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REFUGEE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT AFTER  
MIGRATION AND RESETTLEMENT

By

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B.S.E, Henderson State University, 1978  
M.Ed., University of Washington, 2000

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Faculty of the  
College of Education and Human Development of the  
University of Louisville  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Organizational Development

Department of Educational Leadership, Evaluation, and Organizational Development  
University of Louisville  
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2019

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A Dissertation Approved on

March 22, 2019

By the following Dissertation Committee:

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my deceased parents

Mrs. Kathryn Floyd Stovall

and

Mr. Joe Stovall, Jr.

who provided me with many priceless opportunities to grow and explore the world.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my children, Wesley, Kamron, and Kaileigh Robinson.

Thank you for encouraging me and supporting me when I needed it the most.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

I would like to acknowledge my dissertation committee for the guidance and support you gave me as I journeyed down the proposal and defense road. Each of you were instrumental in inspiring me to dig deeply to produce a quality product. I offer a special thank you to Dr. Kyle Ingle, my chair, for demanding competence and quality.

I am especially grateful to the refugee resettlement agencies staff for your relentless efforts to recruit participants and coordinate the interviews. The research would not have been possible without your support.

Thank you to the refugee parents who participated in this study and shared their experiences with me. Your experiences are truly heroic and deserve to be shared. You will forever guide my appreciation for the life I am privileged to live. I am humbled by your resiliency.

I want to thank my colleague, Denise Franklin-Williams for her friendship, support, and encouragement. Thank you for making me laugh all those times I wanted to cry, and for knowing when I needed a friend. I could not have asked for a better writing partner.

To Dr. Michele Foster, our chance encounter will always remind me of how important it is to entertain strangers. Thank you Dr. Foster for your advice and encouragement to believe in myself, and my abilities.

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## ABSTRACT

### REFUGEE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT AFTER MIGRATION AND RESETTLEMENT

Kathy Yvette Stovall

March 22, 2019

Over the years, researchers have documented the behaviors of refugee parents and their challenges as it relates to their children in preschool programs. However, there is a gap in the literature for understanding the refugee parental perception of preschool after resettlement, and what motivates or detracts from preschool enrollment. This research study was conducted to understand the phenomenon of preschool enrollment by refugee parents.

Globally, millions of children are identified as refugee. They and their parents are resettled in countries and cities that contrast their homeland and migration camp experiences. The differences they experience can be equated to starting over. In this study, roles, responsibilities, and future are central to starting over and are contributors to the research findings.

The phenomenography research methodology was chosen for this study because it explores how a group collectively perceives a phenomenon. In this study, the research addresses how refugee parents perceive enrollment in public preschool programs. The

data used for this research were primary data sources. Participants completed a questionnaire and participated in a semi-structured interview. The research data include 34 questionnaires and 12 semi-structured interviews. The participants were recruited from two local refugee resettlement agencies. Interviews were conducted over a period of seven months. Some participants were interviewed in their native tongue using interpreters provided by the resettlement agencies. Others spoke English and did not need an interpreter. The interviews were audio and video recorded and then transcribed. The transcripts were iteratively analyzed using instruments developed by the researcher and NVivo coding. This analysis resulted in the identification of the categories of description, category outcomes, and the outcome space.

Three categories of description were identified from the analysis of the interview transcripts. These were: 1) Background, 2) Self-Efficacy, and 3) Focus on the Future. From these descriptor, three explicit category outcomes were identified. These were: 1) Education Privilege, 2) Educational Perseverance, and 3) Education Acculturation. These categories summarize the outcome space “*survival instinct*,” which describe the refugee parental perspective on preschool enrollment.

The participants perceived education as a necessary survival strategy for the resettlement of their children. The parents provided evidence of an education acculturation goal for their children, although they possessed little or no knowledge of the education system or how to navigate the system. This study reveals the need for more research on refugee parental views as it relates to education acculturation. Future research may seek to explore how to empower refugee parent with knowledge and skills that support their hopes and dreams for their children’s educational journey and survival.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The focus of early childhood education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has been on school readiness, with an emphasis on all preschool age children entering kindergarten ready to learn. Federal, state, and local initiatives, along with empirical research have dictated the policies and expectations for school readiness. The impetus for policies, and the research that has followed has maintained that the investment in the education of young children prepares them to be lifelong contributors to society and their family economic stability (Duncan & Magnuson, 2013; Glick, 2010; Lynch & Vaghul, 2015). Researchers have noted that human capital investment in young children leads to upward economic mobility, higher education attainment and stronger labor markets (Crosby & Dunbar, 2012; Duncan & Magnuson, 2013).

Although school readiness has been a central focus of early childhood policymaking (Pianta, Howes, Burchinal, Bryant, Clifford, et al., (2005), the most vulnerable population of children, those living in poverty and those who are of immigrant refugee status, still lag behind their peers educationally (Bassok, 2010; Early, Maxwell, Burchinal, Alva, Bender, et al., 2007; Han & Bridglall, 2009; Magnuson, Lahaie & Waldfogel, 2006). In addition to being at the bottom of the economic spectrum and not being kindergarten ready, immigrant children also have the lowest rate of preschool

enrollment (Crosnoe, 2013, Karoly & Gonzalez, 2011; Magnuson, Meyers, Ruhm & Waldfogel, 2004; Vesely & Ginsberg, 2011). Furthermore, research advocates when immigrant children are enrolled in preschool they tend not to be in high quality early learning programs. Yet, quality programming is considered a critical component to kindergarten readiness (Early et al., 2007). Quality preschool programs enrich learning opportunities, advance reading, and math skills, and support social and emotional development (Barnett, 2011; Magnuson et al., 2006). In addition to child development being central to quality preschool programming, research identifies the classroom teacher's education background, and parental involvement as other fundamental components that make up high quality preschool services (Barnett, 2011; Barnett, Friedman-Krauss, Weisenfeld, Horowitz, Kasmin, & Squires (2017).

Barnett et al. (2017) notes the quality assessment of public preschool programs in the U. S. is conducted by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). Program quality is measured by nine benchmarks (prior to 2015 there were 10 benchmarks). Since 2003, NIEER's annual *Yearbook* provides the data on teacher preparation and parental participation in preschool programs. Educational degree attainment, specialized training, and professional development measure teacher preparation. Additionally, the education level of teacher assistants is reported in the teacher benchmarks. Lastly, NIEER measures parent involvement through data that are collected as part of the early learning and developmental standard benchmarks. These benchmarks addresses the program's approach to comprehensive services, its alignment with standards, and its support of families and cultural sensitivity. For parental involvement, data is collected on parental participation and how programs self-report

culturally sensitive support services such as English Language Learners (ELL), and special education.

In February 2013, then, U.S. President, Barack Obama's press secretary stated in a White House briefing, "the beginning years of a child's life are critical for building the early foundation needed for success later in school and in life" (The White House, 2013, para 2). He further noted in the brief that the inclusion of parents as preschool partners solidifies the building of the foundation.

