English reading and writing assignments for the parents' English learning classes. Miano (2011) further reported that although some parents were non-print literate, all parents encouraged their children to read the books sent home from their child's school.

Reese and Gallimore's (2000) used a qualitative research design to explore how cultural models shape the literacy practices of immigrant Latino parents. Cultural models can be described as our general taken-for-granted assumptions about values, rules of interactions, and activities that are influenced by our cultural practices, which often remain invisible until they are observed within a society with a significantly different cultural model. Reese and Gallimore (2000) argue that cultural models can predict home-school discrepancies between literacy practices but are also adaptable and can change gradually in new environments. Reese and Gallimore (2000) analyzed data from an ethnographic study with 10 Spanish-speaking families and a case study of 29 families from a larger survey sample with 121 immigrant Spanish-speaking families to explore the families' literacy beliefs and practices. They found that due to their experiences in their native society, immigrant Latino parents mostly viewed literacy as a skill that should be learned formally with repeated practice in a school setting. Thus, often children's early literacy explorations were not regarded as significant for literacy development. For example, one kindergarten student in the study exclaimed upon returning from school "I have another book!"; however, due to a lack of response from her mother, she did not take out the book or engage with it. Nonetheless, after immigrating to America in search of a better life for their families, many parents aspired to play a more active role in their children's education

than they had experienced from their own parents. As stated earlier, cultural models of literacy can be adapted, and many parents were willing to modify their views after their immigration. For example, although reading aloud was not initially a part of immigrant Latino parents' literacy practices, upon suggestions from teachers they began to integrate it in the beliefs and practices that formed their cultural model.

Similarly, Zhang and Bano (2010) conducted a qualitative study in Ontario, Canada utilizing semi-structured interviews and focus groups to identify the literacy practices of 12 Chinese and Pakistani families. Results revealed that both Chinese and Pakistani families incorporated their specific cultural traditions into literacy practices at home and often utilized religious texts and media technology to do so. For example, Pakistani parents emphasized reading the Quran as an important family literacy practice, as well as reading stories related to Islamic teachings to develop their children's character. Moreover, parents used technology, such as online story-telling sites as a key practice to enhance their child's understanding of their native language, culture, and history. Many educational websites have now started offering digital storybooks that are available in multiple formats such as audio and video, which have been found to improve immigrant children's receptive and expressive vocabulary and can be read independently without adult assistance (Verhallen & Bus, 2010). These technology-based tools can greatly help immigrant parents establish literacy practices that are congruent with their cultural values and traditions, despite limited English reading and speaking ability.

Nevertheless, most parents in Zhang and Bano's (2010) study shared that they knew very little about what was being taught in their child's school or how it was being learned and expressed a desire in learning how to better facilitate literacy learning. Unfortunately, parents often felt intimidated to communicate with Canadian teachers, which Zhang and Bano (2010)

argue is not necessarily a result of Canadian teachers' actions, rather they say it may be due to the privileged role of teachers in Chinese and Pakistani cultures. Parents reported that they would like to learn about culturally appropriate ways to communicate with Canadian teachers.

These findings clearly demonstrate that immigrant parents' culture plays a significant role in shaping their literacy beliefs and practices. Moreover, these beliefs can be adjusted to adhere to current best-practices in literacy instruction while still honoring the significance that cultural beliefs play in immigrant families, such as through encouraging reading of texts that align with a family's cultural values (e.g., cultural digital storybooks). Nonetheless, there is a need to explore how these literacy practices and beliefs are impacted when their child faces a reading difficulty and needs additional reading support.

Need for Current Study

Based on this literature review, it is evident that parents can positively support children who are facing reading difficulties and collaborate with school personnel to help them develop literacy skills (Senechal & Young, 2008; McConnell & Kubina, 2016). Unfortunately, parental involvement is unequally distributed amongst parents with an immigrant status as their efforts are often unacknowledged and they are often undervalued by school personnel (Antony-Newman, 2019; Turney & Kao, 2009). Moreover, they also face numerous unique barriers to involvement such as language barriers, a mismatch between communication expectations, unfamiliarity with the school system, inflexible work schedules, low income, lack of social network, and being viewed as less competent (Antony-Newman, 2019). Additional research in immigrant parental involvement will help revise and update current models of parental involvement (i.e., Epstein's Parental Involvement Framework) to be inclusive of this population, since researchers have critiqued these models for failing to consider the challenges, perceptions,

and practices of immigrant parents (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013; Bower & Griffin, 2011). As

immigration is rapidly changing the demographics of schools worldwide and will continue to do

so in the near future, understanding immigrant parents' experiences in school involvement in a

timely manner is critical to positively impact the learning experiences of immigrant children,

particularly those who are facing difficulties in reading and are at-risk for poorer educational

outcomes. Therefore, the present exploration of the experiences of immigrant parents who are

partnering with school personnel to support a reading difficulty will provide valuable insights on

forming inclusive partnership policies and practices that increase parental involvement of

immigrant parents and consequently, enhance the literacy acquisition of struggling immigrant

readers. Furthermore, this study aims to give voice to the immigrant parent population to enable

researchers and educational professionals to understand how to access and implement the

knowledge and resources that immigrant parents have to offer. Moreover, this study builds on

and contributes to the understanding of the experiences of immigrant parents in the Canadian

educational context, since much of the research in the scholarly literature is based on the

American educational context (Antony-Newman, 2019).

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I will identify the interpretive framework within which this study is embedded and outline my ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological perspectives. Thereafter, I will present a rationale for the qualitative research method employed in this study and present an outline of the complete research process through a discussion of the (a) participant recruitment, (b) data collection, (c) ethical considerations and (c) data analysis procedures and tools. I will conclude this chapter by discussing the efforts that were taken to enhance the validity and rigor of the study.

Interpretive Framework

Interpretive frameworks, also referred to as research paradigms, are beliefs or theoretical orientations held by researchers that guide all aspects of their research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These interpretive frameworks can be viewed as "the lens through which we see the world around us" (Davies & Fisher, 2018, p. 21). Moreover, interpretive frameworks influence the philosophical assumptions of researchers, which include their beliefs in ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Before orienting and identifying the philosophical assumptions (i.e., ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology) and their connection to the adopted interpretive framework of this study, I will briefly describe each concept and the significance they hold for researchers. Ontology is the study of the nature of being and reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Researchers' beliefs on the nature of existing and what constitutes reality greatly influence their understanding of a research problem, its impact and significance, and the approach taken to address it (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Epistemology refers to the study of knowledge, which includes the limits and possibilities of knowledge, how knowledge is constructed, and how claims of knowledge can be supported

(Creswell & Poth, 2018; Rawnsley, 1998). A thorough understanding of a researcher's epistemology can aid in understanding the knowledge that is generated in the research study and how those claims of knowledge are justified as well. Moreover, axiology refers to the understanding that research is value laden by nature and incorporates the researchers' values, biases, perspectives, and views (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is essential for researchers to understand the implications of these aspects on the research study. Researchers, therefore, often identify their positionality in the research contexts and settings to either make apparent and separate their personal voice and beliefs from those of their participants or to make connections and conclusions based on their own subjective understandings constructed by their personal experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Finally, methodology refers to the process of research in a study, also referred to as the research design, which details the procedures for participant recruitment, data collection, and data analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). A clear understanding of methodologies will enable researchers to select the most appropriate research design for a specific research question to effectively address the research problem and contribute to the solution. As stated earlier, a researcher's ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological beliefs are influenced by the interpretive framework selected for the study; therefore, within the following discussion of the interpretive framework which this study adopts, I will also outline the related ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological perspectives.

Social Constructivist Lens

This study is situated within the lens of a social constructivist interpretive framework. Social constructivism is a theoretical framework in which knowledge and understanding are constructed through the lived experiences and socially constructed realities of individuals

(Creswell & Poth, 2018). A key characteristic of social constructivism is that the interaction of language, experiences, historical background, and cultural norms form the basis of the lived experiences from which understandings of a phenomenon or research question are obtained (Burr, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, to truly understand the experiences of immigrant parent participants in this study, I must explore the influences that cultural norms, social interactions, historical backgrounds, and personal beliefs have on their individual and varied realities. Moreover, meanings derived from a social constructivist lens are subjective, varied, and relativistic (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). These meanings are negotiated socially by the interactions of the researcher and participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The following section outlines the philosophical assumptions that align with the social constructivist framework.

Ontological Belief

Constructivist approaches adopt the view that realities are subjectively created by the experiences, cultural norms, and historical background of individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Davies & Fisher, 2018). The belief of a single, objective reality is completely rejected. In fact, constructivists hold the view that multiple realities can exist simultaneously (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Epistemological Belief

Knowledge is collaboratively co-created through dialogue and interaction between the researcher and research participants (Davies & Fisher, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The knowledge constructed is shaped by both parties' subjective realities of their personal experiences and interactions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thus, the knowledge created is nuanced and complex and often does not fit into narrow and specific categories. It is critical to remember that in constructivism, the researcher is intertwined in the knowledge construction process.

Therefore, I recognize that my interactions with my participants played an important role in the knowledge constructed and findings reported in the current study.

Axiological Belief

Values and personal beliefs are a major component of meaning making in social constructionism. Values of research participants are appreciated and explored to construct meaning and understanding (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, researchers who frame their study within a social constructivist lens acknowledge that their personal values and biases are present throughout the study as well; therefore, they define their role or positionality in the research context (Berger, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This occurs in a manner that honors the participants and the sites in which the research is conducted (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Methodological Belief

An inductive analysis approach is used to ensure that the meaning extracted is from the data collected rather than from widely held, preconceived beliefs and assumptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, methods of data collection often include interviews and participant observations, which enable researchers to co-create the knowledge with participants in relation to their personal experiences and interactions. In the following section, I will provide a rationale for and describe the specific research design that was adopted for this study.

Research Method

Research Design

Ethnography is a qualitative research design in which researchers explore and analyze the shared values, behaviors, experiences and beliefs of a culture-sharing group (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Culture in ethnographic studies is a very broad term that incorporates "everything having to do with human behaviour and belief" (LeCompte et al.,

1993, p. 5), and may include shared language, occupations, rituals, interactions, and communication styles (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Ethnographies are a useful method for understanding issues related to a specific culture-sharing group, since they enable researchers to immerse themselves in the setting of the culture-sharing group and analyze meanings of behaviors, language, and interactions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although most ethnographies require researchers to spend an extensive amount of time in the field with participants, a more specialized type of ethnographic research has been developed to collect intensive data specifically concentrated on a particular issue within a defined time frame (Cruz & Higginbottom, 2013; Knoblauch, 2005). This type of ethnographic research is known as focused ethnography.

Focused Ethnography

Focused ethnographies differ from traditional ethnographies in that they do not typically require field visits (Roper & Shapira, 2000; Wall 2014). Since the purpose of a focused ethnography is to understand a specific issue in a culture-sharing group, intensive data collection methods are used, such as audio-recorded and video-recorded interviews, to analyze the research issue (Higginbottom et al., 2013; Knoblauch, 2005; Wall, 2014). Furthermore, focused ethnographies allow researchers to investigate shared patterns of behaviors in groups or subcultures that are highly fragmented rather than a homogenous culture that shares a specific setting (Knoblauch, 2005). Participants in focused ethnographies may not know one another but are categorized in culture-sharing groups due to similar experiences and interactions (Mayan, 2009). Thus, it is an appropriate method for understanding the shared experiences of immigrant parents in the current study. Although immigrant parents in our participant sample share various experiences such as recently immigrating to Canada, speaking a first language other than

English, and supporting a child's reading difficulty in the education system of an unfamiliar country, the members are highly diverse and fragmented across various locations in Canada. Moreover, the objective of the study is to examine one particular issue within the culture-sharing group, which is the collaborative efforts with school personnel to support a child's reading difficulty, rather than to explore various aspects of the culture. Therefore, focused ethnography is an effective design to target the shared patterns of behaviors in this population related to this specific issue (i.e., supporting a child's reading difficulty). Finally, Mayan (2009) asserts that focused ethnographies are effective for studies with a specific research problem that must be explored in a particular context among a small group of people to construct understanding and contribute to solving the distinct problem. This study meets all of these elements, since it aims to answer a specific research problem that focuses on understanding the collaborative experiences of immigrant parents who are trying to support a child's reading difficulty within the Canadian educational context.

Role of the Researcher

Within the constructivist framework, researchers cannot claim to be completely objective in their study since the data that are constructed and their interpretations of it are influenced by their privilege, personal experiences, and previous interactions (Krane & Baird, 2005). For this reason, I openly discuss my positionality in relation to factors, such as race, religion, immigration status and education to clarify the impact that they may have on the interpretation and construction of the data within this study. As a first-generation immigrant, person of color and visible Muslim who wears a headscarf, I believe that my racial, religious, and immigrant status may enable me to identify as an insider with many participants in the immigrant group. I have witnessed my own immigrant parents try to navigate in an unfamiliar school system and try

to support their children to succeed academically. Since studies suggest that participants share most openly with researchers who share similar cultural and social characteristics as them, being a bicultural researcher may have been advantageous (Adamson & Donovan, 2002; Liamputtong, 2008). However, due to the fact that I spent most of my life growing up in Canada and the fact that my fluency in speaking the English language is similar to native speakers, I also anticipated that some participants may be hesitant to accept me as a true immigrant. Thus, this negotiation of insider versus outsider was uniquely conducted with each participant. Moreover, Krane and Baird (2005) assert that it is also critical for researchers to analyze their privilege, as it may impact the voice of their participants. One of the most critical elements of ethnographic design is giving voice to groups who are marginalized. Due to my professional experiences as an elementary school teacher and educational background as a graduate student, I recognized that I may possibly be perceived as a highly privileged individual by some participants. Thus, to encourage my participants to share their perspectives freely and amplify their voice during the interviews, I remained humble, listened attentively, refrained from making judgmental comments, and did not boast or discuss my professional or educational experiences.

Participant Recruitment

Participant Criteria

Criterion based purposeful sampling was used to recruit sample participants for this study to most effectively understand the complexities of the research problem. Criterion based purposeful sampling enables the researcher to select members from the culture-sharing group that would best inform understanding of the research problem and is a valuable sampling strategy often used in ethnographic studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participants selected for the study had to meet the following inclusion criteria: (a) speak a first language other than English, (b)

have immigrated to Canada within the last 10 years, (c) be 18 years of age or older, (d) have a typically developing child identified with a reading difficulty, (e) have access to a computer and internet connection, and (f) be comfortable conversing in English. Statistic Canada defines very recent immigrants as those who have resided in Canada for 5 years or less and recent immigrants as those who have resided in Canada between 5 and 10 years (Zietsma, 2007). Thus, to understand the experiences of all parents who are identified as recent and very recent immigrants, we developed the criteria to include all participants who lived in Canada for 10 years or less. The exclusion criteria consisted of parents of children with co-occurring neurodevelopmental conditions (i.e., autism, down syndrome, cerebral palsy, etc.), since the analysis of the interactions of reading difficulties and neurological disorders is outside the scope of the study. Prior to inclusion in the study, all parents were asked to confirm that they were eligible to participate based on these criteria.

