

IMMIGRANT STUDENTS WITH LIMITED OR INTERRUPTED FORMAL EDUCATION: THE INFLUENCE OF HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND ADULT ROLE MODELS ON EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION

ABSTRACT

This exploratory study examines non-refugee immigrant students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) from Latin America pursuing their secondary education. The education system and the language (English) used differ from the system and language (Spanish) used in their home countries, leading to the educational exclusion of this group. Therefore, we focus on analysing the positive role of high expectations and adult role models concerning the educational inclusion of SLIFE in the host country. To this end, we conducted an empirical research using the communicative approach, interviewing 36 Latin American SLIFE between 15 and 20 years and 14 of their families.

1 Diana Valero, Associate Professor of Social Work, e-mail: dvalero@unizar.es

2 Tatiana Iñiguez-Berrozpe, Associate Professor of Sociology, e-mail: tatianai@unizar.es

3 Carmen Elboj Saso, Full Professor of Sociology, e-mail: celboj@unizar.es

4 Ariadna Munté Pascual, Lecturer at the Department of Social Work and Social Services

Received: April, 2020.

Accepted: April, 2022.

UDK: 37.011.3-052-054.7

DOI: 10.3935/ljsrv29i2.370

Diana Valero¹

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3252-076X>

Tatiana Iñiguez-Berrozpe²

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4530-9645>

Carmen Elboj Saso³

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0937-4861>

University of Zaragoza

Ariadna Munté Pascual⁴

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2226-634X>

University of Barcelona

Keywords:

SLIFE; education; emotional factors; high expectations; adult role models

INTRODUCTION

In recent years Europe has been facing an unprecedented migration crisis. One of the biggest challenges facing destination countries is to ensure that minors acquire the best possible education. However, statistics show that immigrants have worse educational outcomes, as the PISA results of the latest editions show (OECD, 2019). Specifically, "the average score in reading amongst immigrant students across OECD countries was 452 points; non-immigrant students averaged 42 points higher. On average, first-generation immigrant students scored 440 points in reading, while second-generation immigrant students scored 465, on average (OECD, 2019, Table II. B 1.9.3).

Nevertheless, immigrant students are not homogeneous (Valero and Platja, 2017.; OECD, 2019.). Among them, the most vulnerable are, for example, those who recently arrived on the coasts of Spain, Malta, or Italy. Among other issues, they have suffered a disruption in their education due to experiencing several migrations and those who have difficulties in achieving educational success are the so-called students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) (Custodio and O'Loughlin, 2020.). SLIFE have unique needs that require specific attention in the socio-educational field (Evans, Gable and Habib, 2021.; Browder, 2018.), such as "their limited first-language literacy skills, frequent gaps in academic knowledge and skills, and, sometimes, critical social and emotional needs. Also, many tend to arrive unaccompanied as teenagers" (Custodio and O'Loughlin, 2020.: 2). They are especially at risk of failing or dropping out of traditional academic programs (Fry, 2003.). Despite the specific characteristics of this sub-group and the need for specific programs, they have not been studied in depth in the European context. Therefore, it is vital to use the evidence collected in countries such as the United States to help them succeed in the European educational systems.

Specifically, research on SLIFE by the international scientific community indicates that between 10 and 20% of English language learners in the U.S., all immigrant students, have experienced interruptions in their formal education (Lukes, 2015.). Far from decreasing, this population will grow as global conflicts such as the war in Syria and economic differences between more and less developed countries cause an increase in migratory flows, which go hand-by-hand with the movements of minors.

Their interrupted education implies that they usually do not speak the new language of instruction, and their educational level may be at least two years below that of their peers (Freeman, Freeman and Mercuri, 2002.; DeCapua and Marshall, 2010.; DeCapua, 2016.). In addition to the educational characteristics and difficulties, the problems that have caused their educational interruption are added, such as the fact that they can be caused by the war in their countries of origin or natural disasters (Office of English Language Learning and Migrant Education, 2008.). Furt-

hermore, these situations often lead to mental health problems such as post-traumatic stress, influencing their academic performance (Perreira and Ornelas, 2013.). Moreover, immigrant students in general and SLIFE students in particular, face complex family situations (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova and Louie, 2002.); trips to reach the country of destination alone and during which they might be victims of abuse (Sangalang et al., 2019.); the need to support the family financially leads some of them to contribute through jobs inside and outside the home (Orellana, 2001.), as well as problems in the new culture (Brunton and Jeffrey, 2014.). Although they directly reflect on their academic results, these difficulties transcend the educational level and require the coordinated intervention of more professionals. These professionals might be school social workers, who can address social problems and make the reality of these students known to their teachers, so that the teachers could address SLIFE academic performance more effectively.