Before proceeding with the discussion on refugee families, it is important to explain the use of terms such as immigrant and refugee as they relate to this research. Each term has a different meaning, and in the research literature they are consistently used interchangeably. Georgis, Gokiart, Ford, and Ali (2014) explained the difference between a refugee and immigrant while Chavez-Reyes (2010) noted there are distinct reasons for being called an immigrant but did not go into detail to explain the differences. Immigrant and refugee describe the same population, while the singular use of the word immigrant has a different meaning. The official government definition of immigrants describes people who make the choice to leave their homeland and migrate to a new country, with the option of returning home at their choosing (Connor, 2010; Hurley, Medici, Stewart & Cohen, 2011). Whereas, refugee describes people who have been forced out of their homeland never to return (United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 2015). They most often spend years migrating and living in refugee camps. Refugees forced to migrate from their homeland may be a result of persecution, war, natural disaster, or political discord that could result in their death or imprisonment. Unfortunately, much of the research (e.g., Hamilton, Marshall, Rummens, Fenta, &

Simich, 2011; Magnuson et al., 2006) applies the term *immigrant* to all foreign-born persons, leaving one to speculate whether the participants are immigrant refugees or immigrants. However, some studies (e.g., Fazel, Reed, Panter-Brick & Stein, 2012; Hurley et al., 2011; Tadesse, Hoot, Watson & Thompson, 2009; Whitmarsh, 2011) were specific to refugees and identify participants as such.

Between 2009 and 2013, 941,000 refugee children 10 years old and younger were reported to reside in the U.S. with their refugee parents (Hooper, Zong, Capps & Fix, 2016). Although the number of refugee children has shown a steady increase over the years, the future trajectory of refugee arrivals in the U.S. is uncertain because of changes in U.S. immigration laws. Prior to the 2016 U.S. presidential election, a steady increase in the number of refugee children could be projected based on presidential approval. However, with the election of President Donald Trump and his campaign promises to change immigration policies, future immigration forecasting has become difficult.

For most refugee children, the journey to Western nations can be described as problematic, lengthy, and dangerous. The lives of some children began in poor conditions in refugee camps and persisted until resettlement. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (2015) reported the average time from migration to resettlement has increased in the last 20 years from 9 years to as many as 17 years. Furthermore, the U.S. vetting process for resettlement takes an average of 2 years. During this migration journey, young children and their parents are exposed to arduous environments and traumatic experiences that are often absent of educational services. UNHCR's, Filippo Grandi noted in his report on the state of refugee education that globally, refugee children under UNHCR mandate (in resettlement process) are five times

more likely not to be enrolled in a formal education setting. While only 50% of the 6 million children under UNHCR who are eligible for a primary education attend school globally (Grandi, 2016).

Smith, Lalonde, and Johnson (2004) characterized the migration experience as a stressful period that has a substantial impact on parent and child relationships. Their qualitative study examined Caribbean adolescents and the parent child relationship after parents migrated without their children but were later reunited. They found that the parental view is often different from that of their child, and that the psychological impact frequently goes unnoticed by parents. Furthermore, the migration separation had a negative association with the adolescent's self-esteem. Although, Smith, Lalonde and Johnson studied the relationship between parents and children who migrated at separate times, it is just as easy to imagine how the relationships of a parent and child migrating together may have changed the nuance of the relationship after a tumultuous and lengthy migration period, especially the psychological and emotional bonds between a parent and a child. However, no studies were found that examined the refugee family unit, their migration, and its relationship to educational decision-making.

Addressing the migration experiences of refugee parents and how they affect enrollment in preschool is important if the expectation is for preschool-age refugee children to enter kindergarten ready to learn. Parental perspectives can inform the approaches educators, administrators, and policymakers must employ to recruit and maintain refugee student enrollment. The intent of this study was to investigate the refugee parents' educational experiences through their ancestral origin, migration experience, and resettlement assimilation. This will aid early childhood professionals

and education administrators with an understanding for how to build effective relationships with refugee parents for the purpose of increasing preschool refugee student enrollments and quality experiences. The exploration into the parent's perspectives on assimilation examined the parents' level of trust and comfort as their children attend preschool. The research on immigrant refugee preschoolers and their parents is deficient, particularly as it relates to the literature on immigrant refugee preschool enrollment, and their parent's views on early learning programs. Furthermore, there is a lack of research that explores the volatile migration experiences of refugee preschool children and their parents after resettlement. Hamilton, Marshall, Rummens, Fenta, and Simich (2011) noted, "There has been sparse research attention to the potential importance of parents' perceptions of school environment on child adjustment" (p. 313).

### **Background of Study**

A notable moment of the 2016 Olympic Summer Games Opening Ceremony was the entrance of the newly formed *Refugee Athletic Team*, the last group of Olympians to enter the arena. This team of 10 refugee athletes reflected a small fraction of the youth worldwide that make up one-fourth of the child refugee population (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011; UNHCR 2015). Refugees have become more visible over the last twenty-five years, as modern-day technology provides instantaneous media coverage and the presence of social media chronicles the perils of war, violence, human atrocities, and struggles. The special recognition of the Olympic refugee athletes denotes only one of the many predicaments intersecting the lives of refugee children. These young Olympians had to rebound from interrupted athletic training while adjusting to unfamiliar living environments. Additionally, their education can be characterized as episodic,

further compounded by education systems that were not equipped to address refugee children educational needs (Grandi, 2016). With the average length of the migration experience being at least 17 years, some children exit migration as adults having had limited or no access to education. Meanwhile some adults may have faced challenges educating their children in dangerous and unfamiliar surroundings.

My qualitative study sought to examine the perspectives of resettled refugee parents regarding preschool enrollment in Jefferson County Public Schools an urban school district in Louisville, Kentucky. I explored the views and experiences of parents who have migrated to Louisville's thriving refugee communities with various supports to aid in the transition from migration camps. Although, there is a sizable amount of research on immigrant preschoolers and their parents' participation in the education process, the trend in educational research has been to group foreign-born study participants into an overall immigrant status versus classifying them as immigrant refugees. In so doing, researchers overlook the contrasts between documented and undocumented immigrants whose migration was a choice, and the refugee whose life altering 'forced migration' hinged on life or death. The research on immigrants (often not obviously inclusive of refugees) provides a partial cultural perspective of child rearing and parental involvement in child care and preschool programs. Absent are studies on how the parent-child relationship is influenced by migration. There is no research on this topic as it relates to the refugee migration experience. Thus, there is a gap in the literature that explores the refugee parents' decision-making for their children's education as it relates to the migration experiences and preschool enrollment.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Immigrant refugee populations are not engaging in early childhood preschool programs which support kindergarten school readiness (Magnuson et al., 2006). This is despite refugee preschool children being one of the largest and fastest growing child populations in the United States (Glick, Hanish, Yabiku & Bradley 2012; Karoly & Gonzalez, 2011). The refugee child population in the United States has doubled over the last 10 years (UNHCR Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2015). As the refugee population has increased, the enrollment of refugee children in preschool (*refugees are collectively identified as immigrant in most research*) and their kindergarten readiness skills have been characterized as low in comparison to native-born children (Crosnoe, 2013; Karoly & Gonzalez, 2011; Vesely & Ginsberg, 2011).

Kentucky Office of Refugees (KOR) reported in 2019, “Kentucky is 14th in the nation in the number of refugee arrivals compared to other states. When including all eligible populations served by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, Kentucky ranks 9th in the nation”, (no page #, para 2). The Commonwealth of Kentucky resettled 874 refugees in 2016, and Louisville, its largest city has the capacity to serve 1,369 refugees (Refugee Processing Center, 2016). The city’s two resettlement agencies are Catholic Charities and Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM).

