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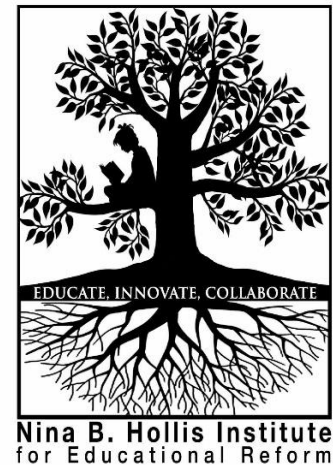
*Voices of Reform: Educational Research to
Inform and Reform*

Volume 4 • Issue 1 • Article 6

December 2021

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Recommended Citation

Ingle, W. K., & Stovall, K. (2021). Refugee parents' perspectives on preschool enrollment after migration and resettlement. *Voices of Reform*, 4(1), 93-109. Retrieved from <https://www.voicesofreform.com/article/35230-refugee-parents-perspectives-on-preschool-enrollment-after-migration-and-resettlement> doi: 10.32623/4.00008
<http://dx.doi.org/10.32623/4.00008>

Revisions

Submission date: September 17th, 2021
1st Revision: November 3rd, 2021
Acceptance: November 10th, 2021
Publication date: December 29th, 2021

Refugee Parents' Perspectives on Preschool Enrollment after Migration and Resettlement

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Abstract

Using phenomenography, the researchers explored the perspectives of resettled refugee parents and why they chose to enroll their children in a large urban school district's preschools. All of the participants were driven by intense desires to have a brighter future for themselves and for their children in their new country. All saw education as privilege and an opportunity to ensure more promising futures for their children—an opportunity that should not be *left on the table*. All the participants expressed an appreciation for the opportunities afforded them in the U.S. and hopes for a peaceful future. The participants' backgrounds and migration experiences varied, but consistent across them were hardships and challenges. These influenced their decision to enroll children in an urban public preschool program in the hopes of increasing the likelihood of success for their children. Participants relied heavily on the support of refugee agencies. The researchers identified a need for local school districts to collaborate with resettlement agencies in developing a concrete plan for addressing the unique needs of refugee parents and children. This may include parent mentoring and using refugees to mentor/assist more recently arrived refugees in navigating the educational bureaucracies in their new country and school district.

Keywords

preschool education, refugees, urban education

Introduction

Large urban school districts struggle to meet the demands of accountability systems and the diverse needs of the students they serve, which are characterized by high percentages of impoverished and minority students (Welsh, 2019). Adding to these challenges is the resettlement of refugees in urban areas (Marks, 2014; Singer & Wilson, 2006) and policies, programs, and rhetoric that demonize immigrants and refugees alike (Koyama & Chang, 2019). In their new urban environs, refugees risk impoverishment as the newest members of what McBrien (2005) calls “an inner-city underclass” (p. 332). Early childhood programs play an integral role in children’s development and educational outcomes, but both enrollments and kindergarten readiness skills among refugee children are lower in comparison to those of native-born children (Crosnoe, 2013; Karoly & Gonzalez, 2011; Magnuson et al., 2006; Vesely & Ginsberg, 2011).

Although researchers have explored immigrant preschoolers and their parents’ participation in the education process, scholars have tended to group foreign-born study participants into an overall immigrant status rather than subcategorize them as refugees (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Pryor, 2001). In so doing, researchers overlook the nuances of refugees’ experiences whose migration may have meant the difference between life and death. This qualitative study sought to examine the perspectives of resettled refugee parents and why they chose to enroll their children in preschool. In so doing, school districts and refugee resettlement agencies may adapt their messaging and strategies to increase refugee children’s enrollment in preschool.