This group faces enormous challenges associated with cultural changes that, without the necessary support, are difficult to overcome, and therefore this often leads to failure and higher dropout rates (Fry, 2003. in Spaulding et al., 2004.). This necessary support goes, in many cases, beyond what teachers can give despite their care (Hos, 2016.), because it derives from socio-emotional and economic situations that exceed their mission and that require the involvement of other educational professionals.

In this line, our research belongs to the larger Project “Understanding Students with Interrupted Formal Education, co-constructing new opportunities,” developed as part of a request from the Northeastern U.S. public administration. The goal of this project was to understand in more depth the characteristics, strengths and needs of the students identified as SLIFE in the district, with the ultimate objective of providing better services and interventions targeted at their specific needs. All this departing from their voices, including students and their families, is a leading contributor to our research, as qualitative studies with this population are not very extensive. This article summarises the main contributions of the exploratory research, developed by social workers, regarding the characterization of SLIFE, their educational difficulties, and how socialization through adult role models and high expectations for their education can contribute to their social inclusion. We consider it a fundamental element from the point of view of social work and that can be promoted by these professionals in schools.

Relevance of family and social environment for SLIFE's educational inclusion: Adult role models and high expectations

As already noted, alongside the purely academic elements, other contextual elements for SLIFE, such as personal and family situations, should be considered because they may affect educational outcomes. As a result, the students may face a difficult situation compounded by assimilating to a new school environment with a new language (Brunton and Jeffrey, 2014.). This adaptation by the immigrant students in general and specifically for SLIFE can be traumatic, as they might discover that they are far behind their peers in terms of academic levels.

Moreover, several authors have echoed how the differences between the school system of origin and the host school system may create difficulties, especially for students at risk of school failure (Li, 2007.; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco and Todorova, 2008.). Departing from the studies of Hall (1976.) described below, Ibarra (2001.) justifies this cultural imbalance that can be useful in analyzing SLIFE. According to Hall (1976.), different cultures can be classified on a continuum, from those based on low context (L.C.) to those relying on high context (H.C.), representing essential differences. While the former cultures are more focused on the individual (e.g., maybe more competitive and focused on individual work), the latter is based on the collective (e.g., teamwork, community-based learning). Thus, cultures of countries such as Germany or the U.S. are at the low end of the continuum and are, for example, based more on the individual. In contrast, the Mediterranean and Latino cultures, which are located nearer the high end, are more focused on the context. These categories are not absolute and do not describe everyone, as all people do not respond equally depending on their background.

Based on this theory, Ibarra developed how this cultural perspective influences education by studying Latino students in American universities. The study assumed that Latino students come from H.C. cultures and integrate into an L.C. culture, such as the American culture, creating »a cultural dissonance« (Ibarra, 2001.: 90). In this case, it is argued that students must adapt to new values, such as specialization or fragmentation, which, together with the lack of social support systems, contributes to a sense of loneliness and isolation (Martin, 2015.). For DeCapua and Marshall (2010.) and DeCapua (2016.), the same thing occurs with SLIFE, as they often come from H.C. cultures, with strong collectivist roots. This entails different ways of doing things and learning from those found in the U.S. and can create adaptation difficulties and academic challenges, with the whole community becoming a key factor for educational success. As the immediate reference in their context, the community is essential for inclusion in education, given its proven relevance as a motivational factor in the educational decisions of immigrant students (Zimmer-

man-Orozco, 2015). In H.C. cultures, adults become a vital reference for students, as they are of great relevance for SLIFE; if their influence is positive, it can serve as a bridge between the H.C. culture and the new L.C. one.

The influence of expectations on immigrant students in general (Portes et al. 2011.) and Latino immigrants in particular (Dabach et al., 2018.; Carpenter, 2014., among others) has been widely studied, both in general and focusing on family's expectations (Sibley and Brabeck, 2017.). Concretely, authors such as Cheng and Starks (2002.) noted that the high expectations of all these agents directly influence the motivation of immigrant students. They also stated that expectations play a crucial role in students' future decisions and their educational success. Therefore, if the expectations of students do not go beyond finding a job, it is not easy to achieve good academic results, so it is crucial to address this area and show the students that they can go further if they have a better education. Furthermore, the study conducted by Cheng and Starks (2002.) noted that, in the case of students from cultural minorities, the expectations of the "closer ones" have more influence than the expectations of teachers or peers, where "closer ones" include family, friends, and members of the community with influence on the students. Fundamental are family expectations when parents and those closest to the students encourage them to continue studying (Koustourakis, Asimak and Spiliopoulou, 2016.).