Between 2013 and 2017, Catholic Charities and KRM resettled 5,764 refugees. These numbers are significant because both the state and city have decades of resources and policies focused on serving all preschool children. The precursor for state-funded preschool programs in Kentucky commenced in 1990 with the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), which was followed by the Kentucky Invest in Development Success (KIDS NOW) in 2000 (Commonwealth of Kentucky, Governor’s Office of Early



Childhood, 2017) . KIDS NOW gave 25% of the KERA tobacco fund settlement to early childhood education, and in 2009, the Governor’s Task Force on Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) was created. In 2011, the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) was formed to bring accountability to early childhood education programs. In 2013, KIDS NOW became legislation, and in 2014, then Governor Steve Beshear allocated \$44.3 million of the Race to the Top federal funding to establish an effective system for early childhood education (KIDS NOW, 2017).

From 2013 to 2016, the Governor’s Office on Early Childhood Education developed profiles on all of Kentucky’s state-funded early childhood programs. The 2012-13, first year profile, offered some insight into the state of school readiness, but it was also the pilot year for the state’s screening tool, and not all counties participated in the data collection. Although data after the pilot phase indicated an increase in kindergarten readiness, school readiness continues to teeter in the 50th percentile across the state. Jefferson County, the most populous county in the state, and the county with the most resettled refugee children reported 52.4% (2013), 51.9% (2014), 48.1% (2015), 52.1% (2016), 48.5% (2017), and 45.1% (2018) of all children entered kindergarten inadequately prepared as indicated on the kindergarten readiness screening tool BRIGANCE. The BRIGANCE kindergarten screener is a national standardized assessment comprised of a collection of tools said to produce exceptionally reliable and valid data.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of my study was to explore how the refugee migration experience shape parents’ decisions to enroll (or not enroll) their children in a formal preschool

education setting. I concentrated on enrollment in public preschool programs, which have yet to develop a focus on creating culturally responsive environments that support refugee preschoolers emotional and mental health development (Rousseau, Benoit, Lacroix, & Gauthier, 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). This is a critical conversation for early childhood services if all young children are expected to enter kindergarten ready to learn.

As a qualitative phenomenography study, I also examined how one conceptualizes experiences and relates them to the world (Marton, 1988). My study adds to our understanding of the intersection of migration and education experiences that may influence refugee parents' decisions to enroll their children in preschool. Gaining insight into the parents' perceptions can support the advancement of school readiness skills prior to entering kindergarten. Marton (1988) noted, "A careful account of the different ways people think about a phenomenon may help uncover conditions that facilitate the transition from one way of thinking to a qualitatively 'better' perception of reality" (p. 145). Therefore, I sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do refugee parents describe early childhood education in their native country?
2. In what ways do refugee parents conceptualize public preschool enrollment for their young children?

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

### **Significance of the Study**

Although the number of preschool refugees is sizable, no empirical educational studies address the impact of the refugee migration experience on this age group. Most studies are concentrated on middle and high school students with an emphasis on transitions and outcomes (Crosnoe, 2013; DeFeyter & Winsler, 2009; Glick et al., 2012). Additionally, no educational studies explicitly address the cultural differences or decision-making process of refugee parents to enroll their children in preschool programs. However, there are a limited number of social science studies focused on the psychological stressor of refugee children after their preschool enrollment and how the migration experience has a significant impact on children of all ages (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011). Furthermore, there is a gap in the research on public preschools and how they specifically facilitate enrollment of refugee families with preschool age children (Glick & Hohmann-Marriott, 2007; Hurley, et al., 2011).

In 2015, 61 percent of Kentucky's 2,048 refugees were resettled in Louisville (Rousavall, 2016). Included in this resettlement were preschool-age children. These children were potential candidates for the district's public preschool programs, which served more than 3,000 preschool children in state and federal funded programs. Research reveals that preschool age children who have migrated to the U.S. are underachieving in comparison to their native-born preschool peers (Yamamoto & Li, 2012). Refugee children often are not enrolled in preschool prior to kindergarten, and if

they are, they are not enrolled in quality programs that prepare them for kindergarten (Karoly & Gonzalez, 2011; Vesley & Ginsberg, 2011). Research on native-born preschool enrollment practices exist (Fuller, Eggers-Pierola, Holloway, Liang, & Rambaud, 1996; Liang, Fuller, & Singer, 2000), but few research studies have focused specifically on the refugee population. Even less research has been conducted to understand the perceptions of parents whose children attend U.S. preschool programs (Tadesse, 2014). The views of parents along with their understanding of preschools shapes their decisions to enroll their children in preschools (or not) and meet the elementary school readiness mission that preschools seek to achieve (Yamamoto & Li, 2012).

My research study has the potential to support family engagement, teacher professional development and school district preschool recruitment efforts. Practitioners may come to recognize the vast differences in refugee parents regarding their migration experiences, the transfer of these experiences to parenting practices, and the differences between generations and subpopulation of refugees. It can also aid in building a trusting and sensitive relationship between parents and school.

### **Scope of Study**

The participants in this study were refugee parents who reside in the school district's service area. Participants had a child or children eligible for preschool or have attended preschool in the school district in the last six years. Parent participants were recruited through two resettlement community service organizations that serve refugee populations (See Appendices A and B). A demographic questionnaire (See Appendix C), an interview guide (See Appendix D), and interviews questions (See Appendix E) were

used to collect the data. The questionnaire addressed refugee specific questions that support the research questions. The interview process entailed collaboration with the resettlement agencies which included uses of their staff to identify participants, conducting interview in their facility, and having access to their interpreters for interviews. This access was meaningful in that it appeared to create a level of comfort for the participants. Creswell (2017) noted it is important for research participants to be comfortable in their surroundings.

### **Definition of Terms**

These definitions explain the terminology in the context of this study. The terms have been defined to help provide clarity where there may be many definitions or interchangeable uses of terminology across disciplines.

#### *Cumulative Stress*

Cumulative stress is the combination of the trauma of displacement and migration with the predictable childhood stressors all children encounter (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011). Moreover, it is a higher psychological risk factor for refugee children than for any other group of children.

#### *District/ Public Preschool*

District preschool programs are early childhood programs operated by a school district. The programs may be delivered using either state or federal dollars for service. These programs may be defined as Early Head Start, Head Start or State-funded Preschool. Programs in a school district or a public-school setting adhere to income and age eligibility guidelines established by state and federal guidelines.

### *Immigrant (also known as Permanent Resident Alien)*

Immigrant is an alien who has been granted the right by the USCIS to reside permanently in the United States and to work without restrictions in the United States. Also known as a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR). All immigrants are eventually issued a "green card" (USCIS Form I-551), which is the evidence of the alien's LPR status. LPR's who are awaiting the issuance of their green cards may bear an I-551 stamp in their foreign passports.

### *Immigrant children*

Immigrant children are children who are foreign-born or native-born with one or both parents being foreign-born. Immigrant children represent first and second-generation immigrants (Karoly & Gonzales, 2001).

### *Native-Born*

Native born represents children and parents who are born in the United States.

### *Panethnicity*

Lopez and Espiritus (1990) defines panethnicity as "the development of bridging organizations and solidarities among subgroups of ethnic collectivities that are not often seen as homogenous by outsiders" (p.198). Understanding panethnicity in the context of this study is important as noted in the introduction and literature review. Much of the research relating to refugees tends to identify refugees as immigrant, thus negating their unique challenges and experiences that shapes assimilation and acclimation to their new culture. Additionally, the grouping of refugees by race, such as refugees from Africa being identified as African American or Black American; thus, resulting in misrepresentations and applications of stereotypes that are not accurate reflections.