Review of the Literature

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines a refugee as “a person forced to flee their country because of violence or persecution” (UNHCR, n.d., para. 1). The biggest distinction between refugees and other immigrants is that refugees do not leave their home by choice (McBrien, 2005; UNHCR, 2000). Researchers have explored refugee perspectives on resettlement experiences and the challenges they faced, including access to educational opportunities, and navigating educational entities (Snell, 2018; Strekalova-Hughes & Wang, 2019). In terms of immigrant youths’ (including refugees) perspectives, research has tended to concentrate on middle and high school students with an emphasis on transitions and outcomes (Crosnoe, 2013; DeFeyter & Winsler, 2009; Glick, Hanish, Yabiku, & Bradley, 2012) or on the psychological stressors endured by refugee children of all ages (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011; d'Abreu et al., 2019). The stresses of pre-migration and migration experiences are met by new stresses—living and acculturating in a new land. The latter are what Fazel and Stein (2002) refer to as “secondary trauma” (p. 366).

The challenges faced by refugee parents have impacts on their refugee children, including intergenerational stress as children shuttle between their adopted culture at school and back to their family’s native culture at home (Ascher, 1985). Research reveals that refugees typically have less overall education and English language training than other immigrant groups (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). Refugee children are disadvantaged in terms of educational outcomes (Graham et al., 2016) and even more so when unaccompanied by parents (Crea et al., 2018). Risk factors range from strained parental relationships, intercultural stress, teacher stereotyping, educators’ low

expectations, bullying, racial discrimination, and post-traumatic stress (Ascher, 1985; Graham et al., 2016).

Given the narrow focus on refugee parents and their perspectives on the decision to enroll their children in preschool, a review of the few research studies that focus on preschool and early childhood education is warranted. Agbenyega and Peers (2010) studied 30 Black African refugee parents from Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Sudan in Australia at a time when Australia was overhauling its early childhood philosophy and curriculum. Parents described racial discrimination and a lack of respect for their cultural practices. Mitchell and Ouko (2012) examined the perspectives of Congolese refugee families in New Zealand in order to understand their experiences and views of early childhood education, finding that parents want early childhood education, but waiting lists and costs emerged as barriers.

Poureslami et al. (2013) interviewed Asian immigrant and refugee parents newly arrived to British Columbia as well as and early childhood education providers. Poureslami et al. (2013) found that adequate access to services was a barrier to immigrants and refugees, particularly those with special needs children. They also found that adapting to Western child development practices, language differences, cultural beliefs and practices, and negative perceptions of care providers emerged as barriers to the identification and participation in early childhood development programs.

Tadesse (2014) undertook a qualitative study of the perceptions of refugee mothers and teachers about preschool services for refugee children. Four mothers from Liberia, Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia and three Head Start teachers participated in the study. Analysis revealed that encouragement and identifying barriers were central to the building of relationships and respect between parents and teachers. Tadesse noted sensitivity to the refugee experience, along with an understanding of cultural practices, are important to serving refugee families.

Consistent across these studies were the identification of barriers to access and a desire among refugee parents to take advantage of available educational opportunities in their new environs. Researchers have noted that in most instances, parents are not familiar with preschool classroom practices (Tadesse 2014; Tadesse et al., 2009). Parents of refugee children are the fundamental contributors to shaping what their children learn, how they respond to learning, and how they engage in an unfamiliar educational system (Rousseau et al., 2009; Tadesse, 2014). However, no educational studies explicitly address why refugee parents choose to enroll (or not enroll) their children in preschool programs. Mitchell and Ouko (2012) noted that:

“There are few studies, however, of refugee perspectives on early childhood education. This absence is worrying, given the growing number of refugee families with preschool children and the potential for early childhood education to play a transformative role in family lives.” (p. 99)

In response, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Why did refugee parents choose to enroll their children in public preschools in an urban district?

2. How do refugee parents perceive their backgrounds and migration experiences as influencing their decision to enroll their children in a public preschool program?