Recruitment Procedures

Approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board (REB) was sought to incorporate the phased recruitment procedures for the study. The first phase of the study consisted of online recruitment on Facebook. An approved recruitment poster was posted on my Facebook page, as well as on numerous Canadian immigrant Facebook groups. Due to marginal responses, the second phase of the recruitment plan was implemented. Permission was sought from thirty-five independent schools to email the study recruitment poster to students' families. Of these thirty-five schools, six schools responded to the request. Two schools emailed the recruitment poster to all students' families. One school posted the recruitment poster on their main bulletin board. Two schools responded that they would request permission from the school leaders, and despite follow up emails did not respond with an update. Lastly, one school

responded by saying that they had no immigrant families enrolled as of yet, but they agreed to send out the study information to any immigrant families who later enrolled at the school. The recruitment procedures began in September 2020 and continued until the end of December 2020. It is important to keep in mind that the recruitment procedures were occurring during the midst of the Novel Coronavirus pandemic and schools across Canada were just reopening under new social distancing and hygiene measures; therefore, it was to be expected that school stakeholders would have a very demanding workload during this re-opening (The Canadian Press, 2020). Moreover, a second wave of the pandemic was declared in various provinces in Canada and school stakeholders were trying to adjust and plan for the uncertainty related to schooling during a health-related pandemic (Lowrie, 2020). Permission was also sought from organizations that provide services for immigrant populations. However, despite numerous follow ups via email, no successful responses were received from these organizations. Lastly, word of mouth was used to spread information about the study in the immigrant community in formal gatherings and informal gatherings. Participants were asked to contact the researcher directly to express interest in participating. Thirteen interested parents sought more information regarding the study by contacting the researcher. Of these, five were not eligible to participate based on the inclusion criteria, two sought additional information but declined to participate, and six met the inclusion criteria and consented to participate. All participants were sent a study letter of information and if requested, had the letter of information read out to them telephonically and explained. Thereafter, all of their questions were answered to their satisfaction. Finally, participants were asked if they would still like to participate in the study. Those who approved, gave informed consent by reading the consent statement which was audio recorded on a stand-alone device prior to their interview.

Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent

This research study was reviewed and approved by the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board. Since the recruitment poster was posted on various Facebook pages, it was possible for family members and acquaintances to express interest in participating. To ensure that there was no undue pressure to participate on any individual, numerous ethical considerations were taken. The study poster was posted publicly on the Facebook pages, and no individual person was asked to participate personally. Furthermore, if after viewing the poster, family members and acquaintances chose to participate, they were asked to follow all of the protocol required for participants who do not have a pre-existing relationship with the researcher. They were informed of the voluntary nature of their participation and that they can revoke consent at any time during the study (up to 2 weeks after data collection). They were also notified that any decision they make regarding the study will not affect their relationship with the researcher. Lastly, they were provided with the contact information of the research study supervisors and were informed that they can contact them with any concerns if needed as well. Furthermore, all of their questions were answered to their satisfaction. After reading the letter of information, fully understanding the study, having their concerns and questions addressed, and giving their voluntary consent, they were allowed to participate in the study.

Verbal consent was obtained, and audio recorded for participation in the study by the research participants. Prior to recording the verbal consent, a letter of information was emailed to the participants. Some participants were hesitant to read the letter due to unfamiliarity with the English language and requested to have the letter of information read out to them. Thus, they were contacted by phone and had the letter of information read out and explained in detail. I

consistently checked for understanding and ensured that all of the participants' questions were sufficiently answered. Once the letter was explained, participants were asked if they would like to participate in the research. Those who accepted were asked to read a verbal consent statement to participate in the interview. This statement was audio recorded on a stand-alone recording device as proof of informed consent. Moreover, participants were notified that they can email the researcher or supervisors to clarify any concerns or ask additional questions regarding the study if they feel the need to.

Before the interviews, participants were made aware of their right to choose which questions to answer and that their participation was completely voluntary. Moreover, they were notified of their right to revoke consent during the interview, as well as up to 2 weeks after the interview was conducted.

Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality on Facebook, participants were requested to either private message or email the researcher directly if they were interested in participating. If any public comments were made under the Facebook recruitment poster, the individuals were directed to privately message or email for further clarification and no response to the question was given in the public comments section.

Participants were notified that all of their private, identifying information will remain strictly confidential. All names were changed to pseudonyms, which were created under collaboration with each participant. The pseudonyms were used in the written interview transcripts, data analysis procedures, and thesis write-up. The master list that links participant names with pseudonyms, verbal consent recordings, and audio recording were stored in an encrypted file on a private password-protected computer. All digital data files will be deleted

from the computer after five years from the date of data collection. The data was accessible only

by the researcher and the research study supervisors.

Emotional Considerations

Since participation in this study involved retelling of past experiences, it was anticipated

that this retelling may trigger strong emotional feelings such as fear or embarrassment and

distressful responses such as frustration or worry. Thus, for participants who displayed signs of

emotional distress, I prepared to offer them a break from the interview session if needed.

Furthermore, they were given the option to reschedule the interview at a different date. Lastly, if

requested, the phone number to the Immigration and Settlement Cross-Cultural Counselling and

Outreach Program was provided for additional support, which is available for Canadian

immigrants at no cost. Finally, it was also anticipated that power imbalance concerns may result

in negative emotional outcomes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This concern was addressed by

ensuring that leading questions were avoided during the interview, by speaking respectfully at all

times with each participant, and by withholding personal impressions of what was observed or

discussed (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Collection Procedure

Interviews are an effective data collection tool to co-construct knowledge with

participants in ethnographic studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). They are congruent with the social

constructivist paradigm and enable the collection of powerful data which provides an in-depth

understanding of the interviewee's perspectives and lived experiences, as well as the meanings

ascribed to them (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018).Thus, the data in this study was

collected using in-depth, semi-structured interviews that were guided by open ended questions

structured around the issues related to collaborating with school personnel to support a child's

reading difficulty. For this study, an interview protocol was created to guide the conversation and ensure that the multiple aspects of the participants' lived experiences that may contribute to their individual realities were discussed. An online interview method was selected due to the uncertainties of the Coronavirus pandemic and the changing nature of social distancing measures. Video interviews were conducted online on the Zoom application and the interviews were scheduled from September 2020 to the end of December 2020. All interviews were audio-recorded on a stand-alone device for further transcription and analysis.

Data Analysis Procedure

Interview data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phase thematic analysis. This form of thematic analysis is congruent with ethnographic research design and also compatible with the social constructivist paradigm (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although Roper and Shapira (2000) have also developed an ethnographic research analysis process which includes coding, identifying patterns, writing memos, and generalizing findings into major themes, Braun and Clarkes' (2006) approach was selected because their analysis strategy organizes these concepts into a step-by-step procedure which can be followed to reach similar conclusions. Therefore, since both approaches include the process of coding, searching for patterns, writing memos or notes, and identifying major themes from the participant interviews, the technique with the clearer delineation of steps was selected.

An inductive thematic analysis approach was used to ensure that meanings extracted were solely from the experiences of the participants and not shaped by my own presumptions or from findings of pre-existing theoretical frameworks. Moreover, the themes identified in this study were at the latent or interpretative level. This means that the analysis of the themes in this study went beyond analyzing the explicit meaning of the text. Rather the interpretation included an

analysis of the underlying assumptions and ideas that were represented within the text (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Six steps were taken to conduct the data analysis in this study.

Phase 1: Transcription and Familiarizing Self with Data

Braun and Clarke (2006) assert that a verbatim written transcript, which includes nonverbal utterances can help retain the original nature of the conversation. Thus, in the first phase of the analysis, I transcribed all of the interview data verbatim and made sure to include nonverbal utterances such as laughs or coughs. Moreover, all of the names were replaced with pseudonyms and additional identifying information, such as school names, were also removed.

The act of transcribing interview data, although very laborious, is viewed by scholars as a key phase of the data analysis as it enables researchers to familiarize themselves with the data set (Bird, 2005; Riessman, 1993). After transcription, I conducted repeated readings of the transcripts and started taking preliminary notes in the margins to begin to identify initial codes and patterns. Braun and Clarke (2006) stress that "this phase provides the bedrock for the rest of the analysis" (p. 87) and highlight the importance of this note-taking method as a catalyst for the development and refinement of the codes and themes that will be later defined and presented in the study write-up.

Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes

After familiarizing myself with the data, I began to develop and refine codes within the data sets. Codes are segments of the data that seem interesting to the analyst that relate to the research topic or phenomenon being studied and provide meaningful information that can be utilized in further analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Boyatzis, 1998). These codes help organize the data into meaningful groups that can later be merged to create themes, which are larger, more interpretive units of analysis (Tucket, 2005). The coding for all interview transcripts was

conducted on Microsoft Word. I thoroughly read each line of the transcripts to highlight and label segments of the text with relevant codes using the Track Changes Comments option. After all the interviews were coded, a cross-analysis of the interviews enabled me to further refine the codes. A codebook was constructed with a table of the codes, their description, and textual examples from the interviews. Finally, all codes were then compiled on a separate section of the Word Document to enable amalgamation for the identification of initial themes.

Phase 3: Identifying Themes

After creating and collecting the codes from all of the interview transcripts, Braun & Clarke (2006) recommend sorting the codes into potential themes. This phase enables the researcher to begin interpreting the data by developing central themes and is the phase in which arguments related to the research question begin to form (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The creation of a preliminary visual thematic map can aid researchers in sorting the relevant codes into thematic groups and subgroups and establishing relationships among the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Using the Microsoft Word document created in phase 2 of the analysis that comprised of the list of codes identified, I began to sort the codes into thematic groups and subgroups in a table format within the document. Thereafter, I identified relationships among the themes by creating an initial thematic map by utilizing the Shapes option on Microsoft Word in a separate document.

Phase 4: Reviewing Themes

The next phase of the analysis is reviewing the themes for (a) meaningful coherence and (b) clear distinctions between themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this phase, I reread all of the codes that were sorted within each theme to establish coherence and ensure that they fit meaningfully together. Moreover, I ensured that each theme was distinct and clearly related to

the purpose of the investigation. In this step, themes that were similar were merged and renamed, newer themes and sub-themes were developed upon additional review, and some themes were discarded due to incoherence. The thematic map was then updated to include these revisions. Finally, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that researchers must review the thematic map to ensure that it accurately reflects the meanings in the entire data set. Therefore, I re-read all of the original transcripts, codes, and themes to ensure that the updated thematic map accurately represents the complete data set.

Phase 5: Defining Themes

After the creation of the improved thematic map, researchers must clearly define each theme and translate the findings of the codes into a vivid "story that each theme tells" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). This is the phase of the research in which interpretation of the data's meaning is conducted extensively. In this phase, I described each individual theme, as well as sub-themes, to clarify the aspects that make the theme distinct and essential. I began to incorporate vivid and thick descriptions from the text to clarify the meanings of each theme and outline how the participants' experiences relate to each theme.

Phase 6: Coherent Presentation of Themes in Write-Up

The final phase of the analysis consists of incorporating the developed thematic findings into a research study write-up. This write-up should pair the themes with evidence from thick, vivid examples from the data extracts in a narrative format to clearly share the findings and form an argument in response to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The application of this phase is evident in the upcoming Results and Discussion chapters.

Ensuring Rigor

Rigor within this study was ensured by following Creswell and Poth's (2018) validation suggestion of selecting strategies based on the researcher's lens, the participant's lens, and the reviewer's lens.

Researcher's Lens Strategy: Clarifying Researcher Bias and Engaging in Reflexivity

Validation strategies that are within the researcher's lens enable the researcher to check the accuracy of the data collected (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher's lens strategy utilized in this study was clarifying researcher bias and engaging in reflexivity. For this strategy, the researcher includes discussions of connections that emerge in the study to their own past experiences and perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This is done by disclosing personal biases, values, and experiences that the researcher brings to the study to enable readers to understand the researchers position and role throughout the investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Moreover, Cruz and Higginbottom (2013) also argue that reflexivity is a significant dimension of ethnography. Therefore, I kept notes of and acknowledged my views, assumptions, and experiences throughout the research process and explicitly embedded these reflexive thoughts in the study write-up to further enhance transparency and improve the study's validity.

Participant's Lens Strategy: Member Checking

Validation strategies that are based on the participant's lens allow the participants to play an important role in ensuring the credibility of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this lens, member checking was conducted following data analysis. After data analysis, participants were emailed a summary of the preliminary findings, along with their interview transcript and asked to provide their personal opinion on the credibility of the findings that emerged. Participants were given a chance to provide clarification and make additional suggestions on the

findings. This action was taken to analyze and incorporate their responses to revise the study's

findings for enhanced accuracy. This method enables researchers to check whether the analysis

of the themes is truly in alignment with the participants' experiences (Curtin & Fossey, 2007).

Reviewer's Lens Strategy: Debriefing of the Data and Research Process

The reviewers lens enables the researcher to seek out an external check by "someone who

is familiar with the research and phenomenon explored" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 129) to

verify the research process and findings. This strategy enables a peer debriefer to ensure

reliability within the study is maintained by asking difficult questions, ensuring honesty in all

aspects of the study, and providing guidance to the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this

strategy, routine peer debriefing sessions were conducted with the study supervisors and meeting

notes were consistently taken to follow up and adjust the study approach based on the peer

debriefer's advice.

Chapter 4: Results

The objective of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of immigrant parents'

experiences in supporting a child's reading difficulty through detailed, semi-structured

interviews. In this chapter, I will first provide a brief introduction of each participant and then

discuss the themes that emerged from the data analysis. Two major themes were identified from

the data: *(a) Factors that influence level of immigrant parental involvement* and *(b) Immigrant*

parents' supportive literacy practices.

Portrait of Participants

Amina

Amina is the mother of four children who were all born in the United Arab Emirates

(UAE). Her native language is Arabic, and she speaks English as a second language. Amina

suspected that her youngest daughter, Sara, has a reading difficulty. At the time of the interview,

Sara had just started grade 1. Amina immigrated to Ontario, Canada from the UAE in 2019 with

her youngest two children to unite with her husband and older two children who had immigrated

to Canada one year earlier in 2018. In the UAE, Amina's oldest three children attended a

renowned private school with a curriculum that focused on providing exceptional literacy and

numeracy instruction. Amina herself was working as a Head of Inclusion in UAE schools.