### *Preschooler*

Children six-weeks to four years old who meet federal and state eligibility guidelines for enrolling in no fee federal and or state-funded preschool programs are considered preschoolers. Children with disabilities in this age range are also considered preschoolers.

### *Refugee*

Any person who is outside his or her country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution. Persecution or the fear thereof must be based on the alien's race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. People with no nationality must generally be outside their country of last habitual residence to qualify as a refugee. Refugees are subject to ceilings by geographic area set annually by the President in consultation with Congress and are eligible to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after one year of continuous presence in the (United States Homeland Security, 2016).

### *Resettlement*

The Kentucky Office of Refugees (KOR) declares “Refugee resettlement is defined as the transfer of refugees from the country in which they sought refuge to another nation that has agreed to admit them as refugees and/or grant permanent settlement there” (no page #, para 1).

### *School Readiness*

The Kentucky Governor’s Office of Early Childhood defines school readiness as each child enters school ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences

that best promote the child's success and ability to be ready to grow, ready to learn, and ready to succeed.

### **Organization of the Study**

Chapter I consists of an introduction, statement of problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, delimitations, definition of terms and organization of study. Chapter II provides a review of the literature that consists of an introduction and six sections. Chapter III is the methodology chapter. Chapter IV provides an analysis of the data collected for this research study, and Chapter V summarizes the research findings and discusses the implications for policy, practice, and future research.



## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Through this research study, I sought to explore refugee parents' understanding and perceptions of public preschool enrollment for young children and explored how their education backgrounds and migration experiences influenced their decision to enroll their children in a public preschool program. In this chapter, I reviewed literature to provide the reader with a summary of the extant research relevant to the current study, identifying what is known about the phenomena that is under study, trends in findings and methods used, and what deficits exist in the research literature. The review is divided into five sections: (1) The Plight of Refugees, (2) Engaging Preschool Families in Education Services, (3) The Cultural, Educational and Psychological Impacts of Migration on Refugee Families (4) Ethnic Diversity and Refugee Populations (5) Refugee Parent Perspectives on Preschool, and (5) Summary of the Literature Findings.

### **The Plight of Refugees**

The end of World War II launched the global humanitarian refugee initiative. The initiative was planned to address the displacement of Europeans expatriated by the atrocities of the war. Thus, the genesis of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) organization and the start of the global uses of the term refugee. Likewise, international laws defining the protocols for identifying, serving, and resettling refugees were also written. The UNHCR was initially engendered to be a three-year service program focused on those who could not return to their homelands after World

War II. Today, more than 50 million refugees have been served by the UNHCR since its founding, and the UNHCR continues to be a central contributor to the global resettlement efforts for refugees (UNHCR, 2016).

In the United States, the implementation of refugee laws and policies after World War II evolved over time, and only after much debate and many delays. The U.S. established its own directives for refugee settlement within its borders. It was not until the United States Refugee Act of 1980 defined refugees as stated by the UNCHR in 1951 (Scribner, 2017). Since 1980, more than 3 million refugees have entered the U.S and national standards for screening and admission have guided the process. A series of laws prescribe the number of refugees to be settled and their eligibility as related to political and religious affiliations (Scribner, 2017).

Worldwide, refugees are steadily increasing. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has been a time in which an exorbitant volume of refugees are on the move and fleeing human tragedy. Included in this displacement are many children (Tadesse, 2014). The UNHCR (2015) reports that 65.3 million people have been forced from their homelands. Among them are nearly 21.3 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18. These children have been depicted in media as being exiled through dangerous and oftentimes deadly means. While there is no concrete data on the number of refugee children who die as their families flee their homelands (due to illegal and dangerous flight), estimates range in the tens of thousands who have died from drowning, hunger, disease, and execution.

While statistical data constitute an awareness of the refugee population growth; explicit data explaining the effects of the migration experiences is not as readily available. This is especially true in the domain of education. Researchers suggest the

migration journey for both the parent and child are key contributors to how they assimilate into their resettlement city and its education system (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011; Tadesse, 2014). Dachyshyn and Kirova (2008) noted emotional stressors are present in the lives of parents and children. Further noting, depression, loneliness, isolation, anxiety, fear, and agitation as emotional stressors that most commonly persist (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011). However, researchers have found refugee parents, whether educated or uneducated, want their children to acquire a solid education after resettlement (Heng, 2014; Whitmarsh, 2011). Yet, refugee children who are of preschool age have the lowest preschool enrollment numbers (Gelatt, Adams, & Heurta, 2014). In 2015, the UNHCR reported 54% of refugees resettled were from Afghanistan, Somalia, and Syria, and 12% (21.3 million) were resettled in the Americas. Many of these children come from war-torn nations where there is either no education system or access to education services is determined by economic status and gender.

In the U.S., each year, the President of the United States determines the levels of refugee admissions into the country. This process is called Presidential Determination. Only the President can regulate the number of refugees admitted and where they are resettled. The U. S. resettlement ceiling for refugees in 2015 was 70,000, with 69,933 being resettled (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), 2015). ORR further noted as war and violence increased in Syria, President Barack Obama pledged to admit an additional 10,000 Syrian refugees above the 2015 resettlement ceiling. The refugees resettled in the U.S. in 2015 were comprised of 20,700 from Africa; 17,300 East Asia; 2,300 Europe; 2,300 Latin America/Caribbean; 27,700 Near East and South Asia.

In 2017, political ideology transformed the conversation on refugee resettlement (Scribner, 2017) and ushered in an era of tighter restrictions on the entry of refugees in the U.S. President Donald Trump brought migration policies center stage domestically and globally with his vows to ban Muslim refugee resettlement in the U.S., and to decrease the number of refugees and immigrants entering the U.S. Prior to becoming the Republican presidential candidate, Trump had supported refugee migration and suggested an increase in the number of Muslim refugees (Scribner, 2017). However, as his campaign progressed, Trump became more vehement about changing migration and resettlement policies in the U.S. In the first 100 days of his presidency, he introduced three refugee executive orders. These orders were focused on banning Muslims and limiting the number of refugees resettled. The orders stood to have a significant impact on refugee children because of the high volume of children coming from Muslim countries. Although Trump's executive orders were challenged by lawmakers and through litigation, the adversarial relationship between the American people and political leadership increased tension and disruption to refugee resettlement.

Refugees migrate from many diverse countries and educational systems. Those from "third world" countries or prevalent poverty may have experienced systems with limited or exclusive educational opportunities. These limitations are often based on gender and social economic status. As refugees migrate, the time spent in refugee or resettlement camps and the conditions therein do not support educational opportunities or continuous learning (Grandi, 2016). Grandi noted, "... refugees' educational access and attainment are rarely tracked through national monitoring systems, meaning that refugee children and youth are not only disadvantaged, but their educational needs and

achievements remain largely invisible” (Grandi, 2016, p 5). Since the early 1980s refugee children have been at the center of the refugee saga (Huyck & Fields, 1981). Whether they were children on boats escaping from Southeast Asia or Cuba in the 1970s and 80s, or present-day Syrians in boats, or Sudanese crossing the deserts of Africa, the harsh reality of a child refugee is difficult to deny.