Regarding families, we highlight the works of Swap (1993.) and Epstein (2010.) already referred to the importance of the family-school-community relationship and the different forms of school involvement. It is paradoxical that despite scientific evidence supporting this triangle as an element of school improvement, current programs, such as that of the SLIFE that have participated in this study, leave the community and families on the sidelines. Likewise, the work of Baquedano-López, Alexander, and Hernández (2013.) refers to the importance of understanding the diversity of getting involved in education that families have, since an ethnocentric vision can lead to undervaluing the contributions of families. Taking the classic theory of cultural capital applied to education (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970.), Koustourakis, Asimaki, and Spiliopoulou (2016.) use the concept of »cultural capital« to investigate the similarities and differences between the institutionalized and objectified cultural capital of native and immigrant parents and correlate these two forms of cultural capital with their expectations for their children's educational future proving that the educational expectations, regardless of national origin and educational level, seem to be very high.

To sum up, high expectations from their closer ones (family, teachers, and community) and the creation of new role models may change the situation of exclusion experienced by SLIFE and impact their acquisition of instrumental skills, such as a second language. Moreover, if school social workers or counsellor teams know this reality, it allows interventions to be guided beyond what happens in the classroom, contributing through work with the family and the community to the educational improvement of immigrant students.

METHOD

The methodology followed in this study was based on the communicative scientific paradigm (Gómez, Puigvert and Flecha, 2011.), recognized by the Framework Programme of the European Commission as especially relevant for working with vulnerable groups. Based on this paradigm, we have followed the methodology of the communicative approach in the techniques of data collection, coding, and analysis.

Research and analysis techniques

The research techniques used in the fieldwork were in-depth communicative interviews with families (14) and the daily life stories with students (36). The family interviews were focused on specific aspects of their children, school, and socialization; the communicative daily-life story aims »not to construct a biography of the research participant but instead to elicit a very reflective narrative of her or his daily life that sheds light on important events, present, and past, and reflections as well as future expectations« (Gómez, Puigvert, and Flecha, 2011.: 240).

Students were interviewed in their schools or homes in one session between 45 and 90 minutes. The interviewers, including the researchers, were all educational professionals, especially school social workers, of the same language as the respondents. Interviews were conducted in the first language of the respondents (Spanish). They were recorded (with the interviewee's consent), transcribed by the interviewers, and analyzed by the researchers.

For the analysis of the interviews and daily life stories (DLS) we have distinguished between the elements that promote inequalities (exclusionary components) and those that favour inclusion (transformative components) (Gómez, 2014.). Exclusionary factors are those barriers individuals or social groups encounter when attempting to be included in a social situation or to acquire a social benefit. For SLIFE, those barriers can be situations, attitudes, language, actions, etc., that prevent the inclusion of their community in the new education system in terms of equality. On the other hand, transformative factors are defined in terms of opposition to exclusionary factors. These elements can overcome the (external and internal) barriers to the equal inclusion of the SLIFE community in society in general, and in the educational field and academic success in particular. All information collected throughout the project is discussed concerning this exclusionary-transformative axis.

Sample

We conducted the study in a Northeastern city of the United States. In this study, 28 boys and 8 girls participated, representing 45.6% of the total Latino SLIFE in the district, and the distribution of boys and girls respects the distribution of the total population.

Regarding the profile of these students, they come from Central America and the Caribbean (El Salvador (64%), followed by Honduras (14%), Guatemala (8%), and the Dominican Republic (8%). They are between 15 and 20 years old, and at the time of the interview, they were participating in a specific program for SLIFE. Out of 36 students interviewed, 2 (6% of the sample) were illiterate. As students and their families reported, the reasons were related to individual safety and family needs. Only 3 out of 36 of the students interviewed reported having had a kindergarten education. Almost all the students (94%) reported that they had been enrolled in primary education, but half of the high school students had not started the 7th grade in their home countries.

Currently, only 10% of students state that they regularly participate in extracurricular educational support activities, and 15% do so occasionally when they need support. The justification for not participating is their need to carry out work irregularly in the afternoons due to poor family economic situation.

Regarding their family context, 33% of the students live with only one of their parents as the other relative stayed in the home country; 31% live with both parents, and 36% do not live with either of their parents, living with an extended family or alone. Regarding their families, only half claim to have attended meetings at school, and it was always due to student misbehavior or absences. Only one in three has attended the parents' group meetings due to the difficulties of the schedules and work conciliation. 50% of the students interviewed stated that they were working or were in the process of seeking employment at the time of the interview, all of them being male.