However, in 2018 when her youngest child Sara was about to start school, Amina lost her job

and had to accept a lower paying job in the private sector. She then had to enroll her daughter in

a less renowned school with lower fees to make ends meet. During this year, Amina was very

busy working full time and parenting alone in the UAE, so she found it difficult to focus on

Sara's learning. After immigrating to Canada, Amina began to notice that Sara was still

struggling with recognizing and sounding out letters. She began to compare Sara's progress to

that of her older three children and noticed that Sara was struggling much more than any of her other children had with learning to read.

Wafa

Wafa is the mother of four children. Her first language is Arabic, and she speaks English as a second language. Wafa immigrated to Ontario, Canada with her husband and three children 10 years ago from Malaysia where her family had lived for 3 years. Before relocating to Malaysia, Wafa's family lived in Egypt which she identifies as her country of origin. Upon immigration to Canada, Wafa's family relocated to Alberta, Canada and has been there for 6 years up to the time of the interview. Her youngest daughter, Camila, who was born in Canada struggled with a reading difficulty. At the time of the interview, Camila was in grade 3. Wafa had enrolled Camila in various types of schools to help best meet her needs such as French immersion, religious private school, Arabic Bilingual school, and at the time of the interview, Camila was attending a neighborhood public school. Wafa's oldest child also had a reading difficulty but upon further investigation was diagnosed with ADHD, which Wafa states impacted his reading skills. Her other two children did not have any problems with learning to read in school. Therefore, when Wafa was informed by the teacher that Camila was having difficulty reading, she thought perhaps she might have ADHD like her brother, but after clinical testing, she was not diagnosed with ADHD or any learning disabilities.

Mariam

Mariam lives with her husband and five children in Alberta, Canada. Her native language is Arabic, and she speaks English as a second language. She has resided in Canada for 10 years and immigrated to Canada from Lebanon after her sister sponsored her parents and her siblings. After her immigration, Mariam completed some high school courses here in Canada. When she

got married, she also sponsored her husband to Canada as well. All of her children were born in Canada. Mariam's second oldest child, Hannah, was identified with a reading difficulty. At the time of the interview, Hannah was in grade 3. Mariam was notified of Hannah's reading difficulty by her teacher and stated that she also noticed that Hannah would often skip words when trying to read. Mariam discussed that she would consistently check in on Hannah's reading level with her teachers to evaluate her progress.

Adam and Sophia

Sophia was the interested participant who met inclusion criteria for this study. However, Sophia speaks very little English and required her husband, Adam, to translate for her throughout the entire interview. During the interview, Adam also provided his perspective for some of the questions asked. Because both parents had consented to participate in the study and often gave joint answers, it was challenging to separate the experience of one from the other. Thus, their joint experience as parents was analyzed in the study.

Adam and Sophia live with their three children in Alberta, Canada. Their native language is Farsi, and English is their second language. Adam immigrated to Canada from Afghanistan in 2005 and after getting married, sponsored Sophia to immigrate with their oldest child in 2015. Their oldest child, who was the only one attending school at the time of the interview, had a reading difficulty which was identified by his teacher. They stated that their child's teacher had reached out to them to discuss concerns related to his reading ability.

Noor

Noor immigrated to Alberta, Canada with her husband and two children from Egypt in 2020. Her family speaks Arabic mainly at home. At the time of the interview, her family had only been in Canada for 5 months. Noor stated that both of her children were having reading

difficulties upon starting school in Canada. At the time of the interview her oldest son, Zayd, was in grade 5 and her younger daughter, Shahin, was in grade 1. In Egypt, both Zayd and Shahin attended a German school and learned all of the curriculum in the German language. Thus, upon immigrating to Canada, the children were learning English as a third language and had minimal prior exposure to both spoken and written English. Both children's teachers met with Noor prior to sending out the academic year's first progress reports and notified her that the children were reading below the expected grade level.

Udhr

Udhr lives with her husband and three children in Ontario, Canada. She immigrated to Canada from India in 2014. All of her children were born in India and her family speaks mainly Urdu at home. She disliked the schooling system in her native country, so much so that she homeschooled her oldest child until grade 6 in India. She looked forward to immigrating to Canada and enrolling her children in a Canadian school because she believed that Canada's educational approach was more focused on an all-rounded development, rather than a strictly book-based approach. Udhr suspected that her youngest daughter, who was in grade 2 at the time of the interview, has a reading difficulty. Udhr acknowledged that all children grow and learn at a different pace; however, she felt her youngest child's progress was extremely lagging compared to her older two children. She stated that she felt it was way past normal when her daughter, who was now in grade 2, continued to demonstrate difficulty in reading tasks that she had been practicing since kindergarten such as sounding out and decoding small words. Moreover, she noticed that her daughter's reading ability was very inconsistent. For example, she would at times be able to read her home reading books; however, if asked to reread the same book, would have difficulty doing so. Two weeks prior to her interview, Udhr became so worried

regarding her daughter's lack of reading progress that she searched online for a free tool to detect reading disabilities such as dyslexia. Moreover, one year earlier she even volunteered at her daughter's school to get trained for the Strong Start to Reading Program that was offered to children who demonstrated reading difficulties. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person academic instruction switched to online learning the following year and her daughter was not able to receive the reading intervention that she had hoped she would.

Parent Name	Immigrated From	Time in Canada	Major Home Language	Number of Children	Child with Reading Difficulty	Child's Status in Canada
Amina (Mother)	UAE	1 year	Arabic	4	Youngest Child	Immigrant
Wafa (Mother)	Malaysia (for 3 years) and resided in Egypt before that	10 years	Arabic	4	Youngest Child	Born in Canada
Mariam (Mother)	Lebanon	10 years	Arabic	5	Second Oldest Child	Born in Canada
Adam and Sophia (Father and Mother)	Afghanistan	15 and 5 years, respectively	Farsi	3	Oldest Child	Immigrant
Noor (Mother)	Egypt	5 months	Arabic	2	Both Children	Immigrant
Udhr (Mother)	India	6 years	Urdu	3	Youngest Child	Immigrant

Table 1. Summary of Participant Profiles.

Themes

The two themes that emerged from the interviews were: *(a) Factors that influence level of immigrant parental involvement and (b) Immigrant parents' supportive literacy practices.* These themes will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections. The visual representations (Figure 2 and Figure 3) below will be referred to throughout the discussion of the themes.

1.1 School-related factors

- School personnel traits
- School personnel education
- School practices and policies
- Communication

1.2 Pre-migration experience with education systems

- Role change
- Parent-based system
- School-based system
- Perception of Canadian educational approach

Theme 1: Factors that influence immigrant parental involvement

1.3 Perceived personal barriers to Involvement

- Language
- Parent education
- Overwhelming collaboration expectation
- Unfamiliarity with the curriculum
- Child's resistance
- Time
- Transportation

1.4 Resources

- One-on-one support
- Specialized personnel
- Paper-based resources
- Technology-based resources

Figure 2. Visual representation of Theme 1: Factors that influence immigrant parental involvement

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        ┌──────────────┐                              ┌──────────────┐
        │  2.1 Daily   │                              │ 2.2 Family as│
        │  Practices   │                              │   support    │
        └──────────────┘                              └──────────────┘
```

- Daily reading
- Utilizing technology-based resources regularly
- Tutoring

Theme 2: Immigrant parents' supportive literacy practices

- Acquiring resources
- Supporting in daily practices

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        ┌──────────────┐                              ┌──────────────┐
        │ 2.3 Creating a│                             │ 2.4 Advocacy │
        │  climate for  │                             │              │
        │  enjoyable    │                             │              │
        │   reading     │                             │              │
        └──────────────┘                              └──────────────┘
```

- Purchasing books
- Finding novel technology-based resources
- Incorporating meaningful reading tasks
- Visiting the community library

Figure 3. Visual representation of Theme 2: Immigrant parents' supportive literacy practices

1. Factors that Influence Level of Immigrant Parental Involvement

Overall, the findings suggest that all parents' level and perception of involvement in Canadian schools was significantly influenced by four specific socio-cultural factors. These are: *(a) School-related factors, (b) Pre-migration experiences with education systems, (c) Perceived personal barriers to involvement, and (d) Resources.*

1.1 School-related Factors

Most of the parents identified and explained that multiple school-related factors, which are specific characteristics, interactions, and experiences in their child's school, impacted how involved they sensed they needed to be in their child's schooling. *The traits of school personnel* was a significant factor that influenced how welcome parents felt in collaborating with their child's teachers. Parents who identified *teachers as dismissive of their concerns* for their child often discussed participating in more home-based involvement that was less collaborative in nature because their expectations from the teachers were not met. Amina, for example, had notified her child's teachers about her concerns with Sara's reading progress. The teacher dismissed her concerns and said not to worry just yet. Based on these comments, Amina stated, "I feel that here they are not taking it that serious, you know?" which further led her to believe that literacy instruction in Canadian schools is suboptimal, particularly when instructing children with reading difficulties, which is highlighted in her statement, "I don't know what they do exactly there the whole day but...uh...they don't send books; they don't send resources."

Moreover, she felt that one of the reasons her concerns were dismissed was because her child was an immigrant who was just beginning to learn English. The following statement emphasized this sentiment:

> Teacher wasn't aware about reading difficulties. They think that at this early age, it's okay that the kid will be always an immigrant...they don't care, I don't know...uh...who struggles with the reading, maybe because English is not his first language or maybe because he's too young to read. So...the lack of awareness about the reading problems is a great issue here.

Similarly, Udhr was very concerned about her child's limited progress in reading and reached out to the teacher to discuss this. Her child's teacher also stated that they would adopt a wait-and-see approach and later in the term if a reading difficulty was suspected, they would think about ways to address it. Such dismissive approaches seemed to signify to the participants that the concern of the parent was unwarranted and often led to feelings of discontent. For example, Udhr identified school personnel's behaviour as "artificial" rather than occurring from a place of real concern. She continued to clarify her stance by stating that although teachers in Canada seem very polite, "it's just like they've learned to be like that with everybody. So, it's not something genuine that comes from within."

Nevertheless, *school personnel who were identified as responsive, cooperative, patient, empathetic, inclusive, and understanding of the child's needs and parent's cultures positively influenced parents' experiences with school involvement.* The following statement by Mariam demonstrates how a teachers' understanding and responsiveness for parents' concern can influence the parents' willingness to collaborate and communicate with the teacher:

Like she… like I never felt before like… because I used to ask every single day about Hannah, I never felt like she's bored from my questions. She used to explain a lot of things for me like about Hannah. Yeah, yeah. I never had a problem with the teacher.

Similarly, Noor added to this idea by discussing how not just teachers, but all school personnel's behavior impacts the involvement of parents:

Whenever I need anything to understand anything, I just reached the front office of the school. They were very cooperative, the lady working there is ready to share any info or discuss anything with me.

Some participants were very surprised with how knowledgeable and understanding the school personnel were of their specific cultural practices. For example, Noor was pleased to inform me that her children's public school provided students with a room in which they could complete their afternoon prayers. *However, other parents' experiences led them to believe that there was a critical need for school personnel to be more informed of how to interact and collaborate with immigrants from varied cultures.* Amina effectively summarized this sentiment in the following statement:

> I think that the teachers, they need more…uh…professional development. They need to know…uh…how to deal with the…uh…students from different backgrounds. They don't expect that this girl who came two months ago from a different background, that she can…I mean…uh…speak and interact with the teacher just like other native speakers. They should be…they should have much more knowledge of…because Canada is country of immigrants.

School-wide policies and practices also played a role in how welcome parents felt to be involved in their child's schooling. The parents were appreciative when they felt policies and practices are developed with the needs of diverse families in mind. For example, Noor identified how overjoyed she was when she realized that admission paperwork and procedures were very simple and easy to complete for her children:

> The school…the school system here actually, is one of the things that I'm happy with from day one. From the start with the school. The admission for my kids in the public school is very easy… was very easy. Everything was very easy. So, and they doing everything they can. So, it's one of the most rewarding experience here for us as a new immigrant in Canada.

Specific literacy-related school wide practices such as reading buddies or dedicated reading time also helped parents recognize the importance of reading and encouraged them to implement these practices into their home practice as well. Wafa identified how such initiative influenced the reading environment in her home:

 I like how the reading is…is…I think that it's really…uh…in a system of the school. It's…uh…since um young age that reading buddy or reading time or…um…reading log and so it…it…it became really a habit in my…with my kids because of the system that they support them to read, read, read every day. Uh...and really it became like…uh…we can't…we can't…there is no day can't go without reading. So, and this improved their…um uh…language really well. And they started writing stories and poetry and stuff like this so…uh…I appreciate the…uh…the system of encouraging reading and this will be…this is…to…to invest in this, it's really…uh…great.

Finally, many parents highlighted that *frequent and effective communication methods were critical for partnering with school personnel to support their child's literacy growth.* Many parents believed that more communication needed to occur between their child's teacher and themselves. This view was effectively summarized by Udhr when she said, "I think parents need to be partners in the education. Um… so there should be some sort of sharing of information…some sort of constant communication would help." Unfortunately, when teachers communicate less than parents expect, they begin to view teachers as less willing to partner with the parents to address the reading concerns collaboratively. Amina's experience with the teacher's communication methods led her to feel that "parents are not given that…that chance to get included in the school community. They just call you…uh…each…at the end of each semester or each three months, which is too little." Most parents identified face-to-face meetings

as a major communication method; however, because this method requires parents to take time out of their day and be physically present in the school, it was often conducted minimally during the school year. For example, when Wafa was asked how often she communicated with the teacher during the school year, she stated, "It's not too much. It's just maybe during the year, all the year maybe three times or something like this." If this method of communication was not combined with another method, parents perceived that the onus of initiating communication was on them rather than the teacher. While discussing Amina's experience with how teachers communicate children's progress, she said:

> Don't expect that to happen from a teacher here in public school. It's you who have to…I mean call and ask and send correspondences regularly…uh…to the teacher and ask about…uh…the…I mean your kids attainment at school and…and so on.

Nonetheless, many parents also indicated that their child's teacher did introduce them to multiple methods of communication, which were viewed as beneficial because parents could utilize the method that was most accessible to them. Mariam was very pleased with the multiple methods of communication offered by her child's teacher and stated "I used to talk a lot with the teacher…Every single test she does, I used to ask her [face-to-face]. And yeah, via…we used to use the ClassDojo. Yea, and sometime by emails." Udhr highlighted how she valued methods of communication in which she could receive information on her child's progress without the pressure to respond back to the teacher, such as newsletters or updates on online platforms such Twitter.