Refugees have been studied at various lengths, with the central focus being on their acclimation and acculturation to their resettlement country. They have been studied in the context of their communities, employment, and education but little focus has been placed on the migration of young children or how parents make decisions central to building a strong early educational foundation for their children. Past and present researchers have noted that overall young refugee children and their parents are the least studied (Huyck & Fields, 1981, Tadesse, 2014; Tadesse et al., 2009. Tadesse (2014) explained that no focus has been placed on how relationships between refugee parents and children evolves because of migration. Although there are many aspects of the migration experience that suggest both the pre- and post-migration experiences have many lasting effects that impact the child’s development and the parent’s response. Understanding the paradoxes of parent involvement in education presents many challenges for researchers as parents, culture, program types, resources, and community diversity inhibits homogenous categorization of the factors that facilitate or mitigate parent involvement.

In the last five decades, there has been growing research on parent involvement as it relates to gender of the parent and child, family social economic status, environmental stressors, parent and teacher views, and student outcomes. This research has established

the significance of parents as contributors in their children's educational journey. However, as times and generations, change unanswered questions continue to persist further complicating perceptions and expectations for parent involvement.

Whitmarsh (2011) studied the characteristics of preschool refugee mothers from the perspective of the theoretical framework of three migration phases. The phases were described as pre-migration, trans-migration, and post-migration. Pre-migration encompassed how the refugee lived prior to migration. This included their socio-economic status, education level, employment profession, and mental and physical health conditions. Whitmarsh (2011) explained the trans-migration phase as all the experiences that occurred because of exile from the homeland. Trans-migration included the flight from the homeland, hiding, and life in a camp. The last phase, post-migration represents a variety of social and emotional experiences that involved adaptation, and physical and mental health. This phase is inclusive of the transition from a camp to a center, to resettlement, and assimilation into the new unfamiliar resettlement environment. It is also in this phase the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is identified.

Whitmarsh's (2011) qualitative study examined the voices of six refugee mothers with preschool age children and found the marginalization of their voices silenced critical aspects of their migration experience. Mothers were asked three critical questions related to the education of their children. These questions addressed the parent decision to choose preschool, why they chose the preschool they chose, and what were the most and least important skills for preschool children to acquire. Whitmarsh found the choices parents made were not always choices but a result of their lack of understanding for their new culture. For example, mothers stated they chose preschool, so their children could

learn English but found it challenging when children were taught autonomy, and English was learned from staff whose first language was not English. The parents reported the encouragement of child independence often contradicted their cultural beliefs, thus leading to conflicts in the home. Mothers also explained preschool choice was not conveyed as a choice. The mothers reported they were given three choices and from those choices they made decisions based on where their other children were enrolled. They shared they did not feel they had a choice. One participant described the post migration experience as a “painful process” noting language and culture acculturation created challenges for the family, especially young children. Mothers stated a loss of culture occurred when young children became bilingual and made their own choices about language spoken in the home. Although mothers believed learning the language of their resettlement city was important for acceptance and assimilation, they also found the assertion of their culture into learning was also important to their child’s development.

Historically, the role family plays in the success of young children has been based on how well educational systems engage and partner with families for student success. The last 50 years of educating young children in the U.S. has been demarcated as important with a focus on native-born children, laws and policies that empower, and strengthening the role of parents in preschool services. Although these laws and policies have evolved and are written to be inclusive of many, gaps still exist for serving non-native preschool children. The next section discusses the preschool laws and policies designed to engage families of preschoolers.

## **Engaging Preschool Families in Education Services**

Laws and research that support and engage the preschool family unit have taken center stage in the last half century (Heng, 2014). Significant federal laws and policies have stated the involvement of parents as a key contributor to educational success. In 1964, U. S. President Lyndon Johnson called for a “War on Poverty,” through The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. This Act heightened the government’s involvement in school systems and focused attention on the implementation of anti-poverty programs (Bailey & Danziger, 2013). Central to The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was the creation of the preschool program Head Start. Head Start began in 1965 as a comprehensive educational program for preschool age children and their parents with a focus on learning, the development of social and emotional skills, and the nutritional health of children. Head Start’s parental engagement component engages parents in learning about child development and the parental role for supporting early development. Since 1965, Head Start has served over a billion children. In 2014 there were 1,763 grantees, and 885,410 young children were served, of these children only 1% spoke a language other than English or Spanish (Mohan & Walker, 2016). Over the years, the legacy of the War on Poverty has been in line with other initiatives to advance the educational needs of preschool age children.

The enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1975 and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 are two significant contributors to early learning. Included in ESSA is the *U.S. Department of Education Preschool Non-Regulatory Guidance Document*. IDEA, ESSA, and the non-regulatory guidance are grounded in educational research, along with guidance on how to design and implement



family programming services. These documents represent how preschool services have attempted to engage a shifting demography that is diverse in culture and size.

Researchers have studied a broad range of preschool family topics; however, as previously noted, the topics have not been specific to refugees or their migration experiences. Matters related to refugees/immigrants have focused on student outcomes, child disabilities, language development, behavior, and the home school connection. Nevertheless, central to the shift in demography has been the growing population of refugees whose family structure, culture and migration experiences signal a need for a better understanding of their family unit.

Although focused on children with disabilities, IDEA has been a key foundational federal statute, guiding and guaranteeing the inclusion of parents in the educational success of their children. From 1986 to 2004, IDEA has continuously strengthened family rights and role in educational decision-making (Pang, 2010). IDEA, along with a vast amount of research, suggests families are fundamental players in the early development of young children, and their success in early learning programs. Pang's (2010) case study on the influences of family system theory and family centered practices for preschool transitions noted families are important partners and contributors to problem-solving educational needs and observations that inform successful transition into preschool. Pang (2010) along with Montgomery (2010) echoed Bronfenbrenner's ecological research as essential for understanding the complexities of child development as it relates to family, community, and social environments.

In 2015, ESSA replaced 13 years of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and became the most recent reauthorization of the 50-year-old Elementary Secondary Education Act

(ESEA) law. Although there were revisions to ESSA in 2017, the act still maintains a focus on increasing the academic achievement of low-income and disadvantage children, ESSA continues to capture the initial legacy of ESEA. As a new law, ESSA covers a wide range of administrative topics such as assessment, accountability, school improvement and the allocation of federal funding. In addition to these topics, ongoing parent and family engagement is also a vital component of the law. The parent and family engagement requirements specifically address, funding, consultations, and parent and family engagement policies. The engagement policies identify types of activities and Title I policy requirements for districts. Significant to this study is the law's expectation that state and local educational institutions will vehemently and purposefully pursue parents as partners and collaborators in establishing the quality and delivery of educationally services.

The non-regulatory preschool guide within ESSA acts as a guide for state and local entities to develop policies and programs that support early learning. It expounds on the delivery of high-quality learning, coordinating, and building collaborative relationships, and support for preschool educators. In this document, family engagement is explained as a key component in the context of post-enrollment in preschool. Parent engagement is discussed as “high quality family engagement and involvement,” and defined as a universal inclusionary process focused on the overall development inside and outside of the home. This guidance document explains family is the foundation for early learning as well as lifelong success.

The federal legislation discussed above establish the importance of inclusion of families in early learning. They are developed around research and note the importance

of meaningful engagement as the foundation for educational success in and beyond preschool. IDEA gives voice to parents of children with disabilities. ESSA advances the voice of parents through laws that mandate documentation of accountability, and the implementation of the laws. Finally, ESSA offers a preschool guidance document that empowers both parents and educational institutions to develop meaningful and successful family engagement strategies and support.