For selecting the sample, the study was presented by the District Educational Administration at public schools with the largest populations of SLIFE. There is a total of 16 schools with SLIFE programs. However, only 5 are for secondary students: a school for SLIFE in Spanish, one for SLIFE from Cape Verde, two more for SLIFE from Haiti, and the last school that has 4 programs: one for each of the main communities (Spanish, Cape Verdean, and Haitian) and another multilingual program. This paper focuses on the district's most significant school with Latino-SLIFE program, but the 5 schools agreed to participate in the project. This school has a specific program for Spanish speakers-SLIFE where all Latino SLIFE are together with one or two teachers. There is no interaction with students in regular schooling except during co-curricular activities and only when these students participate. A Spanish speaker social worker presented the project in the Spanish-SLIFE classrooms. Anyone who

wanted to participate was invited, ensuring that anyone who wanted could express their opinion and reach a participation rate of 45.6% of the total Latino SLIFE.

Ethics in research

The method received approval from both the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the ethics committee of the educational department where the research was carried out. This includes, among other things: that all the documentation provided to the participants was prepared in their language; professionals from the socio-educational field (especially school social workers and psychologists) conducted the interviews in their language; the consents were collected both for the students and their parents; no publication derived from the study included information that would allow students to be identified and the publications were made after the completion of the SLIFE program by all the participants, except for one doctoral thesis, which was not published open-access. Finally, to avoid any possibility of identifying the participants, the specific city where they live was also replaced by the region according to ethical recommendations.

FINDINGS

Having analyzed the past literature exploring the relevance of high expectations for immigrant students and how adult role models can help them, we focused mainly on how such high expectations from the students themselves, family members, and other adult role models positively influence the manner in which SLIFE address their academic challenges. Furthermore, we highlight how in H.C. cultures, such as the Latino culture, with the importance given to adult role models, the relevance that adults attribute to the education of SLIFE and the expectations placed on them will be essential to achieve the educational inclusion of SLIFE. Consequently, we focused mainly on the transformative factors that help SLIFE overcome the exclusionary situation regarding their academic success and inclusion in education.

High expectations for SLIFE

One of the greatest difficulties with newcomer students is that many do not seek to study, but rather get a job due to economic needs and shortcomings encountered in their home countries. They see their unrealistic expectations disappear when they discover that, in order to stay in the U.S., they have to study and thus obtain a student visa that allows them to reside in the U.S. legally:

When one comes, at least, one does not come to study but comes to work and to help the family, and when I got here, I saw I had to study.

In addition to recognizing that studying is essential, it is also common, especially among girls, to show a desire to go to college:

Go to college and get a degree.

Even so, they are aware of the difficulties that they face to get to college, and often they have more immediate goals, such as finishing high school and, from there, moving on:

Until I got here, I had nothing in mind. But one always says, »if I get to graduate I want to be a lawyer, want to be a doctor« or to be honest, I like the attorney work. But any white-collar work is good. But as I say, my goal is to finish high school and if there is a good little job, take it. But for goals, I have not thought it out, but high school... I have a plan to graduate.

In this sense, we can see that the students have high expectations. Identified as a transforming factor, they identify education with having a better job and they especially identify learning English with a greater social inclusion:

Q- Why are you motivated to study?

St- Because I want to learn English and get a good job. Because here, in this country, they look at you as if you were less worthy if one does not know English. And I want to learn English so that they will respect me more.

This motivation is sometimes so obvious that SLIFE with younger siblings in their home countries seek to convey the importance of education to their brothers and sisters. However, since their arrival in the U.S., they have realized how necessary it is:

Yes, because there is a problem. There are many jobs. There we work in agriculture or livestock. That is how I spent life there. For me, I would have liked to study. There I have a little brother who wants to come. But I tell him that if he has the opportunity, he has to study (...).

High expectations among SLIFE relatives

We have observed that parents from our sample encourage their children to continue studying in the Latino community. In many cases, the parents themselves could not study and see possibilities for their children in the U.S. that they did not have; they appreciate education not only as an opportunity but as a necessity, transforming their reality:

A- So they (regarding their parents) tell me to make my best effort. To make the effort to learn and be someone in life (...)

Q- What do you think?

A- It is good that they advise me. My mother speaks with her (referring to the

sister with whom he lives) very often. My mom, she advises me too. To get something. To be someone good in life. Then I take that into account. Because I want to be someone in life.

While future expectations in their home countries were not high, often due to the economic situation of the country, in the U.S., the expectations of the family increase, and education gains greater relevance in allowing students to get a job, especially in the case of learning instrumental skills, such as English:

Q- And your parents, what do they tell you about school?

A- Well, they tell me to learn English.

Q- And why learn English?

A- They tell us that we could have a better job. For example, we could work as cashiers.

However, in this sense, a difference is observed between the expectations of new students. For them, the priority is to get a job as quickly as possible, while the students who have lived longer in the United States want to continue studying, some more than others:

Q- And you, what do you want more? Finish school and get to work now or go to college?

A- I want to go to college.