Methods

In this study, the researchers undertook a qualitative phenomenography approach, a research framework by a Swedish research team in the 1970s led by Ference Marton (Akerlind, 2005; DeMoss & Vaughn 2000; Marton & Svensson, 1979; Sin, 2010). Phenomenography seeks to capture the perspectives of people based on their lived experiences, also known as the *essence* of their lived experiences (Marton, 1981). Following Marton (1988), data analysis consisted of a four-phase process: 1) identifying relevant data, 2) sorting data, 3) contrasting groups, and 4) verifying portions of data. Coding occurred in multiple stages in order to identify categories of description, categories of conception, and the *outcome space*; all of which serve as the primary outcomes of phenomenographic research. Richardson (1999) notes that the analytic procedures of phenomenography are similar to those of grounded theory, which seeks to discover and develop theoretical concepts through the collection and analysis of data through inductive reasoning.

The researchers collected and analyzed data from resettled refugee parents in Jefferson County Public Schools, an urban school district in Louisville, Kentucky relying on participants' discursive accounts of their experiences. Data came from two sources¹ in this study. First, a demographic questionnaire was used to identify potential candidates for purposeful sampling (Palinkas et al., 2015). The questionnaire expedited the identification of potential study participants who met specific parameters: an individual with refugee status, parent or guardian responsible for the care of preschool aged children, a resident of Jefferson County for no more than six years and lived in no other U.S. resettlement city. These were administered at Catholic Charities and Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM) with the assistance of translators. Once identified, potential study participants were contacted, giving them informed consent information. Once they consented, a one-on-one² interview was scheduled with the participants. The resulting transcripts were translated (as needed) and analyzed.

¹ The questionnaire and interview protocol were not included in the manuscript due to their length. However, both are available upon request from the corresponding author.

²Participants not fluent in English required the inclusion of interpreters.

Table 1*Participant Demographics*

	Participant	Age	Gender ^a	Country of Origin	# Children	Educational Attainment Levels	Marital Status ^c	Language Spoken	Years in Refugee Camp	# of Camps
1.	Queen	30-35	F	Congo	5	E	M	Swahili	*	0
2.	Amelia**	60-65	F	Congo	8	N	M	Swahili	22	1
3.	Adahila	26-29	F	Iraq	2	S	M	Arabic	*	0
4.	Batsal**	56-59	M	Nepal	5	U	M	Nepali	2	2
5.	Nora	26-29	F	Ethiopia	5	N	M	Oromo	7	1
6.	Christmas	26-29	F	Rwanda	2	S	S	Swahili	*	0
7.	Jewel	46-49	F	Congo	8	N	M	Swahili	17	2
8.	Mila	20-25	F	Congo	1	S	M	Swahili	*	0
9.	Camilla	36-39	F	Congo	8	U	M	Swahili	22	1
10.	Dinesa	20-25	F	Congo	1	U	M	Kinyarwanda	5	2
11.	Hope	40-45	F	Burundi	3	U	M	French	*	0
12.	Valencia	36-39	F	Bhutan	2	U	M	Nepali	18	0

*Participants did not live in a refugee camp, but resided outside their homeland in a foreign country as a refugee.

**Grandparent

^a F = Female; M = Male

^b N = None; P = Preschool; E = Elementary; S = Secondary; U = University/Postsecondary

^c M = Married; S = Single

In total, 34 questionnaires were collected. From these, interviews were conducted with 12 willing participants (See Table 1). In terms of gender, the participants were predominantly female (11 females, 1 male) and parents (10 parents, 2 grandparents). The countries of origin for the participants varied, but all were from Africa or Asia. The languages spoken also varied. Several of the participants were fluent in more than one language, including English. Educational attainment levels of the participants varied from no formal education (3), elementary only (1), secondary school (3), to university (5). The latter was a surprising characteristic from the pool of participants. Parental educational level is an important predictor of children's educational and behavioral outcomes (Davis-Kean, 2005; Wilson & Gross, 2018). Parents with higher levels of educational attainment are able to enhance their children's development and provide human capital by drawing on their own educational experiences and skills to assist their own children. Participants' years in refugee camps ranged from 0-22 years. For those who did not live in a refugee camp, they instead resided outside their homeland in a foreign country as a refugee.