Although there have been laws, policies, and guidance documents intent on supporting and promoting the role of families in their children's education, the anomaly for refugees lies in their migration experiences and subsequently psychological impact on both parent and child. The next section discusses the culture, education, and psychological significance of migration. The nominal research specific to preschool families suggest the psychological and educational experience are significant milestones to a preschool child's development.

#### The Cultural, Educational and Psychological Impacts of Migration on Refugee Families

The studies reviewed in this section are situated in the fields of education and social and behavioral sciences. Although there are few studies significant to this research, the studies reviewed are specific to refugee preschool parents and probe into their views. Researchers have noted consistently that the research on refugee children has addressed school-age and adolescent youth but not preschoolers (Glick, et al., 2012). The limited number of studies on young children is attributed to the belief that a young child's limited articulation skills would not render much information or insight into their experiences (Jackson, 2006; Rousseau, et al., 2009). However, Waniganayake (2001)

addressed the concerns surrounding verbal limitations by studying the play of refugee children in the classroom and on the playground. Her research also explored the impact of migration on the preschool mothers by also observing them on the playground and then discussing their behavior.

Two significant social and behavioral science studies addressing the migration experience and mental health stressors for refugee preschool age children and their parents were also reviewed. These studies underscored the mental health of the refugee children before and after their resettlement. The findings from these studies suggest that traumatizing experiences refugee children may encounter can be extensive and critical to their development (Glick & Hohmann-Marriott, 2007; Jackson, 2006), affecting child development and producing many psychological stressors that influence the mental health (Bornstein & Montgomery, 2010; Jackson 2006) and education of refugee preschoolers. These findings further suggest that the migration experiences shaped the parental role for supporting and acknowledging the social and emotional needs of their children.

### *The Educational Impact*

The challenges of educating young refugee children both inside and outside of the classroom are exacerbated by the traumas a child may experience during migration (Jackson, 2006). Jackson's study on playgroup environments speculated that separation anxiety and a parent's limited ability to cope with their own migration trauma over that of their child are key factors that contribute to preschool enrollment and parent perceptions of their children's educational needs. Social science research also has noted that young refugee children experience *cumulative stress*, defined by common childhood stressors and the traumas of forced migration (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011).

In addition to understanding the trauma of migration, the influence of social culture must also be explored. However, within the confines of the research on child care and preschool enrollment no research is explicit in its exploration of the refugee parents' perspective on what leads to preschool enrollment. Nevertheless, there have been studies that have focused on why low-income and immigrant children are on the lower enrollment spectrum as compared to their middle-class native-born peers. Fuller et al. (1996) and Liang et al., (2000) studied Latino and Black parents' perceptions of early child care and preschool and concluded enrollment differences stem from cultural values and the perception for how to preserve culture. Liang et al., (2000) suggested the family structure, ethnicity, language and family integration, and parental practice and beliefs are key contributors to parental decision-making related to early child enrollment. They found family structure related to who was present or absent from the home along with extended family and community support systems contributed to a lack of enrollment especially when supports were in place for child care. Most significant to their findings was the commitment of the immigrant families to maintaining their own cultural practices and preference for how to raise their younger children over aspirations to reach school readiness goals. Fuller et al. (1996) noted, "If policy makers remain unable to devise more culturally convergent forms of preschooling -- while continuing to stigmatize indigenous forms of child socialization -- the result for Latino families will be far from empowering" (p. 15).

The volume of research addressing the effects of psychological stressors that influence the education on young refugee children is limited (Tadesse, et al., 2009). This has left a void for understanding how the education journey takes shape to ensure success

for refugees enrolling in preschool programs. The research that has emerged has been largely focused on the child and parent in the context of the home experiences, how language and literacy resources are accessed, and the student's cognitive advancement. Although research suggests knowledge of culture and their experiences is fundamental to child development (Tadesse et al., 2009), few studies approached the subject of refugee children from the aspect of the migration experience or parental views. The absence of research on the refugee preschool parent migration, along with a lack of understanding for the challenges refugee children have faced because of migration suggest gaps for understanding background knowledge, and it is reasonable to conjecture policies, classroom practices, and resources are not adequately meeting the needs of the refugee children or their parents as a result.

Many of the studies conducted outside of the U.S. suggested young refugee children need to be assessed for psychological stressors that have emerged because of the migration experience. These studies were primarily from countries where there is a high volume of refugee resettlement. Many of the studies were conducted on the continent of Australia; while studies from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Netherland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom also contributed to the research. However, absent from the research are studies specific to the parent's views on the migration experience and its impact on parenting. The educational studies found to be most relevant to this review addressed the connection between migration and mental health, student and parent homeland backgrounds, and educational practices directed at refugees in resettlement cities.

Waniganayake (2001) examined three Australian educational programs serving refugees. The programs were Rebuilding Nations, Safe Haven Play Center, and Permanent Resettlement. The families in the studies were East African, Kosovar, and Somali refugees. The children in these programs were observed during pretend play, which involved them acting out violent acts against each other; much like those they had witnessed in their homeland and during migration. The children's play often included pretend weapons. Waniganayake (2001) noted the staff deemed the children's actions as inappropriate behavior for the classroom and playground. Therefore, their response to the children's play was not empathetic to their experiences nor redirected as teachable opportunities. This suggested a need for training and professional development that provided access to knowledge that guides teacher classroom practices (Waniganayake, 2001). While the teachers viewed the children's behavior as inappropriate, the children and families were confused by the staff responses and suggested other classroom practices were more important than how the children played. Parents noted the staff should have shown more concern for their children's nutrition, personal safety, and emotional needs. Waniganayake (2001) noted the situations were pivotal because policies and policymakers failed to acknowledge how refugee experiences (in homeland and during migration) and educational services were more focused on the special needs of the children as it relates to language and development than on their mental health or that of their parents. Waniganayake (2001) posited that the violent migration experiences that manifested in a child's classroom and playground play clearly indicated the impact of migration and deserves greater attention. Furthermore, the conversations and observations of the mothers on the playground and with their children indicate distinct

ties to migration and parenting actions. Mothers demonstrated through their observed actions on the playground that they too relived the heartbreaks of migrations, thus impacting their parenting role and perspectives about preschool.

Jackson (2006) conducted a case study of 12 Australian refugee families whose preschool age children experienced violent trauma during migration. Jackson used qualitative methods that included interviews and observations of parents and children in playgroup sessions. Significant to this research was the impact of the mothers' migration experience and how migration disabled mothers to be engaged in supporting their children's early learning experiences. Jackson noted that the migration experience and psychological health of the mother plays a key role in the child's development and the parents' ability to respond to their children's needs. Two key categories of the playgroup study were satisfaction levels of parents and the program's effectiveness. Parent satisfaction was based on the fostering of community through inclusion, emotional empathy, facilitated peer support and a welcoming environment. From this study, eight themes emerged. The themes were interaction, environment, learning activities, separation anxiety, transition to school, parent-child relationships, social capacity, and playgroup structure and content. Jackson found the structure of the playgroups alleviated separation anxiety for both the parent and the child because parents and children could access each other at any time. Parents also stated that when they had positive support from the staff it lessened the anxiety. Like Waniganayake (2001), Jackson noted the importance of fostering an environment of community and inclusion, noting both are critical factors for engaging refugee preschool parents.