One of the most critical exclusionary factors that emerged in the interviews was family involvement in school and how it affects high expectations. Unfortunately, our research shows that this family participation is still very limited. As stated by one of the interviewed students, parents still do not know much about the education that their children receive:

I think it would be nice (parents to participate more) to speak about how they behave in school, teachers, which classes they are receiving... because my dad knows almost nothing of what I do here in the school, because he has just come to one meeting, if my friends are good, the teachers that I have, you know nothing...

The fact that immigrant parents might not participate in school activities does not mean that they do not participate in their children's education. How they participate does not necessarily include participating at the school, given the barriers they face (such as lack of understanding English and difficulties in fitting work timetables with school meetings and activities). In fact, students believe that their parents do get involved in education:

Q- Sounds like your dad was not involved with your studies. Do you think that it would help if he were more involved?

A- He is always aware. What happens is that he has given me the confidence to do my homework, to go the school, to do everything at school. As he says, »You have to take what is yours. You said you have to do your homework to improve your education.«

In this regard, parents and other relatives collaborate as they are able, by lending their help at home, correcting homework, being aware, and using such strategies to transform their children's exclusion in education. For example, as one of the interviewees expresses regarding the poor school meeting attendance of her family and other families, she explains how, although their families cannot go to the center, they have all supported her at home with math:

Yes, somehow she helps me (referring to her aunt). She does not come here (refers to school), but she helps me with math there. She is the one who helps me.

Another situation illustrates the expectations parents have for their children: the fact that they prefer their children to study and not to work. For the students, this is important because they are aware that a large number of their peers in their countries of origin must work:

Q- Are you aware that many of your classmates have to work because they are not in the same situation as you?

A- Yes, that makes me feel that my parents support me.

We have even observed in SLIFE that little brothers receive financial support from their older brothers/sisters, which they see as an aid to their study:

Q- And your brother, does he help you with your homework?

He told me to stop working. He gives me money. Also, my parents tell me not to work.

Relevance of adult role models in SLIFE education

Typically, the literature considers teachers as important references for this community. It is argued that if it is shown that an immigrant can be a teacher, immigrant students may identify more with these teachers and feel more supported and understood. This also shows that the authority figure or expert needs not always be from the culture that is seen as superior (Flecha, 2013.).

However, according to the interviews, relatives are the main reference for SLIFE. For example, when classes for adults are organized and students appreciate their relatives' involvement in such classes, there is an immediate increment of educational success. In addition, these programs increase the confidence of families in the school workers and facilitate a more positive family-school relationship. Thus, one student whose school uses these kinds of programs stated that this type of action develops a greater identification with parents and more significant support for them:

A- Yes, they have already told us that parents can come, or brothers or cousins. There are classes from 4 to 6 pm.

Q- Ah, good! And you, what do you think about that?

A- Well, it is good for dads who are like us, who need to learn English or learn

how to help with tasks.

Q- And do you think that this could improve you and your colleagues' performance?

A- Yes, because they can help us or help people who live as we do. Yes, it would help us to learn English. They would talk to us.

In addition, students who indicated that their families supported them with homework also made reference to the fact that their family members had participated in some type of training program, demonstrating that the family's education has a direct impact on the education of the students.

In the house, my aunt can do all that. I tell her to teach me. (...) she did not study, but is studying adult classes.

DISCUSSION

Past research on SLIFE and the obstacles they face regarding educational inclusion in the host country has highlighted how the lack of motivation of these students is one of the greatest difficulties encountered. In many cases, the various educational programs in the host countries do not take into account the personal, family, and cultural context of the immigrant students. This causes problems such as truancy, labelling, disqualification of these students and their families, problems with coexistence, school failure and lack of motivation (Flecha and Soler, 2013.). However, and taking into account the exploratory character of our results, most students interviewed are highly motivated to go to school; although they have different objectives, their expectations are high.

High expectations that SLIFE have about themselves and that are manifested by their adult role models become a motivational tool that directly reverses the negative results, transforming an initial exclusionary situation. Thus, despite the belief that the background of SLIFE in H.C. cultures, such as Latin America, can cause dissonance when they must adapt to an L.C. culture, such as that in the U.S. (DeCapua and Marshall, 2010.), this importance given to context can be an advantage for the educational inclusion of these students. Thus, within the group of SLIFE analyzed, the interactions between the students and their families, and even their interactions with the rest of the community are highly valued. The students generally consider their studies and educational participation to be critical. Because of this, when integrated into education, cultural links can be seen not as a handicap, but as a factor to be exploited.