Noor, whose children had started attending school only 5 months prior to the interview, shared her experience through which she learned about the communication methods utilized by her children's teachers. She stated that in the beginning of the academic year, she had a question

for her daughter's teacher but did not know how to communicate with her. She, therefore, called the front office at the school and shared that she wanted to speak with the teacher. The office staff informed her that she could communicate with the teacher by writing in her daughter's agenda because it was checked by her teacher daily. Similarly, with her older son in Grade 5, she requested him to ask his teacher about how she could contact him if she had any questions or concerns. Regarding this unique experience, Noor stated:

> Maybe because I was new and they drop the idea that the… that the new parent doesn't know how to reach them. Because my kids is the only new kids in class. I don't know. Or maybe I have to reach out and tell them how to communicate, I don't know. But I have to reach out and know how to reach each of my children teachers.

All parents valued and appreciated interacting and communicating with teachers regarding the curriculum and their child's progress. However, some parents acknowledged that *specific methods of communication were difficult or overwhelming for them to use*. Adam and Sophia shared their experience with using emails as a main method of communication:

> And you know it's…sometimes it's really hard for me to even open my email address. Like believe me sometimes it's like about there is like 500 emails and I…[laughs] I didn't open it for a long time because I don't have time.

Noor mentioned that she favored communicating on the phone over writing in the agenda, because she could have her questions answered immediately, which she found more beneficial than waiting for a written response by the teacher in her child's agenda the following day. Nevertheless, all parents acknowledged that communication was key for remaining involved and updated on their child's schooling and that immigrant parents who may be unfamiliar with how

to approach and speak with teachers should be informed of how to appropriately do so within the Canadian educational context. This concern was clearly highlighted by Wafa when she said:

> I see many, many immigrants they don't really speak out or ask for help or because they don't really know their rights or as they are new or maybe the struggle of the language, so they don't really…um… know what to do or ask for what they suppose… what… what is the help they need. Um… I see… I see that this is really important to… to ask for help or…um… reach out to the principal, teachers, or any resources for the new immigrants.

1.2 Pre-migration Experiences with Education Systems

Parents' pre-migration experiences with education systems also influenced their perceptions of involvement in providing support for their child's reading development within the Canadian context. Pre-migration experiences consist of the unique experiences that each parent had within the schooling systems of their previous country of residence. All parents reported experiencing a significant *role change in the level of involvement* expected in Canada compared to their prior country of residence. Two diverse types of prior educational approaches were identified by the parents: (a) *Parent-based system,* which is a system of education in which parental involvement is extensive and often overwhelming because parents are required to spend numerous hours working with their child to help them succeed in school by learning the curriculum, studying for exams, or completing assignments and (b) *School-based system,* which can be described as an approach in which parents' involvement was not expected and their role in their child's education was minimal. Half of the parent participants in the current study discussed their pre-migration experiences within a Parent-based system, while the other half shared their experiences in the School-based system.

When discussing the Parent-based system, Wafa said that parents are expected to sit with their children from the moment they arrive from the school and help them with schoolwork until they go to bed. Some of the assignments and projects assigned are not age appropriate and parents have no choice but to complete their children's project for them. Wafa described this system as extremely overwhelming because "it's like you are in the school, not…not they are". Noor similarly shared that she was accountable for much of her children's learning. Regarding her experience, she said, "I used to be more involved back in Egypt, uh in their homework and in their… and in their study. And if they have a exam, I have to make sure that they understand what they have. Actually, it was my responsibility." Udhr also highlighted that parents in India spent 2-3 hours daily helping their children with schoolwork because "parents have a lot of pressure to help their kids perform well".

Regarding the involvement expectations in Canada, Noor stated that it is "minimum" and Udhr similarly believed that it was "not that much". Due to their pre-migration cultural experiences, these parents looked forward to sharing more of the responsibility with the teachers. Moreover, some parents were pleased that children were held responsible for their learning, which was articulated by Noor when she said, "So, it's not stressful for me and I think they… that gives them a little bit of self-esteem. That they can do everything by themselves and they can be responsible for what they have to do." However, parents from such a system also were willing to work collaboratively with the teachers if needed and were often pleased by the inclusive and respectful teaching practices in Canadian schools. Udhr's statement highlighted how *parents may compare the practices of Canadian schools to those of their prior country*:

I like the fact that that the teachers…um…pay a lot of attention to never pointing

out…um…negative things about the students in front of other students, which was a big…um… difference from my own experience. Um…and also they…they try hard to be inclusive. They might not be able to, because…um…the person who is not in that…who's in a privileged position, it's kind of difficult for them to understand how the other perceives something.

The final statement demonstrates the need for teachers to effectively communicate with parents and learn about their pre-migration experiences to truly be inclusive in their collaborative interactions as opposed to just appearing inclusive.

The second type of pre-migration experience discussed was a School-based system. The reasons for cultures adopting such an approach differed greatly. For example, Amina shared that her children attended an international private school with high tuition fees that was renowned for its academic excellence. Thus, because she was paying the school, she was not expected to complete any learning activities with her children after school. She stated that, "The school does everything. They don't have homework. They got [grades] in the 90s." Adam and Sophia also discussed that in Afghanistan, they were not expected to complete any schoolwork at home. The school personnel were responsible for teaching everything and did not expect parents to share any of the teaching responsibility. However, the reason for this was much different than Amina's. *Adam and Sophia shared that the illiteracy rate is so high in Afghanistan that many parents are not able to help their children* and school personnel knew this so they accepted that teachers must take full responsibility for their student's learning. This is highlighted in the following statement:

I would say probably 50…50 percent of the…the…the population, if one…one…one parent is like, one spouse is like you know illiterate, the other one is unilliterate you

know? So, it's…it's really hard a little bit over there, because they…they cannot

even…even check on the files or the…uh…studies or anything, because they don't,

even if they could…they could not read…And they accept…expect something from

the teachers to…to like, you know, mm…uh…teach the…the…the students because

they could not help them by themselves, right?

Secondly, Adam and Sophia discussed how they were eager to have their children in a

society which was much safer than their previous country. Regarding Canadian schools, they

said, "…the schooling system is really good in here because they…they don't have anything

to be worried about…uh…you know, the security and being secure like going to school

without having any…any…uh… problem."

Most parents from such a school system viewed the role of parents in Canada as

extremely involved. For example, Amina said her involvement role changed from "[one]

extreme to another extreme" and believed that the involvement expectation is very extensive

in Canada. Her prior experience also influenced her expectations of the teachers, which was

highlighted when she said, "I'm expecting much from this teacher to help my daughter" and

"teachers here are very spoiled when you go, they just complain of your kids." During the

interview, she would often compare her experience in Canada to that of her experience in her

previous country. Adam and Sophia also felt that the involvement expectation was very

demanding in Canada and stated, "I cannot like do all…all those stuffs you know. I need…I

need really help."

1.3 Perceived Personal Barriers to Involvement

Many parents identified *multiple barriers to their involvement, such as (a) language, (b) parent education, (c) overwhelming collaboration expectation, (d) child's resistance, (e) unfamiliarity with curriculum, (f) time and (g) transportation.*

Half of the parents identified that their *limited English-speaking abilities* made collaboration with schools more difficult for them. Wafa suggested that having someone who can help translate for families would be very beneficial for immigrant parents. Regarding the language difficulty, Mariam said, "So, when we came here, yeah, we face so many difficulties in… in talking. We know how to read. But we don't like ha… know how to talk. And we had an accent." In fact, she shared that she learned a lot of English from her children who were much more fluent than her. Adam and Sophia shared that their limited ability to speak and understand English was a barrier in helping their child as well:

Specially with the…with the…with those…uh…like specially with the…with the language and stuff because I didn't even know myself the language properly. Then how I could…I could help just…uh…help…help him or like you know teach him what to do. I mean, it's a little bit hard.

Most parents also felt that having *lower levels of education* was a barrier in collaborating and supporting their child's needs. Amina emphasized the importance of parental education when she said, "It's very, very tough here to…to be…uh…not illiterate but to have this low level of education. You can't support your kids." Adam and Sophia shared similar beliefs and said:

I would say the end of 2005 till now, I haven't even opened a book to study. Like it…it's been a long time, like even I lost a lot of vocabulary and a lot of like you know…uh…spelling and stuff like…For me, it's really hard to sometimes to understand like you know some of the words and you know, even some…some…some words that he

is learning or like he is getting…getting…getting it from the school. I mean I don't know the meaning and he is…he is explaining to me that what is the meaning of those.

Wafa took initiative to enhance her knowledge and skill level by attending ESL classes to be able to better support her children's education and communicate more effectively with her children's teachers. Mariam similarly suggested that parents should join a school to learn English or practice reading in English because they will face many problems if they are unable to read and speak it.

Some parents were very *overwhelmed with the expectation to help their child*. For example, Amina shared that she had to be intensively involved with her children's learning at home and said, "You don't just have to go and have look at your kids…what they…no, you have to sit by…next to them and do the work with them and explain." Because of this overwhelming collaboration expectation, Amina began to feel that too was much being expected of the parents and began to perceive her child's teachers as incompetent. Moreover, because Wafa had changed her daughter's school multiple times to find the appropriate support for her daughter's needs, she was able to compare parental involvement expectations in varied schools. Regarding her experience in private school, she said, "Uh…[teacher] copy some materials and give me links and then I…I do the job by myself. So, I am the…the…um…assistant teacher." However, when her daughter transferred to a public school, she said "I found it's… it's their job. I am not involved…uh…only maybe I support her. They…they send reading log and…and…uh…only follow up with them that she's reading every day or I can tell I remind her, 'Did you read today?'" Moreover, Wafa shared that when the teacher sent home a lot of educational materials to support her child with, it led to her feeling more overwhelmed because she felt it meant that she had to spend more time going over the materials and teaching them to her daughter.

Adam and Sophia mentioned their *child's resistance to completing learning tasks was a barrier to supporting him in the home*. They stated that their child would complete work that the teacher had directly asked him to complete, such as homework, but would make it difficult for them to support him in additional, supportive learning tasks. Regarding this struggle, they said:

> Like they're really hard for me…for me to like you know…uh…tell him to do something. And then at…in the…in the…in the school the teacher tell him something to do, he will do it definitely.

They suggested that teachers should mention additional tasks that they expect parents to do such as reading aloud to the child too so that the child is more willing to complete those tasks with the parents.

Adam and Sophia also stressed multiple times throughout their interview the importance of having the curriculum content which they were expected to cover with their child. Thus, *lack of familiarity with the curriculum* was another barrier that impacted parents' involvement in their child's schooling. They said receiving a curriculum book in advance that presents all of the study topics would help them clearly identify what is being studied, where their child is having difficulty, and how to help him improve. This belief was summarized in the following statement:

> I mean if you have everything in… in a book like that, so I'm sure it's if you have a book, it will be easier for the parents to…to you know, teach that their children, especially the children that they… they... they don't have…they're not native speakers basically you know. For those guys, I think that the book will really help them learn something.

Udhr similarly mentioned that understanding the curriculum was an essential component in being able to support her child's academic growth. Regarding this concern, she said:

…like if they would send out at the beginning of the term or beginning of the unit that

this… these are the topics we're going to be covering and…um…so that the parents know

and they can help support if needed. I think that is important for me, you know.

Lack of time was also identified as a major barrier for many parents, due to the multiple

responsibilities that they had. For example, Amina was enrolled in the first year of a PhD

program at the time of her interview. She stated that she did not have much time to support her

daughter and said, "I let everything down. The kids, the house, and everything." Adam and

Sophia also mentioned how they had to prioritize their time to meet their family's needs.

Regarding this barrier, Adam commented:

But I was really…really busy with my…with the…with the job that I had. I didn't have

any choice. There was no choice for me. If I would have stopped like doing that I could

have…I could have…I could have lose…lose everything.

Wafa similarly felt that she had many responsibilities and little time to fulfill them all when she

said, "With four kids, of course, maybe it's…it's hard work. Uh…especially if I…If I have study

or do something else, it's… and driving and do other stuff."

Finally, some parents identified that they had *difficulty with transportation.* Amina stated

that she didn't have her license yet and Wafa mentioned that she had difficulty driving her

daughter to a school that was further away, so she decided to enroll her in a school that was

closer to her home. This barrier has a significant impact since many parents clearly stated that

face-to-face meetings, which require transportation to and from school, were the most common

collaborative communication method used by teachers.

1.4 Resources

Many parents reported that *when their children received one-on-one support from school personnel, it helped them learn how to better support their child's reading development.* For example, Amina said, "They used to send her once a week with the…to a one-on-one session for the reading. And from that point, I got… I grasp the idea and started to do it myself here." Wafa also discussed how she learned about matching levelled readers to her child's reading ability when her daughter started receiving individualized reading instruction:

> And they had like…uh…they…they go out of the class, have like maybe half an hour or one to one or…uh…maybe they are two or three in the…the group and they…they read. They have levels. So, they read like a level A and then if they finish it, they go to the…the…the next level.

All parents who discussed their child receiving individualized, one-on-one reading instruction identified that as the most helpful strategy for their child's reading development.

Moreover, parents *valued the expertise of specialized personnel* who could provide targeted strategies which parents could implement to support their child. Amina mentioned that the reading specialist who her child was receiving reading instruction from was employed only temporarily, and she expressed her desire to have her employed full time at the school:

> We are not reading specialists. She can give us ideas, good websites, good strategies to use…uh…them with our…with our children. So, I wish that they had a reading specialist to help…uh…kids at school and to guide parents at home.

Similarly, Wafa expressed gratitude that schools have specialized personnel such as social workers who can "connect you with resources or answer your questions".

Parents also identified two types of resources that were given to them by teachers that helped them support their child's reading skills: *(a) paper-based resources and (b) technology-based resources.* Paper-based resources that parents identified were library books, levelled readers, sight word lists, and worksheets specifically focusing on their children's areas of improvement. Of these, levelled readers were identified as particularly helpful because the families received books that they could read with their child that were at the child's skill level. The importance of this was highlighted by Noor when she said, "I didn't know which level she's at, to bring her books. So, I struggled in this a little bit. So, I'm glad that the school sending her books in her reading level." However, Amina shared her experience with levelled readers as somewhat frustrating when she said, "Sometimes, it's not the appropriate book because you know what they do? They just let the kids go and choose what to read." Because her daughter was given the freedom to choose her levelled readers, she would sometimes bring books that were above her reading level or bring the same book home repeatedly during the week. Nevertheless, Amina still believed that these readers, if utilized correctly, "help the kids to read" and are "very, very beneficial". Paper resources that were matched to the student's needs were also very helpful for parents. For example, Noor discussed that she shared her daughter's difficulty with learning vowels with the teacher and the teacher followed up by sending home vowel worksheets that she could complete with her daughter to review this specific topic.