The third study, also a qualitative Australian study, focused on Black Africans from the Saharan region of Africa. The participants were from Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Sudan, and were one of the fastest growing refugee population in Australia in the mid-nineties. Agbenyega and Peers (2010) noted the growth of the African population and the adverse racial encounters affecting preschool education services compelled their research. The participants (n=30) were both mothers and fathers and were permanent residents of Australia. Demographic data were collected, and interviews were conducted in the home. Parents were studied to gain an understanding of their perception of services and how their children were treated. This research came at a time when Australia was overhauling its early childhood philosophy and curriculum into its Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) (Agbenyega & Peers, 2010). The foundation for the EYLF is the ontological philosophical assumption focused on multiple realities (Peers & Fler, 2014). The researchers addressed the guiding ontology concepts of belonging, being, and becoming as characterized in the EYLF curriculum. The central focus of the research was on how refugee children and their families are included and made to feel a sense of “Belonging, Being, and Becoming” the impetus of the curriculum (Agbenyega & Peers, 2010). The EYLF curriculum describes the pillars as:

- Belonging is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they belong because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture, and place.
- Being is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just ‘be’—time to play, try new things and have fun.

- Becoming is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.” Australian Government Department of Education. (2009, para 3)

While this framework focused on the whole child, the researchers found a contradiction in how the parents were engaged. The parents described discrimination because of their skin color, and noted their cultural practices were not respected. Parents also shared they felt staff actions contradicted how their children were treated when staff thought parents were not in view to observed the student teacher encounters. Parents described staff behavior as disrespectful and uncaring. Agbenyega and Peer (2010) further noted, the belonging, being and becoming framework informed the Australian government about what it meant to be inclusive of all its citizens and the training needs of classroom professionals to be inclusive and sensitive to migrant populations. Since the creation of the EYLF the Australian government has printed the framework in 12 languages to support the refugee families entering their school system. .

The fourth study was a North American study. Tadesse (2014) found the perspective of refugee families is significant to the educational success of their children. Further noting this perspective is driven by effective communication that demonstrates a respect for cultural diversity and the life experiences of refugees. Tadesse undertook a qualitative study to gain knowledge of the perceptions of refugee mothers and teachers as it related to preschool services to refugee children. Four mothers from Liberia, Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia and three Head Start teachers were participants in the study. The participant responded to an open-ended survey and two semi-structured interviews. The

survey provided background information while the interviews established how relationships between parents and teachers were established. Analysis revealed that encouragement and identifying barriers were central to the building of relationships and respect between parents and teachers. Moreover, the stress of the migration experience on both parents and children is significant.

Tadesse (2014) noted sensitivity to the refugee experience along with an understanding of cultural practices are important to serving refugee families. Education in the U.S. differs significantly from the diverse cultural practices and educational experiences of most refugees (Tadesse, 2014; Tadesse et al., 2009). Refugees are exposed to an extensive list of resettlement adjustments; therefore, in many instances, the exposure to educational services is foreign to them in many ways. The refugee parents' perceptions of preschool, no matter the ethnicity has been that Western educational systems should focus more on teacher-facilitated academics and not on developmental play (Heng 2014; Tadesse, 2014). This reflects the conclusions of other researchers, even that of Waniganayake (2001) of where play was used to define the child's emotional needs, and props related to the child's migration experience were provided.

Researchers have noted that in most instances' parents are not familiar with preschool classroom practices; therefore, when their children enter preschool programs, if practices do not meet their expectations this influences their participation (Tadesse 2014; Tadesse et al., 2009). Tadesse (2014) posited it is essential for policymakers and educators to understand and acknowledge the differences and challenges for refugee children and their parents, and to then develop appropriate strategies and resources to engage them. An awareness of the differences and challenges for refugee preschool

parents and their children needs more research to adequately serve the population. The essential fit for refugee children in early childhood is for early education practices and parental cultural beliefs to be integrated into the early childhood curriculum (Tadesse, 2007). The dialog around any life altering experiences is challenging, but it demands an understanding for the psychological aspects if change and inclusion is to transpire (Fazel et al., 2012).

### *The Psychological Impact*

Resilience is a collective term consistently used by educators to describe children who have encountered adversities that should produce long-term negative consequences, but instead their trajectory is one of a stable equilibrium with positive outcomes. As a process with outcomes, the resilience of refugee youth is enabled by “family cohesion, support and parental psychological health; individual dispositional factors such as adaptability, temperament, and positive self-esteem; and environmental factors such as peer and community support” (Montgomery, 2010, p. 479). Montgomery further noted that the psychological health of refugee parents is also aligned with the traumas they themselves experienced during migration and this plays a key role in the well-being and rearing of their children. Most parents are challenged with skills to support their children when psychological issues are involved (Montgomery, 2010).

Montgomery’s (2010) qualitative study on the traumas and resilience of refugee children encompassed nine years of research focusing on understanding the long-term mental health of the participants before and after resettlement. Montgomery characterized the experiences of refugee children as being dominated by posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and vulnerability to the effects of pre-migration. The participants

in the study were 67 families who migrated from the Middle East to Denmark. Both children and parents were part of the study. Montgomery noted parental reaction to migration, coupled with adverse environment, were key factors to the children's psychological development. The children in the study ranged in age from 11- 23 with a mean age of 15.3 years. In the first year of the study, parents were asked questions about their child's migration experiences. Parents were asked to comment on their children's exposure to personal human-rights violations, camp violence, war, and their experiences in their homeland before migration. Additionally, parents were asked about their children's mental health before and after resettlement. Both parent and child described the specific things they witnessed or experienced as part of war and migration. Behavior checklists were used to capture child data over the nine-year period. From this research, Montgomery found a need for a clearer understanding of refugee parents and children prior to migration and noted a knowledge of parents' mental health before and after resettlement is important to a child's resettlement and acculturation. A study of parent mental health after resettlement was strongly recommended for children whose mental health declined after resettlement. Although Montgomery focused on adolescence, it is important to keep in mind that the adolescents in the study began their migration as young children, therefore, experiencing almost all their youth as a refugee.

Bronstein and Montgomery (2011) researched the mental distress of young refugees resettled in the Western Hemisphere. Their study addressed children between the ages of 3 and 5. This study was a meta-analysis of three studies addressing the mental health of early childhood age children. The analysis noted psychological distress such as anxiety, sleep disturbance, and depression were significant for refugee children. The

challenges of young children were described as cumulative stress, and when combined with natural occurring child development stressors this extending the mental health challenge for young refugee children.

The review of this research on the mental health issues of young children is significant because it explores their vulnerability, as well as enlightens educators about how migration may influence parental practices directed at safeguarding their children's emotional health. It is also significant because it expounds on the characterization of refugee parents from the standpoint of migration and not just cultural background. Collectively, the studies on the mental health of refugee children infers that there is an even greater influence on refugee parental practices, as they seek to protect their children from further mental and physical harm after resettlement.

Research has described preschools as 'hubs for caring community network for refugee children' (Waniganayake, 2001, p. 291). However, teachers and policymakers confirm challenges with knowing how to effectively work with parents and children to provide services that support early childhood learning (Waniganayake, 2001). However, policymakers and educators must also acknowledge that refugees are not homogenous although they are most often identified as such, and sometimes hinder the delivery of services. Waniganayake (2001) found public programs, especially those in schools, play a vital role in building attachments to the community. Therefore, the ethnic diversity of staff is needed and critical to enhancing the preschool experience for both the parent and the child. Waniganayake further suggested employing staff who have experienced migration, come from the same culture of the children being served, and look like the students is critical to preschool success and parental acceptance of programs.