Although authors analyzing the adult role models for SLIFE have focused on members of the community and teachers (Guest and Schneider, 2003.; Spaulding et al., 2004.; Zimmerman-Orozco, 2015.), in our sample, the families themselves acted as the main adult role models for SLIFE. However, their opportunities to par-

ticipate in school are very limited, as Bhopal reported in a previous study (2004.). In general, all the families agreed that their participation in their children's education is very important and that they feel that they are involved, but it seems that the ways in which they are involved do not fit the way school workers expect families to participate. Here, we see a great difference between the expectations of the school and those of the family. In contrast, the school expectations focus on a physical presence (e.g., attending meetings); the idea of "education" for Latino families often entails supporting students from home, for example, keeping the children from working to gain more education. At the same time, families have a low academic background and level of English, and some feel that they cannot help and prefer to let the teachers do their job.

It is essential to note that the lack of direct participation in school activities, typical for a Western model of education (LC) but different from the model in their home countries (H.C.), does not mean that parents lack interest in the education of their children. In contrast, in the analysis of the interviews, we have seen how families understand their children's education as a necessity and an opportunity, especially regarding the acquisition of English for finding a good job. This is the idea noted in the international scientific community in the case of immigrant students and especially the newcomers such as SLIFE: learning the new language is essential. As Abedi (2008.) noted, learning opportunities are intimately linked to the mastery of the language of instruction. Moreover, one of the key elements that influence learning opportunities is the motivation that emerges from students' interactions with all kinds of people, and relatives remain an essential part of this H.C. culture (Zimmerman-Orozco, 2015.). Thus, we have seen how the high expectations that these families have about the possibilities for their children's learning directly impact the motivation of SLIFE. Some students expressed a great interest in continuing their studies and even going to college. In the end, families' high expectations strongly influence schooling and educative exclusion, as Aubert et al., (2016.) reported previously.

In short, the role of the various adult agents interacting with SLIFE serves both as a motivator and as a reference, supporting the scientific literature that shows how the involvement of all educational agents can determine the educational inclusion of immigrant and ethnic minority students (Spaulding et al., 2004.; Office of English Language Learning and Migrant Education, 2008.).

CONCLUSIONS

In contrast to SLIFE's initial "loneliness" in the destination country, our exploratory study shows that the strength of their own cultural context, which includes the family and community in educational processes, can contribute significantly.

This H.C. culture uses the importance of the family and community network as an advantage for the educational inclusion of these students. In this sense, as an inclusive element, we have analyzed the impact of adult role models and high expectations on student motivation, which creates high expectations in young people about themselves and their education. Many of these students, far from being discouraged and dropping out of school, are even thinking about college. The role played by families is essential; they are involved in their children's education, with the idea of providing them better opportunities that they wish they had. All this is done despite not being able to participate in school activities, given their difficulties and school-related obstacles (mismatch with working hours, long distances between the center and the family, etc.). Their support for instrumental learning is smaller, although when family members are involved in training activities inside the school, it directly impacts students by serving as a positive reference and educational support. As we have seen, not participating in school does not mean that these relatives do not participate in education.

To aid students such as SLIFE, who face difficulties in educational inclusion, but whose context attaches great importance to education and acts as a motivational element, we are committed to a holistic approach that addresses all areas of student life and, based on scientific evidence, promotes educational inclusion. In this sense, promoting strategies that encourage the participation of SLIFE families in the school and its educational activities would reinforce SLIFE's motivation; thereby, these high expectations for SLIFE's education can become a reality.

In this aspect, participation is essential for teachers who are concerned and involved and for other specific professionals, such as school social workers. Teachers have a vital teaching load outside the school, so they have minimal time to pay attention to this socio-emotional aspect. Specific professionals must transfer this deep knowledge of SLIFE to their teachers and help them build strategies that allow them to reach SLIFE. At the same time, it would also be essential that the same professionals work with the family and the community, bringing them closer to the school and making them feel welcome. We cannot expect teachers to address all the needs of these students and their families; therefore, figures such as family coordinators, school social workers and some counsellors are essential in this new school environment. Furthermore, all these professionals must be trained in the characteristics of SLIFE and the evidence collected on the most appropriate way to help them. Previous experiences with other immigrant students show that, for example, through interactive groups, it is possible to include families, the community and improve the academic results of these students (Valero, Redondo-Sama and Elboj, 2018.).

Limitations

The results presented offer students and their families' vision about their social situation and how the expectations of those close to them influence them. Despite the relevance of capturing their voices and learning more about this group, research inevitably has its limitations. We highlight that the students interviewed come from very few educational centers, so the reality captured may differ from other centers.