Technology-based resources for developing reading skills were identified by every parent as extremely helpful and were utilized daily by many. Some of the resources identified were Raz Kids, Read Theory, Epic Reads, Lalilo, and online phonics videos. These resources helped children access books online, have the books read out to them, practice their reading comprehension skills, and even provided phonics instruction. Udhr stated that technology-based

tools motivated her child to complete reading tasks because "they use gamified learning…so it helps". Noor's children had very little experience with using technology before immigrating to Canada; however, she stated that the school provided her with free accounts for websites in which her children could access a wide range of books and work on their comprehension skills. Over time, she found her children began to adjust well and learned how to navigate the technology in school and at home. In fact, Noor shared that her son could now access these resources independently and preferred "to do all his work in his Chromebook and all his writing and all his reading, [which] motivates him a lot". Adam and Sophia also liked technology-based resources in which their child could read at his own level such as RAZ kids, but they suggested that follow up is needed by teachers to ensure that children are most effectively using the technology-based tools and to track their growth. They also believe that teachers should incorporate activities for children to complete while reading on these technology-based resources to further develop their literacy skills. The following comment presents their views regarding this concern:

> So, what I…I know in the… on the… on the app, it's gonna show…he…he got…he read it, he answered the questions and everything and it's not. So, I mean it was… it is good to be doing …doing reading every night. So, he suppose…he should get…get asked by the teacher kay, I want you to read and write something. I mean if you…if he is going to read something in the same time, write it in that night. I'm sure it will…he will get better in his reading and writing and like spelling. It will help him like succeed in…in three different ways.

2. Immigrant Parents' Supportive Literacy Practices

Regardless of the barriers to involvement identified, all parents shared a wide range of diverse methods through which they supported their children's reading development. These will be discussed in the subsequent four sections: *(a) Daily practices, (b) Family as support, (c) Creating a climate for enjoyable reading, and (d) Advocacy.*

2.1 Daily Practices

All parents stressed the importance of *daily reading* for their child. For example, Adam and Sophia said, "He does read…reading every day now. And sure, it's gonna help him…help him you know…uh…get better you know." Similarly, Amina said, "I was making sure that she had to read at least 10 minutes a day." The time that each parent read with their child ranged from 10 to 30 minutes each night; however, regardless of the time, all parents made an effort to continue this practice consistently. The *technology-based resources* that were encouraged by the school played a significant role in helping the parents and children read appropriate level books and were perceived as very easily accessible. Noor commented, "Mainly my son doesn't choose books anymore. He reads from Read Theory and Epic Reads." However, many parents also read using the daily levelled readers that were sent home.

Another daily practice that some parents mentioned was *tutoring*. Many parents scheduled time after school to teach their child specific reading skills. For example, Amina said, "I started to teach her the sight words. She learned all of them and the sounds, the letters, phonics I mean, then the CVC words, and so on." Noor also discussed that she would make sure she sat with her children and actively engaged in dialogue to enhance their reading comprehension skills. She mentioned strategies such as "reading with [the] kids and discussing the meaning of the vocabulary". Udhr also identified her strategy for teaching word decoding to her daughter

and said, "I help her decode…um…the words…um…to sound them out, to identify the different syllables, and yeah break them… break the word into…into those syllables".

2.2 Family as Support

Many parents identified how their families also play a major role in supporting their child's reading. Family support was provided in two different ways. Some family members *supported the child by providing additional resources* for parents to use to further develop their child's reading, whereas other family members *supported the parent by participating in the daily literacy practices*. Amina discussed an incident where she called her sister to share her concerns about her daughter's reading difficulty. She said, "I tell her about my fears and all the time she gives me a lot of…I mean...strategies to use with Sara. There was a very good…uh…website." Amina's sister helped her acquire a valuable resource which Amina now utilizes daily to teach her daughter phonics. Wafa also shared that her children would recommend and share their own books with her daughter, which would encourage her to read more. Regarding sibling sharing, she said, "I think all of them they are really helping each other because they… everyone read the books. They get, 'Oh, this is a really good book you can read it' and they…they bo… borrow from each other."

Other parents, such as Noor, shared responsibility of the daily reading practices with their spouse. Mariam's family members, such as her sister and nephew, would often visit her home and read with her child. They even tried hard to motivate her to read, which was highlighted when Mariam said, "And every time she read, my sister will get her…uh… a treat like a chocolate bar or…uh…an LOL doll." However, it is important to remember that not all family support was beneficial to the child's development. For example, Udhr shared that when her husband or her older children try to read with her daughter they often "like to give the answer" if

she struggles, which she states is not helpful for learning to read. Similarly, Amina found that when she sought the support of her older daughter for helping her younger daughter read, Sara often started to cry because she found the older daughter "doesn't motivate her" appropriately. Thus, it became apparent that the level of support varies from family member to family member.

2.3 Creating a Climate for Enjoyable Reading

Parents also took many initiatives to *create a climate for enjoyable* reading in their homes. Many parents discussed that they *purchased books* for their children to encourage them to read. Many parents also *found and used additional technology-based resources* to help their children stay motivated to read. Amina said, "I used a lot of resources, you know. I use this…I use the YouTube channel, these ABC songs for phonics sounds." Similarly, Wafa said she would play phonics videos online and have her daughter play phonics games to improve her reading. Adam and Sophia shared that they would try to engage their child in *meaningful reading tasks such as reading the newspaper.* Another beneficial resource that parents utilized for creating a positive reading environment was the *community library*. Regarding libraries, Mariam said, "We used to go to the library a lot. Yeah, it was fun! Because she…she used…sometimes she meets with her friends at the library. Yeah, they used to read together." Wafa also shared that she would regularly take her children to the library. She was very thankful for the library system in Canada and said that it was much different from her experience of libraries in Egypt. She stated that in Egypt, the selection of books was very limited, and individuals would often have to buy books, which not everyone could afford to do. However, she loved the library system in Canada and believed it was a valuable resource for making children's reading experiences enjoyable. She shared the following comments:

Uh...and in the library here, you can feel like you can go and sit and you

have…it's like…um… outing there [laughs]. Yeah, you enjoy. You enjoy staying

here… here and you have like computers too, and you have different, it's… it's

different. It's really different.

2.4 Advocacy

Most parents also engaged in *advocacy to gain the necessary supports for their child in*

both home and school settings. In our interviews, Amina felt that the teachers dismissed her

concern about her daughter's reading initially. However, she continued to advocate for her

child's needs, and it was through this advocacy that she was able to get her daughter to receive

individualized reading instruction with a reading specialist at the school. She said it was critical

for immigrant parents to be aware of their children's progress and share concerns as soon as they

become aware of them. She also recognized that some immigrant parents may fear to do so due

to unfamiliarity with the Canadian education system and urged parents to know their rights as

parents who are partners in their children's education. Her views are summarized in the

following statement:

> Uh, I encourage the parents of…I mean the immigrant parents to don't hesitate
>
> and…uh…advocate for their kids. Kids, they have the right to education, to the full
>
> access to the curriculum. Uh, don't feel that you are immigrants, so you have less rights
>
> than others. Canada is for all. Canada is a country of immigrants. Nobody would say that
>
> I am the pioneer here. We are all even. We have all the same rights. So, don't…uh…let
>
> this chance…uh…don't lose this chance. Advocate for your kid. Contact the teacher.

Wafa also shared how she advocated for her daughter's needs by discussing with the principal

that there needed to be extra supports for children facing learning difficulties in the classroom.

Due to her advocacy, the following year there was a teacher assistant employed in the grade one classroom; however, she had already transferred her daughter that year to a different school to better meet her needs. Noor also believed that parents should immediately contact the teacher if they have any concerns about their child's learning and keep communication open. While reflecting on her experiences, she said:

> So, my advice is always reaching to the teacher. When I found that Shahin have a difficulty in reading, I reached the teacher. She start to communicate with me and told me that she will work with her alone. And she will send her specific things to do in her reading level. So always reach to the teacher and the school will eventually help you.

Summary of Results

The findings in this study reveal that parents' cultures, social interactions, and past and present experiences have a significant influence on how they perceive parental involvement and their supportive practices as well. Two themes were identified that highlighted this complex issue: *(a) Factors that influence level of immigrant parental involvement and (b) Immigrant parents' supportive literacy practices.* These themes were discussed in great detail in this chapter and supported by descriptive quotes from the multiple participants.

The findings highlighted that there are multiple barriers to involvement faced by immigrant parents. Nevertheless, parents' supportive actions clearly indicated that they are motivated to partner with school personnel in an approach which aligns with their socio-cultural expectations. Effectively doing so will positively influence the parents' involvement level and consequently their children's literacy outcomes.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this focused ethnography was to explore and understand the lived experiences of immigrant parents' involvement in supporting their child's reading difficulty. This chapter includes a discussion of the major findings in relation to the scholarly literature available on this topic. Also included is a discussion on connections to this study and conceptual models of parental involvement. This chapter concludes with a discussion on the implications and recommendations for practice, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

This chapter contains discussions to help answer the following central research question:

1. What are the experiences and perceptions of recent immigrant parents whose children have been identified as having a reading difficulty?

The following sub-questions will also be addressed to comprehensively answer the central research question and identify future research possibilities:

1. What services and resources do immigrant parents perceive to be available?

2. What are the greatest challenges for immigrant parents when partnering with school personnel to support a reading difficulty?

3. What actions do immigrant parents take to work towards an effective partnership with school personnel?

Two broad themes were identified on immigrant parents' experiences in supporting their child's reading difficulty and collaborating with school personnel: *(a) Factors that influence level of immigrant parental involvement* and *(b) Immigrant parents' supportive literacy practices.*

Factors That Influence Level of Immigrant Parental Involvement

School Personnel Traits and Education

The current study's findings are consistent with those reported in previous scholarly literature which found that immigrant parents understand the value of parental involvement for supporting their child's reading and do try to get involved through methods which align with their cultural beliefs and expertise (Miano, 2011; Reese & Gallimore, 2000; Sohn & Wang, 2006; Zhang & Bano, 2010; Zhong & Zhu, 2011). However, the results of this current study contribute to previous reports by identifying the specific factors that influence immigrant parents' level and type of involvement. For example, Sohn and Wang (2006) reported that immigrant parents value supportive teachers who are patient, cooperative, and understanding of their needs and challenges. The current study adds to these findings by revealing that these positive traits (i.e., being responsive, cooperative, patient, empathetic, inclusive, and understanding of the child's needs and parent's cultures) actually influence the parents' willingness to work with teachers collaboratively; whereas, if a teacher is dismissive of parents' concerns, parents often turn to home-based involvement without consulting the teacher. This aligns with previous research findings that it is essential for educators to demonstrate a genuine concern when working with students' families to help them overcome challenges, fears, and encourage more collaboration with the school personnel (Poza et al., 2014; Swick, 2004).

Swick (2004) also reported that if parents perceive teachers as incompetent, it can be debilitating for the parent-school partnership. The results in this current study similarly revealed that if teachers were perceived as knowledgeable about reading difficulties and the unique cultural needs of the participants' families, parents viewed them as more competent and they were more willing to work collaboratively with them. This finding is comparable to those of Dozza and Cavrini (2012), who affirm that parents' perception of teacher competences is based on their expectations of the teacher. Thus, teachers' actions, knowledge, skills and attitudes play

a significant role in how involved immigrant parents choose to be in their child's schooling. In our participant sample, it was apparent that when school personnel were perceived as educated and informed of the participants' needs and culture, parents were more willing to collaborate with them. For example, Noor mentioned in her interview that if she ever had any concern about her child's schooling, she would eagerly contact the office without hesitation because she believed the school personnel would be willing and able to help since they "have a lot of understanding for how diverse the kids [are]". On the other hand, Amina stated that her daughter's teacher "lacks experience" and "[does not] focus that much on literacy" after her concerns for her child's reading difficulty were dismissed by the teacher, which led her to further perceive that this teacher could not provide adequate support for her child and consequently, reduced the likelihood of future parent-teacher collaboration. This became evident during Amina's interview since she outright stated that she had to take initiative to begin tutoring her daughter in her home using an online reading program which she sought independently to support her daughter's literacy development.

Communication

Communication was also a major factor that influenced how involved and collaborative parents chose to be with their child's teacher. All parents recognized that effective communication was necessary for partnering with teachers to support their child's reading development, which aligns with findings in the previous literature (Ladky & Peterson, 2008). However, similar to Zhang and Bano's qualitative study (2010), parents in the current study shared that they did not know what literacy concepts were being taught to their child in the classroom and believed that more explicit and effective communication regarding the reading curriculum needed to be developed for immigrant parents. This sentiment was evident in Adam

and Sophia's interview, as they stated multiple times throughout the interview that receiving

information on the specific concepts being taught in the curriculum would enable them to better

support their child by focusing specifically on the area he is struggling with, rather than just

generally supporting his overall reading. Likewise, Udhr expressed that if parents are to truly be

partners in their child's education, teachers need to consistently share the topics and skills being

covered in the classroom with parents.

One of the most common types of communication methods that parents reported in this

study was face-to-face meetings with the teacher. Most parents stated that these interviews

occurred two to three times during the school year. However, many parents found these meetings

to be insufficient and insisted that additional methods of communication were necessary to

partner with their child's teacher and share progress and concerns throughout the year. This

finding is similar to that in Ladky and Peterson's (2008) study of immigrant parents' experiences

of involvement in Ontario schools wherein parents believed that face-to-face 15-minute

interviews were inadequate and preferred additional communication methods such as student

agendas, newsletters, and report cards which highlight their child's learning and progress. One of

the unique findings in this current study was that in addition to two-way communication

methods, Udhr shared that communication in which the parents were not expected to respond,

such as newsletters and online posts of students' work, were particularly helpful for her because

they allowed her to learn about her child's learning and progress without having to deal with

fears and challenges associated with having to respond to the teacher in an active manner.

Moreover, Adam and Sophia shared that emails were not an effective method of communication

for them and actually became extremely overwhelming as they had received multiple emails that

they did not check or respond to. This experience aligns with Ladky and Peterson's finding

(2008) that immigrant parents often feel more comfortable and in control if agendas are available for parents to use if they choose to for communication with their child's teacher. Use of agendas or implementing an open-door policy to encourage parents to speak informally with the teacher before and after school may remove the challenges and anxiety associated with using technology or writing in the English language for communication, particularly for parents who have little experience with it.