Findings

In this section, the discussion of findings begins with the provision of the phenomenographic results of the study through the presentation of an outcome space, defined by Marton (2000) as a "logically structured complex" (p. 105). The outcome space consists of two key elements. These are the descriptions of each category and selections of illustrative statements from the participants for each category (Han & Ellis, 2019). The latter are structured around the two research questions, first discussing why the refugee parents interviewed for this study chose to enroll their children in public preschools in an urban district. The discussion then turns to how the refugees interviewed for this study perceived their backgrounds and migration experiences as influencing their decision to enroll their children in a public preschool program. As one will see, the refugee parents' rationales for why they enrolled their children in public preschools are consistent across the participants in answering research question 1. While the parents' individual backgrounds and migration experiences are varied and personal, these influenced their decision to enroll children in an urban public preschool program. As such, greater attention is given to their migration experiences in answering research question 2.

Outcome Space: Survival Instinct

The critical aspect for developing the phenomenographic outcome space is to identify the meaningful relationships between the categories of description. The categories of description and the category outcomes that define the outcome space, *Survival Instinct*, are the collective views of the participants that evolved from their own educational experiences and the decisions they made on behalf of their children (See Figure 1).

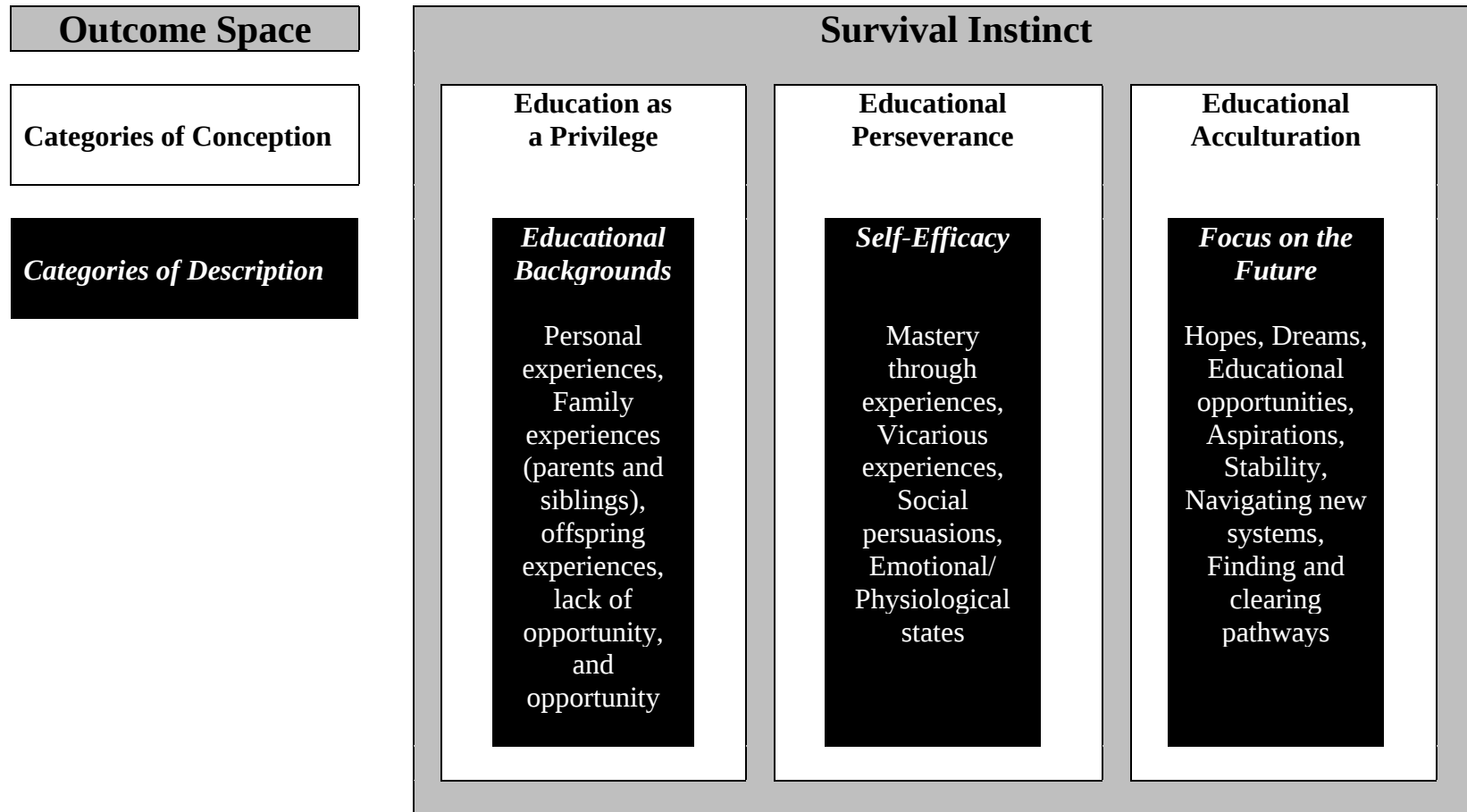
Education is a privilege denotes the widely varying educational experiences of the participants and their desire to privilege their own children with any educational service that avails itself, such as a free, public preschool. The second category outcome describes the participants' *perseverance* as it related to education and survival in their migration camps/cities. The third category, *education*