REFERENCES

1. Abedi, J. (2008). Classification system for English language learners: Issues and recommendations. *Educational Measurement: Issues & Practice*, 27 (3), 17–31. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-3992.2008.00125.x>
2. Aubert, A., Villarejo, B., Cabré, J. & Santos, T. (2016). La Verneda Sant Martí adult school: A reference of popular education in the neighborhoods. *Teachers College Record*, 118 (4), 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811611800402>
3. Baquedano-López, P., Alexander, R. A. & Hernández, S. J. (2013). Equity issues in parental and community involvement in schools: What teacher educators need to know. *Review of research in education*, 37 (1), 149–182. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X12459718>
4. Bhopal, K. (2004). Gypsy travelers and education: Changing needs and changing perceptions. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 52 (1), 47–64 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8527.2004.00254.x>
5. Brunton, M. & Jeffrey, L. (2014). Identifying factors that influence the learner empowerment of international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 43, 321–344. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2014.10.003>
6. Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J.C. (1970). *La reproduction: éléments pour une théorie de système d'enseignement*. Paris: Editions du Minuit
7. Browder, C. T. (2018). Recently resettled refugee students learning English in US high schools: The impact of students' educational backgrounds. Educating refugee-background students. In: Shapiro, S., Farrelly, R., & Curry, M. J. (eds.), (2018). *Educating refugee-background students: Critical issues and dynamic contexts*. Multilingual Matters, 17–32. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783099986-006>
8. Carpenter II, D. M. (2014). Expectations, aspirations, and achievement among Latino students of immigrant families. In: Jeynes, W. (ed.), *Family Factors and the Educational Success of Children*. Routledge, 169–190
9. Cheng, S. & Starks, B. (2002). Racial differences in the effects of significant others on students' educational expectations. *Sociology of Education*, 75, 306–327. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3090281>

10. Custodio, B. & O'Loughlin, J. B. (2020). Students with Interrupted formal education: Understanding who they are. *American Educator*, 44 (1), 9–11. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1249795.pdf> (16.2.2022).
11. Dabach, D. B., Suárez-Orozco, C., Hernandez, S. J., & Brooks, M. D. (2018). Future perfect? Teachers' expectations and explanations of their Latino immigrant students' postsecondary futures. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 17 (1), 38–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2017.1281809>
12. DeCapua, A. (2016). Reaching students with limited or interrupted formal education through culturally responsive teaching. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 10 (5), 225–237. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12183>
13. DeCapua, A. & Marshall, H. W. (2010). Students with limited or interrupted formal education in US classrooms. *Urban Review*, 42 (2), 159–173. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-009-0128-z>
14. Epstein, L. (2010). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76 (9), 81–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171009200326>
15. Evans, W., Gable, R. A., & Habib, A. (2021). Lessons from the past and challenges for the future: Inclusive education for students with unique needs. *Education Sciences*, 11 (6), 281. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11060281>
16. Flecha, A. (2013). Healthier lives for European minority groups: School and health care, lessons from the Roma. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 10 (8), 3089–3111. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph10083089>
17. Flecha, R. & Soler, M. (2013). Turning difficulties into possibilities: Engaging Roma families and students in school through dialogic learning. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 43 (4), 451–465. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2013.819068>
18. Freeman, Y. S., Freeman, D. E., & Mercuri, S. (2002). Keys to success for bilingual students with limited formal schooling. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 25 (1), 203–213. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2001.10162790>
19. Fry, R. (2003). *Hispanic youth dropping out of U.S. schools: Measuring the challenge*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center. Retrieved from: www.ericdigests.org/2004-3/latino.html (16.2.2022.).
20. Gómez, A. (2014). New developments in mixed methods with vulnerable groups. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 8 (3), 317–320. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689814527879>
21. Gómez, A., Puigvert, L. & Flecha, R. (2011). Critical communicative methodology: Informing real social transformation through research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17 (3), 235–245. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410397802>
22. Guest, A. & Schneider, B. (2003). Adolescents' extracurricular participation in context: The mediating effects of schools, communities, and identity. *Sociology of Education*, 76 (2), 89–109. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3090271>