One significant action that parents highlighted in the study was that educators must remember to explicitly notify immigrant parents about culturally appropriate methods of communication since immigrant parents who are new to the school culture may have little previous experience with communicating with their child's teacher. For example, in our study Noor discussed that both of her children's teachers did not take any steps to share how parents should contact the teacher regarding their questions or concerns. Noor had to then phone the school office to ask how she could contact the teacher to share a concern she had regarding her child's schooling. It was only after this action that she was directed to the appropriate communication methods through which she could contact her children's teacher. The need for immigrant parents to be informed of culturally appropriate ways to communicate with the teacher was also identified by Zhang and Bano (2010). Because of communication differences, researchers have found that immigrant parents are often perceived by school personnel as either too involved or not involved enough (Antony-Newman, 2019). Providing immigrant parents with clear instructions on how to communicate and work together with their child's teacher may help them be more involved and reduce the differences between teachers' and parents' communication and involvement expectations.

Pre-migration Experiences with Education Systems

Similar to Reese and Gallimore's (2000) study, this current study found that immigrant parents' pre-migration experiences of education systems influence their cultural models which form their perception of involvement in Canadian schools. One framework that is particularly useful for understanding immigrant families' needs and challenges is the RAISED between Cultures model which consists of six factors that should be considered when working with immigrant families: (a) Reveal culture, (b) Acknowledge pre-migration experiences, (c) Identify post-migration systemic barriers, (d) Support family and community strengths, (e) Establish connections between environments, and (f) Determine child outcomes together with families (Georgis et al., 2017). The second factor in this model highlights the importance of acknowledging immigrant families' pre-migration experiences, which influence their adjustment in their new country of residence (Georgis et al., 2017). This study contributes to this concept by identifying the different types of educational systems that immigrant parents from diverse countries may experience prior to moving to Canada, and how the change in expectations for their role in their child's education may influence their involvement in Canadian schools. For example, parents whose pre-migration experiences consisted of a parent-based system in which parents were expected to be intensively involved in their child's schooling found that the involvement expectation in Canada was minimal. Due to their prior experiences, parents from this education system were often willing to work together with teachers in Canada to support their child's reading development. However, parents from school-based systems, where parents were not expected to participate in their child's schooling, often perceived involvement expectations in Canada as overwhelming. Their unfamiliarity with involvement in a child's schooling was largely unaddressed by the staff in Canadian schools. The differences in pre-migration experiences highlight the need for educators and administrators to understand each

family's unique pre-migration cultural norms and align involvement expectations in a manner that is sensitive to the adjustment challenges that may present for these individuals in the Canadian context. Ozaki and Koshino (2008) similarly emphasized that miscommunications and misunderstandings among parents and educators often occur due to a lack of understanding of the significance of one's cultural beliefs and assumptions. Moreover, empirical findings also suggest that cultural models related to parenting can also evolve and adapt as contexts and settings of individuals change (Harkness & Super, 2002; Reese & Gallimore, 2000). This adaptation was evident in the participants' experiences in this current study, as all parents who experienced school-based systems of education shared that they now implemented literacy strategies suggested by their child's teacher consistently in their homes such as daily reading and tutoring.

Barriers

Many of the barriers to involvement identified by the participants in the current study have been previously reported in the scholarly literature. Within the RAISED between Cultures model, the barriers that immigrant parents face are referred to as post-migration systemic barriers since they arise when society's multiples systems such as education or health care fail to acknowledge the social, cultural and linguistic experiences of diverse immigrant families in their policies and practices (Georgis et al., 2017). Within this study, seven barriers to involvement were identified: (a) language, (b) parent education, (c) overwhelming collaboration expectation, (d) child's resistance, (e) unfamiliarity with curriculum, (f) time and (g) transportation.

Language was the major barrier to involvement that was identified by many parents in this study. Difficulty speaking the language of the host country is also one of the most frequently cited barriers to immigrant parental involvement in the scholarly literature (Antony-Newman,

2019; Cureton, 2020; Garcia Coll et al., 2002). Zhang and Bano (2010) reported that immigrant parents' inability to speak English often limits them from communicating their concerns with their child's teacher, which consequently leads them to perceive collaboration with teachers as very intimidating. Research suggests that despite immigrant parents wanting to stay involved, lack of language proficiency often restricts their ability to do so and may even lead to parents internalizing themselves as less intelligent or unqualified for helping their child academically (Cureton, 2020). Sentiments similar to this were shared by the participants in the current study. For example, Mariam shared that she would often learn English from her school-aged children. Similarly, Adam and Sophia shared that Sophia struggles so much with speaking English that she could not help her son much with his schoolwork. Wafa also shared her desire for receiving translation services when speaking with her child's teacher due to her language difficulty. The final sentiment shared by Wafa affirms the need for cultural brokers, who are individuals that share the immigrant parents' language and cultural background, and therefore, are able to translate and also interpret meanings in the appropriate contexts during discussions between school personnel and immigrant parents (Yohani et al., 2019). Due to linguistic and cultural differences, accessing immigrant parents' expertise and a deeper understanding of their culture can be a difficult task. However, Yohani et al. (2019) stress that cultural brokers can facilitate this understanding by discussing with the parents and school personnel significant knowledge related to cultural assumptions, norms, needs, and challenges to better support the child.

Parents in this study also shared that limited formal education negatively influenced their involvement with their child's schooling. For example, Adam stated, "I would say the end of 2005 till now, I haven't even opened a book to study…I mean I don't know the meaning and he is…he is explaining to me that what is the meaning of those." This declaration clearly highlights

how parents may feel ill-prepared to support their child academically due to their limited formal schooling experiences. Adam and Sophia also discussed the high illiteracy rate in Afghanistan, which they maintain is the main reason that school personnel in their previous country do not expect parents to be involved in their child's schooling or complete academic activities at home. Because of this pre-migration experience, they found the expectation to support their child's schooling in Canada to be overwhelming. This finding fits with previous research which suggest that lack of formal education can result in parents feeling unprepared to be a part of the host country's school system (Qin & Han, 2014; Rah et al., 2009). Educators must understand this experience as a pre-migration barrier that can significantly impact parental involvement. Researchers have suggested that schools should develop education programs for immigrant parents to allow them to learn about the host country's school system, provide academic support to their child, reduce insecurities, and learn the host language (Hamilton, 2004; Tarasawa & Waggoner, 2015). Many parents in this study similarly stated that there was a critical need for immigrant parents to attend English classes to communicate more effectively with their child's teacher and consequently be more involved. This view was summarized by Amina who stated, "It's very, very tough here to…to be…uh…not illiterate but to have this low level of education. You can't support your kids."

Overwhelming collaboration expectation is a unique barrier that was identified in the current study. This refers to immigrant parents' perception that the collaborative efforts are inequitable and too much is being expected from the parents for supporting their child. However, this barrier is also related to other barriers, such as language ability and parent education, as they can impact the intensity by which this barrier is experienced. This barrier also seems to be influenced by pre-migration experiences since parents with little experience supporting their

child academically or those with limited formal schooling were significantly impacted by overwhelming collaboration expectations. This finding aligns with Georgis et al. (2017) who assert that lack of acknowledgement of cultural experiences can lead to immigrant parents feeling overwhelmed and finding common cultural practices such as attending meetings or completing forms challenging and extremely difficult. Moreover, this barrier seemed to be exacerbated by teachers' actions in the current study, such as sending too many resources or by inadequately addressing parents' concerns. For example, Wafa shared that she felt like an assistant teacher when her child's teacher would share an immense amount of resources with which she was expected to support her daughter's reading. Because she felt that too much was being expected of her, she began to resent the teacher's approach. The following year, Wafa transferred her daughter to a different school in which the teacher had a somewhat lower involvement expectation which she was pleased to be able to meet as it was not so demanding (e.g., reading daily and filling in reading logs). This experience demonstrated how culturally appropriate actions, such as sharing resources with parents, may actually be perceived as challenges by parents with different cultural assumptions and experiences. This further emphasizes the need to integrate parents' cultural needs into involvement strategies to form an effective home-school partnership.

Another unique barrier that was identified in this study was that children may also be resistant to completing additional learning tasks with their parents at home if the teacher has not explicitly stated that it is a required task. Adam and Sophia shared that they wished their child's teacher would specifically let their child know that they are to complete daily reading with their parents rather than just encouraging it. Although children's resistance has not been identified in previous literature as a barrier unique to immigrant parents' involvement, previous research has

found that children may begin to resist parental involvement in their schooling as they grow older and strive for more independence (Epstein & Connors, 1995). Moreover, immigrant children's cultural models may also influence their actions, such as completing work more willingly when it is expected by their teachers due to their culturally respected professional status (Reese & Gallimore, 2000).

Unfamiliarity with the curriculum was also identified as a barrier to immigrant parents' involvement in this study, which is consistent with findings in previous research on immigrant parents (Antony-Newman, 2019). Because of pre-migration experiences with education systems, immigrant parents often do not have a clear understanding of the school curriculum, policies, and practices of their host country (Qin & Han, 2014; Yakhnich, 2015). This makes effective collaboration extremely difficult for parents who are trying to navigate and learn about the various systems (i.e., education, health, social services) in a new country. Qin & Han (2014) also note that unfamiliarity with curriculum content is often intensified in immigrant populations due to language barriers. This was evident in this study as well, as Adam and Sophia shared that their difficulties in speaking English made it challenging to understand what their child was learning. Thus, they suggested that receiving a workbook that they could complete with him after school would help them teach him exactly what he needs to know. This preference is very similar to that of the immigrant parents in Ladky and Peterson's (2008) study who desired a practice similar to their home country where they received a textbook that included all of the concepts the children would learn in each subject during the year.

Finally, lack of time and transportation have also been reported in previous research as barriers to immigrant parents' involvement and are associated with poorer educational outcomes as they often limit parents' ability to support their child in activities such as attending in-school

meetings or spending time after school to complete additional learning tasks (Alexander et al., 2017; Cureton, 2020; Qin & Han, 2014; Rah et al., 2009; Townsend & Fu, 2001). These barriers often result out of a need for "increasing economic survival for the family" after migration (Qin & Han, 2014, p. 12). Amina stated multiple times during the interview that she was busy playing the role of both the mother and father for her four children in this new country and that she was extremely busy with multiple responsibilities which made it difficult to spend time with her daughter on her reading. Similarly, Adam stated that he had limited time to complete academic tasks with his son after school because he was too busy working to support his family and meet their basic needs. This experience aligns with the research finding that many immigrants from working class backgrounds are often employed in physically demanding jobs with inflexible work schedules that makes involvement particularly difficult (Antony-Newman, 2019).

Resources

Parents in this study identified many resources that they perceived as accessible and beneficial for supporting their child's reading. One of the most interesting aspects of this study was that parents identified their child receiving one-on-one or individualized reading instruction as not only helpful for their child's development but also beneficial for developing their skills in supporting their child. Wafa, for example, stated that when her daughter started receiving individualized reading instruction, she understood the procedure and began to implement it in her home as well. This finding suggests that when parents are informed of the interventions provided to their children, they can learn to better support their child with evidence-based instruction. This is consistent with previous research that reveals the positive impact that parents can have on their children's reading development when included in intervention strategies (McConnell & Kubina, 2016; Senechal & Young, 2008). Gerzel-Short (2018) similarly found that understanding the

reading intervention process can positively impact parents by enhancing their problem-solving skills, increasing feelings of competence, and empowering them to advocate for their child's needs.

Two main types of resources provided by school personnel were found to be particularly beneficial in supporting their child's reading: (a) paper-based resources and (b) technology-based resources. Paper-based resources consisted of literacy resources such as library books, levelled readers, sight word lists, and worksheets to focus on the child's specific area of improvement. These resources align with findings that teachers most frequently assign independent reading and reading aloud at home tasks to encourage parents' at-home support in their child's literacy development (Ladky & Peterson, 2008). One of the key valuable resources identified by immigrant parents were the levelled readers which were often sent home daily with the students. Parents in this current study shared that they often struggled with finding books that were at the appropriate level for their child's ability. Receiving these readers enabled them to better support their child's reading at their specific skill level. Nevertheless, Amina did identify some concerns related to the use of these readers within her daughter's class. She noticed her daughter was bringing home the same book multiple times during the week or sometimes reading books that were not at her appropriate level. This experience highlights the need for educators to ensure that the levelled reader selection is matched to the child's reading ability to allow students and their families to truly benefit from this resource.

The second type of resource identified as beneficial for supporting reading development were technology-based tools which enable children to access books online, have the books read out to them, practice their reading comprehension skills, and even provide phonics instruction. The value that parents in the current study ascribed to these resources align with research

findings which suggest that technology-based resources that provide texts in digital formats can help children develop early reading skills and can improve children's phonological awareness, word-reading skills, and vocabulary (Biancarosa & Griffiths, 2012; Korat, 2010). One particular benefit reported in research is that these technologies enhance accessibility to reading material and increase children's reading practice at home (Verhallen et al., 2006). These benefits were clearly reported by participants in the current study. For example, Noor's son who had minimal access to technology prior to their migration, was easily able to learn how to use the resources provided by the school for developing his reading skills and preferred to do all of his daily reading tasks using the technology-based resources. It is also worth noting that Korat and Shamir (2008) suggest that technology-based reading resources can be utilized to lessen literacy related learning gaps among children from different socioeconomic backgrounds since they found that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds made greater gains in word-reading skills and vocabulary knowledge when utilizing these resources than children from more advantaged households.

Immigrant Parents' Supportive Literacy Practices

Daily Practices

The parents in the current study identified various daily literacy practices that were encouraged by their child's teacher which they embedded into their routines at home to support their child's reading. All parents shared that they engaged in daily reading with their child regardless of pre-migration experiences with education systems and limited formal schooling. This is consistent with findings in research that immigrant parents often read books with their children at home in both English and their native language (Ladky & Peterson, 2008). Even parents who are non-print literate encourage their children to read daily at home (Ladky &

Peterson, 2008; Miano, 2011). The adoption of daily home reading by all parents is consistent with previous research that parents are willing to modify their cultural models in new social contexts and are able to learn new ways of supporting their child due to the fluidity of cultural assumptions and beliefs (Georgis et al., 2017; Reese & Gallimore, 2000). All parents in the current study shared that they wanted to support their child to the best of their ability and acknowledged that they can achieve this by incorporating teachers' suggestions. This is similar to findings by Reese and Gallimore (2000) who reported that immigrant parents strived to give their children a better chance at academic success and therefore, adapted their cultural models flexibly in new contexts.