acculturation, describes their personal motivation for adapting and emerging into the educational systems they experienced. Participants engaged or attempted to engage in education because they want to survive resettlement as they had survived their migration.

The outcome space, *survival instinct*, suggests that refugee parents resettled with the intent of ensuring that their children took advantage of public educational services in their resettlement city, beginning with preschool. In spite of their commitment to their children's education, the participants lacked an understanding of how to navigate the education system as a parent in a new environment, so they relied heavily on the local resettlement agencies to support them in navigating the educational system.

Figure 1

Outcome Space: Survival Instinct



Why Refugee Parents Enroll their Children in Public Preschools

When the participants learned about public school early childhood programs that offered services to children as young as six-weeks, they were initially surprised, but sought to maximize any opportunity they could for their children. Consistent across all 12 participants was their focus on not only their own future in a new country, but for those of their children. All participants perceived education as privilege and a means of improving their lot in life and futures that are more promising for their children. All the participants expressed an appreciation for the opportunities afforded them in the U.S. and hopes for a peaceful future. For example, Christmas stated, “I need the best for my kids. I need my kids to go to school and do something in life— [become a] good person.” Dinesa reflected on the impact of education and future possibilities stating, “This country [U.S.], it's a really good country. Everybody go to school. You do what you want to do.”

Mila noted (through her interpreter), “...she take all the kids there to school. Because the first one come here in America when he is in grade five, yes. She say it's better because this beginning is very important. And makes kids change their minds and help so much the kids to grow up good.” Valencia equated education as an opportunity for her whole family. “So, if they go to school at least they learn something...They are there all day and the parents are free to go to work.” Hope stated, “My plan is to help my kids grow and put education first.”

So as to why refugee parents enrolled their children in public preschools, all of the participants were driven by intense desires to have a brighter future for their children in their new country. All saw education as a privilege and an opportunity to ensure more promising futures for their children—an educational service made available to them, so they took advantage of it for the benefit of their young child(ren). As will be shown, the parents’ backgrounds shaped their decisions to enroll their children in urban public preschools.

How Refugee Parents’ Backgrounds and Migration Experiences Influenced their Decision