23. Hall, E. (1976). *Beyond culture*. New York: Anchor.
24. Hos, R. (2016). Caring is not enough: Teachers' enactment of ethical care for adolescent students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) in a newcomer classroom. *Education and Urban Society*, 48 (5), 479–503. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124514536440>
25. Ibarra, R. (2001). *Beyond affirmative action: Reframing the context of higher education*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.
26. Koustourakis, G., Asimaki, A., Spiliopoulou, G. (2016). Cultural capital and educational expectations of native and immigrant parents of primary school students: Qualitative study. *International Journal of Sociology of Education*, 5 (3), 166–189. <https://doi.org/10.17583/rise.2016.1892>
27. Li, G. (2007). *Culturally contested literacies: America's »rainbow underclass« and urban schools*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203935576>
28. Lukes, M. (2015). *Latino immigrant youth and interrupted schooling: dropouts, dreamers and alternative pathways to college*. London: Multilingual Matters.
29. Martin, E. (2015). Un Análisis de los Marcos Educativos de la Interculturalidad. *Scientific Journal on Intercultural Studies*, 1 (1), 4–31. <https://doi.org/10.17583/recei.2015.1181>
30. Orellana, M. F. (2001). The work kids do: Mexican and Central American immigrant children's contributions to households and schools in California. *Harvard Educational Review*, 71 (3), 366–390. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.71.3.52320g7n21922hw4>
31. Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development [OECD]. (2019). *PISA 2018 results (Volume II): Where all students can succeed*. Retrieved from: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/263bde74-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/263bde74-en> (16.2.2022.)
32. Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education: Indiana Department of Education (2008). *Effective programs for English language learners (ELL) with interrupted formal education*. Retrieved from: www.doe.in.gov/englishlanguagelearning (16.2.2022.)
33. Perreira, K. M. & Ornelas, I. (2013). Painful passages: traumatic experiences and post-traumatic stress among US Immigrant Latino adolescents and their primary caregivers. *International Migration Review*, 47 (4), 976–1005. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12050>
34. Portes, A., Aparicio, R., Haller, W. & Vickstrom, E. (2011). Progresar en Madrid: Aspiraciones y expectativas de la segunda generación en España. *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas (REIS)*, 134 (1), <https://doi.org/55-85.10.5477/cis/reis.134.55>
35. Sangalang, C. C., Becerra, D., Mitchell, F. M., Lechuga-Peña, S., Lopez, K., & Kim, I. (2019). Trauma, post-migration stress, and mental health: A comparative analysis of refugees and immigrants in the United States. *Journal of immi-*

- grant and minority health*, 21 (5), 909–919. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-018-0826-2>
36. Sibley, E. & Brabeck, K. (2017). Latino immigrant students' school experiences in the United States: The importance of family-school-community collaborations. *School Community Journal*, 27 (1), 137–157.
 37. Spaulding, S., Carolino, B., Amen, K. A. & Ball, K. (2004). *Immigrant students and secondary school reform: Compendium of best practices*. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.
 38. Suárez-Orozco, C., Todorova, I. L. & Louie, J. (2002). Making up for lost time: The experience of separation and reunification among immigrant families. *Family process*, 41 (4), 625–643. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2002.00625.x>
 39. Suárez-Orozco, C., Suárez-Orozco, M. M. & Todorova, I. (2008). *Learning a new land: Immigrant students in American society*. Harvard University Press.
 40. Swap, S. M. (1993). *Developing home-school partnerships: From concepts to practice*, New York: Teachers College Press.
 41. Valero, D. & Platja, T. (2017). Inclusive immigrant student education: Lessons from the United States, Canada and Australia. *REMIÉ-Multidisciplinary Journal Of Educational Research*, 7 (3), 316–338. <https://doi.org/10.17583/remie.2017.2946>
 42. Valero, D., Redondo-Sama, G. & Elboj, C. (2018). Interactive groups for immigrant students: A factor for success in the path of immigrant students. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 22 (7), 787–802. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.1408712>
 43. Zimmerman-Orozco, S. (2015). Border kids in the home of the brave. *Educational Leadership*, 72(6), 48-53. Retrieved from <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/border-kids-in-the-home-of-the-brave> (16.2.2022.)

Diana Valero
Tatiana Iñiguez-Berrozpe
Carmen Elboj Saso
Ariadna Munté Pascual

STUDENTI IMIGRANTI S OGRANIČENIM ILI PREKINUTIM FORMALNIM OBRAZOVANJEM: UČINAK VISOKIH OČEKIVANJA I ULOGE ODRASLIH UZORA NA UKLJUČENOST U OBRAZOVANJE

SAŽETAK

Ovaj istraživački rad analizira učenike imigrante koji nisu u statusu izbjeglica s ograničenim ili prekinutim formalnim obrazovanjem (SLIFE) iz Latinske Amerike koji pohađaju srednju školu. Obrazovni sustav i jezik kojim se služe (engleski) različiti su od obrazovnog sustava i jezika (španjolski) u zemljama iz kojih dolaze, zbog čega dolazi do obrazovne isključenosti ove grupe. Stoga smo se usredotočili na analizu pozitivne uloge visokih očekivanja i odraslih uzora u pogledu obrazovne uključenosti ovih učenika u zemlji domaćinu. U tu smo svrhu proveli empirijsko istraživanje koristeći komunikacijski pristup, unutar kojeg smo intervjuirali 36 učenika s ograničenim ili prekinutim formalnim obrazovanjem iz Latinske Amerike u dobi od 15 do 20 godina i 14 od njihovih obitelji.

Ključne riječi: *učenici s ograničenim ili prekinutim formalnim obrazovanjem (SLIFE); emocionalni čimbenici; visoka očekivanja; odrasli uzori.*



*Međunarodna licenca / International License:
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0.*