During the interviews, many parents referred to the technology-based resources as a critical resource for facilitating daily reading. This is consistent with Zhang and Bano's (2010) findings that key literacy practices in immigrant parents' homes include the use of technology, particularly online story-telling sites in which children can access books in their native language, culture, and history. The technology-based resources discussed in the current study similarly provided children and families with access to countless books on a multitude of topics and included many useful functions such as being able to have the entire book or specific words in the book read out loud if the child or parent struggled with reading. Moreover, these tools also enabled children to practice their reading comprehension skills, since comprehension quizzes accompanied many of the texts in certain reading programs. A significant benefit of these resources is that they can be used independently without adult assistance (Verhallen & Bus, 2010). Thus, parents can support their child's reading by helping them access the resource but don't necessarily need to read the books if they have difficulty doing so. The parents' experience

in this study aligns with previous research findings which suggest that parents appreciate having access to and recommendations on books to read with their child (Ladky & Peterson, 2008).

Some immigrant parents also shared that they actively tutored their children to develop specific reading skills in the areas they were struggling. For example, Amina explained the specific steps by which she taught her daughter reading which included teaching her the letter sounds first, then moving onto blending letter sounds, and finally learning some irregular sight words. Similarly, Udhr identified specific strategies she used to help her daughter decode words. In fact, Udhr also shared that she took initiative to volunteer at her daughter's school to get trained for the Strong Start to Reading Program. These actions suggest that immigrant parents may be able to participate in interventions in which parents are encouraged to teach their child specific reading skills. These types of interventions have been empirically found to have a significant impact on children's reading acquisition (d=1.15) (Senechal & Young, 2008). Nevertheless, it is also important to remember that tutoring was not identified by all parents as a daily practice and may not be an appropriate collaborative strategy for every immigrant family due to unique pre-migration experiences and the impact of post-migration systemic barriers. As suggested in the RAISED between Cultures model, culture is complex and the realities of each family are diverse; therefore, it is critical for teachers to work with the families and understand their unique experiences in order to develop effective strategies that align with each family's needs and culture to ensure they can feasibly be incorporated in their home (Georgis et al., 2017).

Family as Support

The findings in the current study also revealed that many immigrant parents' extended families may play an important role in supporting their children's reading. As articulated by

Georgis et al. (2017) cultures can be classified as more individualistic or collectivist within a continuum. Cultures that are more collectivist value the role of extended family members in the child's development (Georgis et al., 2017). This cultural value was evident in the current study as many parents reported that their child's aunts, cousins, siblings, and fathers played an important role in developing their child's reading skills. The current study's findings contribute to previous findings by identifying the ways through which extended family members may support children's reading which include providing literacy resources and participating in daily literacy practices. For example, Amina discussed the incident when her sister supported her daughter's literacy development by sharing an online reading program that she utilized to teach her daughter phonics. This aligns with the RAISED between Cultures model which acknowledges that immigrant parents have multiple strengths or funds of knowledge which they can utilize for supporting their child, such as the support of extended family members (Georgis et al., 2017). The second way that family members supported their child in the current study was by participating in the daily literacy practices. For example, Mariam's sister and nephew would often visit her home to read with her daughter, as well as provide rewards to her daughter as motivation for reading with them. Previous research supports the finding that extended family members often help in immigrant households by participating in reading activities (Menard-Warwick, 2007; Miano, 2011). One unique method of family support was identified in the current study during Wafa's interview when she discussed that her children would often share and recommend books to one another to encourage each other to read more. This suggests that even if extended family members are not directly reading with the child, they can play an important role in motivating them to read. However, it is important to note that a few participants in the study found family support to be unhelpful. For example, Udhr stated that she found her

husband or older children's help in completing daily literacy practices unhelpful because they would often tell her daughter the answers if she struggled during reading rather than encouraging her to use a reading strategy or giving her more time to try to read the words. This experience is consistent with the findings that each family is unique and that cultural practices may vary in each household; therefore, it is critical for educators to engage in dialogue to understand each family's specific needs and challenges when collaborating with them (Georgis et al., 2017).

Creating a Climate for Enjoyable Reading

Parents in this study emphasized the importance of creating an enjoyable climate for reading in the home to support their child's development. This is consistent with previous literature which reports that when parents support their child's reading by creating an encouraging climate in the home (i.e., by providing reading materials, reading to their child, or modeling positive reading behaviors), their children spend more time reading for enjoyment (Braten et al., 1999; Greaney & Hegarty, 1987; Neuman, 1986; Rowe, 1991; Shapiro & Whitney, 1997). Many parents stated that they supported their child by purchasing books of interest for them. Miano's (2011) study similarly found that although books, like toys, are often a luxury in immigrant households, many parents strive to support their children's reading by acquiring books when they are able to. Due to the benefits observed by teacher-recommended technology-based tools, many parents also searched for and used additional technology-based resources to support their child's reading, such as educational literacy-related videos and games. Use of these resources has been empirically found to engage children in learning by increasing their motivation and interest (Mayer, 2005). This fits with Udhr's experience that online reading programs help motivate her daughter to complete the literacy tasks. Additionally, Adam and Sophia also highlighted that they engage in meaningful reading tasks with their son at home such

as reading the newspaper. This finding is consistent with Miano's (2011) report that immigrant parents find various opportunities to engage in reading with their child such as reading landmarks, signs, bills and even helping parents with their own English homework. All of these activities help create an environment that highlights the value of reading and encourages the child to engage with it eagerly.

Within the current study, the public library was highlighted as a critical community resource for immigrant parents in encouraging their child's reading. For example, Mariam and Wafa both shared that they would frequently visit the library to read with their children and reminisced on how enjoyable and memorable those experiences were. Moreover, Mariam shared that during her library visits, her daughter would often meet and read with friends. These experiences align with Rodriguez's (2019) findings that libraries often serve as a "hub" in which immigrant youth can feel a sense of belonging and build additional connections and networks. Paolo Picco's (2008) analysis of how libraries in Montreal, Canada support new immigrants revealed that many valuable services are being provided in public libraries to help immigrant families adjust to their host country such as: liaison agent services, multicultural collections, guided visits, and cultural activities. The liaison agent was identified as a particularly important individual who was often the link between the immigrant community and the library. This individual's role involved planning activities in collaboration with community organizations to meet the unique needs of immigrant families in the community. The findings in this study can help such liaison agents and stakeholders of public libraries further understand the unique reasons immigrant families utilize library resources to further support them in their endeavor. In addition to the liaison agent, Paolo Picco (2008) stressed that all library staff must be appropriately trained to work with immigrant individuals to best meet their needs, and should

possess skills such as being open, respectful, patient, and able to adapt to the needs of immigrants in the community.

Advocacy

Ozaki and Koshino (2008) suggest that advocacy is an essential component of immigrant parental involvement which refers to initiating discussions related to concerns and desires with school personnel in the best interest of their children. When asked to provide recommendations to fellow immigrant parents, many parents within the current study emphasized the need to advocate for their child's needs. For example, both Amina and Noor urged immigrant parents to share academic concerns with teachers immediately to ensure their child's needs were appropriately addressed in the school. Parents also shared incidents of their advocacy within the school system and the impact of those efforts. For example, Wafa notified the principal regarding the need for extra support in her daughter's classroom, which resulted in the hiring of an educational assistant in that grade level the following academic year. These incidents suggest that immigrant parents' participation in advocacy is a method of involvement through which they can enhance their child's academic development.

During her recommendation to immigrant parents, Amina included the statement, "Don't feel that you are immigrant, so you have less rights than others." The inclusion of this statement suggests that post-migration systemic barriers may impact the advocacy efforts of immigrant parents. Ozaki and Koshino (2008) affirm that immigrant parents may face obstacles during advocacy in the host country such as language barriers, cultural barriers, and barriers caused by incorrect assumptions held by school personnel of immigrant parents. For example, immigrant parents with limited English-speaking ability may have difficulty sharing their concerns in parent-teacher meetings that are held solely in the English language. Similarly, due to their

cultural experiences some parents may choose to stay silent during meetings rather than express their concerns out of respect for their child's teacher. Additionally, these findings also align with the concept of intercultural communication apprehension, which suggests that immigrant parents may feel fear and anxiety when interacting with individuals from a culture different than theirs (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997). Thus, strategies need to be developed to both reduce these anxieties and increase understanding of culturally appropriate communication.

Connections to Conceptual Models of Parental Involvement

The findings of this study also contributed to the understanding of how multiple parental involvement conceptual models apply to immigrant parents. The following section will review the results of the current study in relation to these parental involvement conceptual models.

Freire's (1970) Banking Model of Schooling

Freire (1970) argued for a need to develop a pedagogy from the lived experiences of the marginalized and oppressed in society and critiqued traditional education systems that have multiple oppressive systems embedded within them (Garavan, 2010). Our discussion of the impact of immigrant parents' post-migration systemic barriers on parental involvement demonstrates that many barriers still exist for marginalized groups such as immigrant parents. Thus, the findings in this study align with Goodall (2017) who asserts that although Freire's critique of the Banking Model of Schooling (i.e., the belief that teachers are the main authority in the classroom whose role is to "fill" the student with knowledge and skills) has influenced teaching practices to be more learner-focused, parental involvement policies still align with this outdated model. For example, Goodall (2017) argues that often the power in the parent-teacher communication resides with the teacher, who is considered the expert on the child's academic development and little consideration is taken to understand or include the voices or expertise of

the parents. This was exemplified in many of the parents' experiences of involvement within the current study. For example, although Adam and Sophia found emails to be a difficult mode of communication, the teachers continued to utilize them as they held the power in their collaborative relationship to make such decisions. Moreover, the dismissal of Amina's concerns for her daughter's reading difficulty by the teacher indicated that the teacher perceived herself as the expert or authority regarding her daughter's reading development. This incident also suggests that within parent-teacher discussions, the knowledge of the teacher is valued more than the parents. These inequitable incidents highlight the need to move towards an involvement model based on more equitable relationships between immigrant parents and teachers that considers traditional power imbalances and rectifies them by co-constructing the parent-teacher relationship dynamic with dialogue and understanding (Goodall, 2017).

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Model for Human Development

The findings in this study contributed to the understanding of how immigrant parents support their child's reading development within the microsystem, the mesosystem, and the macrosystem. The home-based involvement of parents such as seeking literacy learning resources independently or tutoring their child after school were some examples of how immigrant parents supported their child's reading within the realm of the microsystem. These acts were directly conducted with the child and not influenced by extraneous relationships. In the mesosystem (i.e., actions that occur as a result of collaboration or interrelationships between two or more settings), parent-teacher communication and parents' advocacy with their child's teacher were found to support the child's reading development. Participating in daily reading and filling reading logs for teachers, completing reading tasks on technology-based resources provided by the child's school, or sharing reading experiences with extended family members are some

additional ways through which immigrant children's reading was supported by the interrelationships and collaboration of the school personnel, parents, and extended family members (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Finally, the influence of the macrosystem (i.e., the cultural beliefs and assumptions of an individual) on parents' involvement was greatly highlighted in this study. Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) description of the macrosystem, the influence of culture impacted the patterns of actions across the systems in this model. For example, parents' partnership with extended family members in supporting their child's reading suggested that collectivist beliefs of a culture can influence the collaborative actions within the mesosystem. Similarly, immigrant parents' experiences with post-migration systemic barriers seemed to influence them to assume a mainly home-based supportive role. It was also noted that the culture of the parents influenced their collaborative efforts with teachers and the teachers' cultures influenced their interactions with the parents, which highlights the bidirectionality of this model. Historically, immigrant families have been expected to adapt and assimilate within the major culture of their host society (Paat, 2013). This expectation often leads to immigrant families being disadvantaged in their host country and losing their privilege to voice and exercise their rights openly (Paat, 2013). The findings of this study align with these sentiments and imply that there is a critical need to understand the cultures of immigrant families and incorporate them into the macrosystem of the larger host country's culture to improve the mechanisms to involve parents equitably. As parents in this study highlighted, when school personnel choose to be inclusive, cooperative, and understanding of the parents' cultures, they are more willing to collaborate with them. Thus, cross-cultural understanding is paramount for effective partnership with immigrant parents.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995) Model of Parental Involvement

The findings in the study supported the significance of role construction, sense of efficacy, perception to be involved, and life-context variables in the school involvement of immigrant parents. Parents in the current study discussed how their pre-migration experiences with education systems influenced their perceptions regarding how to be involved within the Canadian education system. Parents with limited experience with school involvement often found the expectations for involvement to be overwhelming in Canada; whereas parents who came from a culture in which involvement was culturally expected seemed more eager to collaborate post-migration. Moreover, parents' level of formal education, English-speaking ability, and understanding of the Canadian curriculum influenced how capable they felt in supporting their child's reading, which Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) refer to as a sense of efficacy. These factors have been identified as socially constructed by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) which fits with the current study's findings. Parents in the study began to adopt a role that was more in line with involvement expectations in Canada after migration, regardless of pre-migration experiences, education level, or language barriers, such as supporting their child in completing the tasks encouraged by school personnel in their homes and meeting with teachers in face-to-face meetings. Perceptions to be involved were largely addressed in discussions of teachers' attitudes, traits, and actions. Thus, the significant role that teachers have in creating a positive collaborative experience was greatly highlighted. Specific positive traits of teachers were identified which encouraged parents to be more involved such as being responsive, cooperative, patient, and understanding of the child's needs and parents' cultures. Finally, life-context variables were addressed in the discussion of barriers to involvement. Parents identified lack of time and transportation as significant obstacles to supporting their child's reading at home and collaborating with school personnel.

Epstein's (2010) Parental Involvement Framework

Immigrant parents' involvement within the current study mainly was situated within three areas of Epstein's Parental Involvement framework: parenting, communicating, and learning at home. Parenting, which involves the establishment of a home environment that is conducive to the child's development, was evident in the parents' discussions of how they facilitated an enjoyable climate for reading in the home. Actions such as taking their child to the library, encouraging the use of technology-based resources, and engaging in meaningful tasks such as reading the newspaper were some ways that parents tried to create an environment that was supportive of their child's growth in reading. Parents in this study also actively communicated their concerns about their child's reading and sought ways to initiate discussions with teachers to better support their child. Despite dismissive responses by some teachers, many parents continued to advocate with school personnel to best meet their child's developmental needs. Finally, all parents in the study learned about and adopted strategies suggested by teachers to support their child's reading at home, such as participating in daily reading, tutoring, or completing online reading programs. In fact, parents in the study shared that they would prefer to learn precisely what was being taught in the classroom and receive workbooks with lessons on the specific concepts to help them better support their child's learning.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

The following section will highlight implications of the study's findings and suggest recommendations for practice.