The refugees elicited stories of survival and challenges they faced prior to their arrival in the U.S. that shaped their desire to access the educational system in their newly adopted home for the benefit of their children. These challenges included limited access to educational opportunities (either for themselves or for their children), substandard educational resources, economic hardships, threats to life and limb, malnutrition, and starvation. For example, Amelia was a refugee for 22 years and lived in a country with an ongoing civil war. As the mother of eight, she revealed that education in the refugee camp was poor. Children did not always attend because it was not a priority and there were limited resources that allowed them to go to school. Amelia noted she allowed the children to attend school when resources allowed, but costs interfered. In her new environment, these costs were mitigated through the provision of public education, including and beginning with preschool. Jewel reflected on her camp life and resettlement, contrasting it with the educational opportunities for her children. She states, “In the camp, we don't have transportation like here. [The] bus come at home to take kid and to take them back. The second— here kids can have lunch. But in our country no lunch for kids.” She goes on to describe the physical aspects of the school as translated by the interpreter, “Here the building is good. The building is good for school. And the space is good. Also when you enter into the classroom you

have space everywhere.” Other participants described access to early education in refugee camps as limited or having no resources for attending. Valencia grew up in a small village and started school at age 6. At the age of 10, she became a refugee and lived in a camp for 18 years. She did not experience preschool in her homeland. However, one of her children went to preschool in the camp and this led her to actively seek out preschool services in the U.S.

Hope did not grow up as a refugee but acquired the status through marriage. She resettled from Zimbabwe with her husband and children. Both she and her husband were college educated. Her husband was a refugee for 12 years. While in Zimbabwe, she was a teacher and one of her children attended preschool. Her second child was only three when she left Zimbabwe. She enrolled her second child in preschool and her youngest (born in the U.S.) enrolled at age three.

Nora had limited educational opportunities, but experienced education through her children. Her oldest went to preschool at age four in Kenya and her second attended kindergarten. Through her translator, she shared, “It was very good when the children went to school at the youngest age. It was very good. Even now the babies they are smart because they have been in school from the youngest age.”

Camila revealed that a lack of money interfered with her children attaining an education prior to coming to the U.S. There were education opportunities in the refugee camp, but she noted:

“We needed to look for money to pay for school, to eat, for rent. It’s not an easy life, but we tried our best. It’s very hard in our country, but here it’s a little bit better because we aren’t assessed school fees. This is the good thing we appreciate here—make[s] us happy and no stress.”

The educational experiences of the participants varied greatly but contributed to their collective views on early learning. Collectively, their personal education experiences (or lack thereof) ignited a passion for education and future success of their offspring. Traumatic refugee experiences shaped their educational views and those of their children. Whether the participants had extensive or limited experiences in education, they all perceived education positively. All the participants discussed government education as a privilege when there were no other educational opportunities due to costs or breakdowns in the provision of government education (e.g., civil war, upheaval). For example, Christmas described education as a privilege, but one for the very few in her native land. She stated, “Most of the kids, they don't go to school because they don't have—they can't afford it.” Participants also provided evidence of the lack of equal opportunities for children based on gender. Of the 11 female participants, all had experienced some form of educational discrimination at some point in their educational journey, even among those who had opportunities for early learning experiences. For example, Hope shared:

“According to traditions, girls were supposed to remain home to do domestic jobs, to help their mom, to go to the field, to the land...But me, I did preschool. I was lucky because I was the third child in my family. My elder brother and my elder sister were educated. They helped me. I start[ed] the first grade when I was seven.”

Similarly, Dinesa reflected on the limited opportunities for females in her native country, stating, "Back home, just men go to school. Boys."

Adahila, a mother of two from Iraq, shared her experiences and those of her children. Her translator noted, "So when a child, there's not too much care about the kids. So maybe some people go to the preschool, but most of them no. They wait until the elementary school."

Nora struggled with her own lack of education and sought to ensure her children did not suffer similarly. Nora's interpreter stated, "She is really struggling with why she didn't go to school. Her parents didn't send her to school and now here she's regretting it because she feels she doesn't know anything...So that's why she's fighting to take them to school."

Queen, the most recently resettled and fluent in English, stated, "I'm not used to education being taken this serious [sic]...But I like it. I love it. Because having the pressure on me to take my kids to school, it's a good thing. Because it's going to help my kids."

Dinesa shared her educational successes and then having to start all over because of the disruption of becoming a refugee. This led to disruptions in her education and those of her siblings, yet they persevered. Dinesa chronicled her experiences from Congo to Burundi and eventually to Kenya and the heartbreak of having to start over:

"So, we went to Kenya. They speak different languages...There they said, no, you cannot get your high school diploma because you are a refugee. It was not good. So, I asked them so how I'm going to get my high school diploma? They say you need to go back to grade eight. That's the rules of this country. You need to get certificate from grade eight, so you can join high school. And I was already finished high school."

Dinesa's experiences revealed an ability to persevere despite obstacles and challenges:

"I went to Job Corps. Because I was 19, I could not go to high school. My sister and I went to Job Corps. We spent one year there. I got my high school diploma, my [Pharmacy Technician] license, and my office administration certificate. It's been really hard for me to not be in one place my entire life. I have been moving, moving, moving, moving. So, it's affected my life—my education especially."

Their own difficult experiences led the refugee participants to focus their energy on gaining access to early learning programs and make a difference in the future of their children in a new land.

Forced migration shaped the participants' mindsets about education. Although much of their past and present experiences have been void of a clear understanding of the educational systems where they lived, they conveyed a belief that education was a lifeline to the future. The study participants suggest they embraced education as a priority. Nora reflected on preschool educational opportunities stating, "It's incredibly good when the children went to school at the youngest age... They are smart because they have been in school for the youngest age. Very good. So, when they

come here it means like they didn't have any trouble of [sic.] school because they were speaking English already.

The analysis of participants' narratives evoked connections to a theory of behavioral change known as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1997), defined as an individual's belief in his or her own capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments. Bandura (1997) identified four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and one's emotional/physiological state. Each participant exhibited at least one of these sources of self-efficacy. Mastery experiences evolve by surmounting obstacles or overcoming those of their children. In some instances, self-efficacy developed by observing family and friends excel in education as a result of early learning. They learned about educational systems and acclimated themselves to those systems to gain access to early childhood education. These are what Bandura (1997) referred to as vicarious experiences.

Social persuasion is one in which others offer encouragement that increase perceptions of self-efficacy. Family members were particularly instrumental sources of building self-efficacy among participants. For example, Christmas's father told his children he wanted a better life for them and believed they could accomplish anything; even as refugees. This hope was inculcated in Christmas and her desire to leverage education for her own children's benefit. A compromised emotional and physiological state of an individual is a source of self-efficacy also. The refugee participants in this study sought to transcend the unpleasantness of the refugee condition in the belief that conditions would improve in their new land and the opportunities that emerged there, such as preschool services.

Summary of Findings and Discussion

Although eager for their children to begin their formal education and with varying levels of education among the study's participants, they relied heavily on the refugee resettlement programs for help. This is consistent with findings from the limited extant research on refugees and early childhood education programs that identified barriers to access, and a desire among refugee parents to take advantage of, available educational opportunities in their new environs. This in itself is not surprising given the challenges faced prior to resettlement. It takes time to adapt and learn in a new environment. It takes time to learn a new language and adapt to a new culture (García-Vázquez, 1995).

All of the study's participants were driven by intense desires to have a brighter future for themselves and for their children in their new country. All saw education as privilege and an opportunity to ensure more promising futures for their children—an opportunity that should not be *left on the table*. All of the study's participants expressed an appreciation for the opportunities afforded them in the U.S. and hopes for a peaceful future. The participants' backgrounds and migration experiences varied, but consistent across them were hardships and challenges. These influenced their decision to enroll children in an urban public preschool program in the hopes of increasing the likelihood of success for their children.

The participants revealed that the refugee resettlement agencies played integral roles in connecting them to opportunities, specifically public preschool enrollment for their children. Indeed, were it

not for such agencies, they would not have enrolled their children in these programs. These agencies played a valuable role in *connecting the dots* between refugee parents and their children to the urban public preschools that seek to provide strong educational foundations for K-12 education and beyond among a subpopulation that has faced challenges already and face challenges in their new environs. Researchers (Tadesse, 2014) identify a need to improve the understanding of the plight of refugees in order to inform the design of education programs for refugee children. In so doing, school districts and community organizations, such as resettlement agencies, can adapt their messaging and strategies to increase enrollment of refugee children in a large urban school district's preschools.