1) Reduce Potential Barriers to Involvement

One of the major barriers to parental involvement consistently reported by parents in the study was a language barrier. Similar to Turney and Kao's (2009) finding, parents

in the current study with limited English-speaking ability were more likely to report other

significant barriers to involvement such as feeling overwhelmed by the involvement

expectations in the host country and unfamiliarity with the curriculum. Therefore, to

lessen the challenges perceived by immigrant parents, it is paramount to provide

language support. According to Cureton (2020), employing translators in school-settings

can encourage parents to communicate more with school personnel as this action suggests

that their voices are valued in a manner that is embracing of their cultural and linguistic

background. The use of cultural brokers who are not only familiar with the native

language of immigrant groups but also with their cultural background may also help

enable school personnel to understand the unique needs and challenges to involvement

for this group, reduce assumptions arising from a disconnect between cultural

expectations, facilitate the development of more effective communication channels, and

consequently create a more equitable collaborative partnership (Cureton, 2020; Yohani et

al., 2019).

Language support is one method through which school personnel can enhance

parents' sense of efficacy and reduce challenges associated with unfamiliarity to the

curriculum and school system. Access to multi-lingual homework programs or offering

newsletters and brochures about the school system and curriculum in parents' native

language can assist parents with limited English-speaking ability to learn how to be more

involved in Canadian schools and/or more effectively support their child's academic

development in the host country (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). Moreover,

participants in the current study shared that receiving English language learning classes

would significantly aid them in communicating more effectively with their child's

teacher. Therefore, efforts should be made to provide English classes or workshops in schools to expose parents to common terms used in school settings and provide information on the Canadian education system for immigrant parents who are unfamiliar with the culturally appropriate norms and practices of the country (Cureton, 2020).

Additional barriers identified in the study such as limited time and lack of transportation should also be acknowledged in parent-school partnership practices. Home-visits by school liaisons, providing childcare in the school, modifying meeting schedules to accommodate varied work schedules, and arranging for transportation to school events may lessen the impact of these barrier and create a more welcoming environment for immigrant parents to encourage collaboration (Arias and Morillo-Campbell, 2008).

2) Gain Cultural Understanding

Many of the challenges to involvement highlighted in the current study seem to stem from a lack of understanding of immigrant parents' cultures. If school personnel do not understand the culturally influenced behaviors and responses of immigrant families, it may lead to the formation of incorrect assumptions that weaken the collaborative relationship between school personnel and immigrant parents (Georgis et al., 2017). Therefore, there is a critical need to understand immigrant parents' cultures prior to the development of a working collaborative relationship. In this study, parents identified the significant impacts of pre-migration experiences with education systems and post-migration systemic barriers to their involvement. When school personnel understand and acknowledge these cultural experiences and challenges, they will be better positioned to support the parents in a manner that aligns with the parents' cultural needs. Similarly, a

deeper understanding of parents' cultural beliefs (e.g., collectivist beliefs in education) may help educators access the strengths or fund of knowledge that immigrant families possess and incorporate them into the collaborative strategies, such as the support of extended family members and bilingualism (Georgis et al., 2017). The most effective method to doing so is by initiating a dialogue with immigrant parents and developing a strong relationship with families to truly understand the nuances of their experiences (Georgis et al., 2017; Goodall, 2017). Use of cultural brokers may significantly aid in this endeavor. Finally, understanding which resources are culturally appropriate and accessible to parents will ensure that the strategies suggested and incorporated are achievable in the immigrant students' home setting. For example, home reading was greatly facilitated in the current study by the incorporation of technology-based resources in immigrant households since such resources enabled families to access books on multiple topics easily. Moreover, the inclusion of functions such as being able to listen to the book and answer comprehension questions afterwards seemed to reduce the challenges associated with parents' English-speaking abilities, unfamiliarity with the curriculum, or limited formal schooling. Therefore, this resource was greatly valued by many immigrant parents as it enabled them to support their child's reading in a manner that aligned with their cultural beliefs and needs (Zhang & Bano 2010).

3) Teacher Education

The influence of the teachers' actions, knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes to involvement were discussed in great lengths by the parents in the study. Thus, the study's findings suggest that there is a critical need for teachers who are working with immigrant families to be knowledgeable of how to collaborate and communicate with sensitivity and

respect. Ozaki and Koshino (2008) suggest that educational courses need to be developed for teachers to learn about immigration, and the resulting cultural and linguistic diversity in classrooms to better prepare for working with immigrant families. Moreover, a practical approach to learning how to be more inclusive and sensitive to the needs of immigrant families comprises conducting discussions among school personnel and immigrant parents in the community to understand the challenges they face, as well as learn from educators who possess the skills to effectively work with immigrant parents. This process can be extremely valuable as it can help address both the site-specific and population-specific challenges in parental involvement policies within the school-setting (Ozaki & Koshino, 2008).

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Although the findings in this study were enlightening and informative, it is important to consider the limitations in this study as well. Recruitment challenges limited the study participants to six immigrant parents who met inclusion criteria. Moreover, although the aim was to get a heterogeneous sample of immigrant experiences across Canada, our participant sample consisted of parents from only two provinces (Alberta and Ontario). The number of participants in this study was limited and more perspectives could have been gained with additional participants in the study from a variety of provinces. Additional research in this area should be conducted with larger sample sizes and quantitative research designs such as surveys to enhance the generalizability of the results.

Secondly, due to the Novel Coronavirus pandemic, only parents who were experienced with using a computer were able to participate in the online interview procedures. Therefore, additional research should focus on the experiences of parents who have limited understanding

of technology-based resources, since within our sample, technology-based resources were identified as essential by most parents for supporting their child's reading and collaborating with teachers.

Also, most of the participants in this study were mothers. Additional research on immigrant fathers' experiences and perspective are needed. Moreover, all of the immigrant parent participants held legal status in Canada. Research still needs to be conducted on how being undocumented or of refugee status may impact the experiences of parents who try to collaborate with school personnel to support their child's reading difficulty. Finally, research that compares the experience and perceptions of immigrant parents to those of school personnel collaborating with immigrant parents may provide additional insight on areas of disconnect and further contribute to the development of policies that reduce differences in perceptions related to parental involvement.

Conclusion

This study aimed to provide an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of immigrant parents' involvement in supporting their child's reading difficulty. The results of this study suggest that immigrant parents are motivated to learn how to best collaborate with school personnel to support their child's reading difficulty, regardless of the challenges they face. This study's findings contribute to the understanding of factors that influence immigrant parents' involvement and the types of literacy practices they choose to incorporate for supporting their child's reading. The findings also highlight the significant influence that cultural models have on parents' perception of involvement in Canada and how these models can be adapted and modified in new contexts. Furthermore, the critical need for school personnel to collaborate with immigrant parents in a manner that is sensitive and understanding of parents' pre-migration

experiences and post-migration systemic barriers was discussed. This chapter situated the findings of the study within relevant scholarly literature, and outlined implications and recommendations for practices, limitations of the study, and future research possibilities. I hope that this study lays the groundwork for future research in the area of immigrant parental involvement and consequently, contributes to the development of inclusive and culturally responsive family-school partnership policies to effectively support the reading difficulties of immigrant students.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol: A Focused Ethnography Exploring the Experiences of Immigrant Parents' Collaboration with School Personnel to Support a Child's Reading Difficulty

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Questions:

Background Information

1. Tell me about your family. Who lives in your home? Which child has a reading difficulty?

2. Can you tell me the story of how you came to Canada?

School Experiences

3. What was it like for your child to start school in the Canadian school system upon moving to Canada? How was it for you as a parent? Did you find anything interesting or surprising? What was challenging about this experience?

4. Tell me about a typical school day for you and your child.

5. Tell me about your child's strengths as a learner.

6. How do you see your role in your child's schooling? Is it different from your previous country of residence?

Reading Skills

7. How did you find out about your child's reading difficulty?

8. What do you believe is the cause of the reading difficulty? What does your child struggle with?

Collaborative Involvement in Supporting Reading Growth

9. What reading goals have you or your child's teacher set for your child?

10. Can you tell me how you and your child's teacher work together to achieve these goals or support your child's reading?

11. How do you and the teacher communicate your child's goals and progress? How often do you communicate?

12. What services and resources do you receive for your child at school to help develop their reading skills? Have you used any resources other than what has been provided by the school? What has been your experience with these supports (i.e. what has been helpful and what has not been helpful)?

13. Can you describe how you or other members of the family support your child's reading at home?

14. Have you faced any challenges when trying to work together with your child's teacher(s) and/or specialist(s)? Does anyone know of these challenges? Has anyone tried to address them?

15. What advice or recommendations would you give other immigrant parents who have a child with a reading difficulty?

16. What advice or recommendations would you give to teachers who are working with immigrant children with reading difficulties and their parents?

Extension or probing questions that may be used to gain enhanced understanding:

1) Can you tell me more about that?
2) What do you mean that…
3) Can you give me an example of…
4) It sounds like you are saying…(paraphrase)

Appendix B: Letter of Information

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<u>Letter of Information for Study Participant</u>

Title of Study: Exploring the Experiences of Immigrant Parents'
                        Collaboration with School Personnel in Supporting a Child's
                        Reading Difficulty

Researcher: Sana Rashid, B.Ed.
                        Department of Educational Psychology
                        Faculty of Education
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Supervisors: Dr. Lesly Wade-Woolley
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                        Dr. Alison McInnes
                        Email: mcinnes2@ualberta.ca

                        Dr. Sophie Yohani
                        Email: sophie.yohani@ualberta.ca

Dear Parent,

I would like to invite you to participate in the present research study. I am an experienced teacher working on a Master's degree in Special Education. My research is being supervised by Dr. Lesly Wade-Woolley, Dr. Alison McInnes, and Dr. Sophie Yohani from the Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta.

Why you are being asked to be in this study?
·   You are a parent of a child in elementary school with a reading difficulty.

- You immigrated to Canada less than 10 years ago.
- You speak a language other than English at home.

What is the reason for doing the study?
- Children who have a reading difficulty can improve when their parents work with teachers to support their reading skills.
- Immigrant parents' experiences of working together with teachers may be different than those of Canadian born parents. There are many reasons for this such as not being familiar with the Canadian school system and cultural differences.
- By understanding the experiences of immigrant parents, we can help to build better partnerships between school and family. These partnerships would help to make it easier for immigrant parents when they try to work together with teachers to support a child's reading difficulty.

What will you be asked to do?
- Read this information. Ask any questions you have. Give consent to be in the study.
- Participate in a 90-minute, online interview on Zoom (I will help you with this).
- In this interview, you will be asked to share your experiences of working together with classroom teachers and specialists to support your child's reading difficulty.

What will you do in the interview?
- The interview will be set at a time that is best for you between August 2020 to December 2020. You can do the interview from your home.
- I will email you a link for the Zoom online application.
- You will press on the link to download Zoom and get into the online room for the interview.
- In the interview, you will be asked some questions about your child's experience at school, the difficulty he or she is having with reading, and your experience in working with your child's teachers to help your child.
- The interview will be about 90 minutes long (1 ½ hours).

What will I do with the information from the interview?
- I will record just the spoken part of the interview (audio record). Then I will use this to make a written file from your answers. I will use the

written part to analyse the information from your answers, and other parent's answers.
· I will *not* be recording the video part of the interview. No interview data will be placed on Zoom servers.

Are there any benefits to you for participating?
· There will be no direct benefit to you for being in the study. But, having the chance to talk about your child's experiences at school might help you think of some new questions to ask your child's teacher. This may help you play a bigger role in your child improving his or her reading.
· Also, your input may allow others to understand the experiences of immigrant parents in supporting a child's reading difficulty. This may help create more effective family-school partnership policies.

Are there any risks to you for participating?
· There are no expected risks or harms to you for taking part in this study.
· However, retelling of some experiences may bring out strong feelings such as sadness or worry. If it becomes too hard for you to continue the interview due to these feelings, we will stop the interview and continue it at a different time.
· You will also be given the phone number to the Immigration and Settlement Cross Cultural Counselling and Outreach Program for additional support.

Do you have to take part in the study? Can you withdraw at any time?
· Being in the study is completely voluntary. You are free to decide if you want to be in this study. I will check on this with you before the interview.
· If there is a question you do not want to answer, you do not have to answer it.
· At any time during the interview, you can choose to leave the study. If you leave the study, none of your information will be used. Nothing bad will happen if you choose to leave the interview.
· If you do the interview, and change your mind later, you can ask to have your data taken out from the study. I ask that you let me know about this within two weeks of the interview.
· To leave the study, you can email me, Sana Rashid, at the email address provided on page one of this form. At this time, all of your information

will be deleted forever from the computer files and paper files will be shredded.

How will the information be kept safe? Who will know about my answers in the interview?

- All of your answers will be kept **confidential.** All digital documents with your information will be stored in a password-protected computer.
- The only people who will know about your answers are me and my supervisors at the university. It is also possible that the Research Ethics Board might ask to see the data.
- The interview will be audio recorded on a stand alone device. The audio recording will be erased after the interview has been written down and analyzed.
- Any paper records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.
- All files will be destroyed after 5 years.
- During the interview, you may choose a "fake" name which will be used in the interview write-up. This name will be used to protect your privacy. This is the only name that will appear in the study report. You can use a fake name for your child too, if you wish.
- Your contact details and the list matching your name to the fake name will be kept separate from the data in a locked file.
- The words you use to answer the interview questions may be used in reports about the study. However, you, your child, or your child's teacher or school will be not identified in any part of any reports.

The plan for this study has been approved by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. If you have questions about your rights or how research should be conducted, you can call (780) 492-2615. This office is independent of the researcher.

<u>**Please ask any questions you have.**</u>

Informed Consent Statement (will be audio recorded):

My name is _____. Today's date is _____. I consent to participate in the research study entitled: Exploring the Experiences of Immigrant Parents' Collaboration with School Personnel in Supporting a Child's Reading Difficulty.

<u>Contact Information:</u>

If you have any questions, or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact:

> Sana Rashid, B.Ed.
> Department of Educational Psychology
> Faculty of Education
> University of Alberta
> Email: srashid@ualberta.ca

Appendix C: Recruitment Poster

Research Study: Exploring the Experiences of Immigrant Parents' Collaboration with School Personnel in Supporting a Child's Reading Difficulty
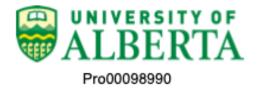
PARENT PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Who?

- Immigrant parents of an elementary-aged child (Grade KG – 6) who has a reading difficulty
- Resident of Canada for 10 years or less
- Mainly speak a language other than English at home
- Have access to a computer and internet connection, are 18 years of age or older, and are comfortable having a conversation in English

How long?

- One 90-minute conversational, online interview

What will I do?

- You will participate in a conversation to describe your experiences working and collaborating with school personnel to support your child's reading difficulty.

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For more information, please contact:
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University of Alberta
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