A potential starting point for accomplishing the task of building relationships with parents is for local school districts to collaborate with resettlement agencies in developing a concrete plan for addressing the unique needs of refugee parents and children. The participants in this study were refugee parents in an urban school district that were identified in cooperation with local resettlement agencies. While the researchers in this study did not interview educational leaders or leaders of the local resettlement agencies, it was clear from the analysis how important these local organizations are to the education of refugee children. Resettlement agencies were key to connecting refugee parents to the urban preschool services and the urban school district was key in providing the preschool instruction to a subpopulation that would benefit greatly from its provision. By helping refugee parents and their children access preschool education services, schools may benefit by improving educational outcomes later on—outcomes that schools, districts, and educational leaders are held accountable by state and federal departments of education.

In sum, urban school districts and resettlement agencies are natural allies with shared goals of improving outcomes for their stakeholders. School districts may wish to consider involving members of the refugee community, giving them voice and an opportunity to serve as a resource for their own children as well as for other refugee parents and children. These individuals can serve as ambassadors in the local communities and among their fellow refugees, sharing knowledge about educational services (e.g., public preschools) and the means by which to avail these services. The district and resettlement agencies may consider having liaisons who are trained and knowledgeable of complex policies and services, such as registration, school attendance, special education programs, bullying, school choices, and counseling; but most importantly skilled in working with refugee families. In addition to a liaison, another alternative for consideration is the creation of a parent-mentoring academy that offers a stipend and certificate to families who mentor families through the first year of schooling. Parent mentoring can build on the already present self-efficacy identified in the participants—often overlooked due to language and cultural differences.

Another implication for policy and practice is the improvement of educational coursework and professional development for educational professionals (administrators, teachers, and instructional staff) that touch upon the unique needs of refugee families and children; particularly in institutions that prepare educators to work in environments where refugees are resettled (e.g., urban areas). Not all communities see the influx of refugee resettlement, but university education programs proximal to such locales may want to explore expanding refugee-related content. This may alleviate practices based on secondhand information and the collective labeling of refugees based

on their immigration status. Educators are often aware of the language differences and some cultural differences, but few are adequately informed about the education systems, refugee backgrounds, and the influences of migration. Several of the parents in this study had extensive formal education, challenging stereotypes identified in the research literature and incorrectly assumed by the researchers about refugees.

The district that served as the context for this study may also consider the development or identification of a refugee parent curriculum or parent engagement model. The parent curriculum could focus on the parents gaining skills and knowledge about preschool program services and the long-term educational future of their children. This curriculum would likely need to include an orientation program designed to bring parents into the school to experience the school and classroom environment and to see how children learn. If the school district and educational institutions collaborate with refugee resettlement agencies to gain access to parents, this may provide insight into the development of refugee parent curriculum and provide educational professionals with firsthand knowledge and experiences with families before children enter the primary grades. Of course, when considering these recommendations, there is also the issues of funding and adequate staffing required for implementation.

In terms of future research, scholars may want to focus on identifying research tools that garner information from refugee parents in order to inform classroom teachers about their educational views and experiences. Doing so may facilitate classroom partnerships and practices that support refugee children preschool success. Additionally, researchers may study how parents benefit from access to information and strategies that focus on integrating their parenting skills and backgrounds into the successful support of their children. This may include providing supports that create an inclusive acculturating climate for refugee parents. As previously stated, refugee parents served as the participants in this study, not educational leaders, teachers, or representatives from resettlement agencies. Further studies could expand beyond the narrow confines of one type of stakeholder (refugee parents in the present study) to include additional key stakeholders, such as educational leaders, teachers, and representatives from resettlement agencies, and focus on the design of programs that seek to engage refugee parents and their effectiveness. Scholars may draw from or adapt existing parent engagement models, such as the work of Epstein (2001) or Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997).

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