Additionally, early childhood staff need ongoing professional development that prepares them for meeting the challenges the migration experience brings into the classroom.

### **Ethnic Diversity and the Refugee Parent Voice**

With the resettlement of refugees increasing globally, this growth has presented both opportunities and challenges for integrating refugees into their resettlement cities. For early childhood education, the introduction of racial and ethnic diversity has unearthed biases that have challenged collaborative and positive relationships between educators and families (Agbenyega & Peer, 2010; Waniganayake, 2000). Thus, in some communities the refugee perception of preschool educational services has resulted in low preschool enrollment. Parents of refugee children have noted that for the first time in their lives they experienced ethnic and racial discrimination they would not have felt in their homeland especially when they were the majority population (Heng, 2014, Tadesse, 2014; Waniganayake, 2000). Parents suggested their children's visible appearance as a minority, cultural practices, and language differences have been key contributors to low enrollment and feelings of distrust in preschool programs (Agbenyega & Peer, 2010; Heng, 2014; Li, 2001).

Refugee parents have a great deal to contribute to their children's education from the perspective of language, culture, and values. However, research most often focuses on the deficit of the parents, and school staff lack of preparedness for working effectively with parents. Little attention is directed toward parent views and how their views are shaped because of their experiences or those of their children. In the case of migration, the assumption that the psychological impact of migration ends when children and parents are resettled is a misnomer. Fazel et al., (2012) reported refugee families must

learn to adjust to their new and unfamiliar surroundings while reconciling their losses. Therefore, while resettlement provides permanency, it cannot erase the past or heal the tragedies that has led to migration. The extensive ethnic diversity of refugees is comprehensive and complex because of their culture and experiences.

The scarcity of research on refugee parents and children in early childhood holds true for those resettling from the Asian continent. In the case of Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Indian refugees, few studies differentiated immigrant refugee from the immigrant, and those that did were not specific to preschool enrollment. Six studies were identified using the search terms *Chinese refugee preschool*, *Asian refugee preschool*, *Asian refugee parents*, and *Asian refugee preschool migration*. Five of the studies addressed Chinese immigrants and one Korean mothers, but only two spoke specifically to the refugee preschool population. Although Chinese immigrants are the third fastest growing population in Canada and the U.S., studies specific to Chinese refugees are not reflective of the globally increasing Chinese immigrant population (Heng 2014; Li, Yamamoto, Luo, Batchelor & Bresnahan, 2010). Studies from Heng (2014) and Li et al. (2010) addressed bilingualism, parent teacher interactions, Chinese immigrant expectations for Western education and high-quality preschool. They further suggest Chinese parents value education and advocate for a more academic approach to early learning over learning through play, even when developmentally appropriate practices were explained to them. Heng (2014) examined the parent perspectives from a Head Start parent view in a community-based preschool program. The focus on the interactions between parents and teachers suggested economic status influenced the effectiveness of communication. Communication was one-way when there were



language challenges and misunderstandings evolved from sociocultural differences between teachers and parents. Parents complied with the school although they may have not agreed with treatment of their children or wanted change. Heng (2014) emphasized the importance of collaborating with parents and empowering them to understand and engage in the preschool education process. Heng also suggested educators could be more effective by gaining an understanding of the parent perspective prior to enrollment, thus enhancing their partnerships. Heng noted parental empowerment is important as it relates to how educational practices collide with cultural practices and values.

Li et al., (2010) studied the purpose of school learning and learning beliefs in an immigrant Chinese community. The 50 immigrant families participating in this quantitative study were described as low income, but no reference was made to them as refugee. The researchers defined purpose of school learning as the child's thoughts and feelings about school. Children's learning beliefs were described as learning concerns, purpose, personal regard, process, and personal perception. Li et al., (2010) suggested parents play a vital role in developing these children's learning beliefs when they are preschool age. Further noting, Chinese parents' cultural perception of learning is highly valued and grounded in Chinese practices of personal moral cultivation, (p. 1638). However, as children age, cultural barriers develop between parents and children when children acculturate at a faster rate than their parents.

Black refugee children are another fast-growing population of refugee preschool children. In the instance of Black refugee preschool families, as previously noted, research explicitly focused on preschool refugee families is limited in the U.S. Therefore, studies specific to diverse ethnic refugee populations are also restricted to

smaller numbers. However, unique to the studies is Black refugees tended to be identified as such versus the generic classification of immigrant. The search of literature on Black refugees included the search terms and phrasing *Black refugees*, *African refugees*, *Black refugees in America*, *Black refugees in preschool* and *Black refugee preschool parents*. The most extensive and consistent research on Black refugee preschool children and their parents were foreign studies from Canada and Australia. The studies from the continent of Australia were the most relevant to this research and consistent in identifying the parent perspective and the preschool experiences of refugee children. Studies from Agbenyega and Peer (2010) and Waniganayake (2001) addressed the continent's growing Black refugee population, and the continent's challenges for dealing with culture, ethnicity, and post-migration of resettled refugees. The findings from these studies suggest the education system and the classroom professional have not developed effective systems and policies to address refugee parent views of education, their migration experiences, and their cultural diversity (Agbenyega & Peer 2010; Waniganayake 2001). Thus, noting teacher training is critical to change and inclusion.

The Black refugee population is significant to my research for three reasons. The first reason is research indicates this refugee population continues to have a low enrollment in preschool and childcare programs, especially those of quality and those that are focused on school readiness (Dachyshyn & Kirova, 2008; Magnuson, 2013). Secondly, Blacks on the continent of Africa are the fastest growing refugee populations with Sudanese families migrating 2,000 per day (UNHRC, 2017). Thirdly, parents of Black preschool children continue to express a deep dissatisfaction with early childhood programming, noting concerns for discrimination and lack of empathy for their children

and their diversity (Agbenyega & Peer, 2010; Tadesse, 2014). Parents noted racial discrimination that they attributed to their skin color and refugee status (Agbenyega & Peer, 2010; and Waniganayake, 2001). In the U.S., refugee parents of preschoolers expressed concerns with being identified only as Black and not as Blacks from other cultures. Therefore, they note that they are unfairly compared to Black Americans and are labeled with the stigmas and negative stereotypes associated with Black Americans (Cosby & Dunbar, 2012). Preschool parents also noted the types of exclusion they experienced held future ramifications for schooling and socio-economic success of their children (Agbenyega & Peers, 2010).

Dachyshyn and Kirova's (2008) qualitative study on Black refugees addressed the development of the relationship between Sudanese mothers and their children, after the children were immersed in Canadian preschools. The research explored how the child's developmental preschool play style transferred into the home, and how it was non-reflective of parental cultural practices and beliefs. The children were taught autonomy in the classroom which transferred into the home and was described by parents as being disrespectful of parents and adult authority. The findings suggested, although developmentally appropriate child-centered play is fundamental to early childhood practices, it can lack cultural sensitivity and hijack parental practices and beliefs causing disruption in the home and challenges for acculturation. Such challenges leave parents contemplating how to deal with another loss of personal and cultural identity.

The review of literature on Hispanic refugee preschool families was minimal compared to other ethnic groups. In the case of refugees of Hispanic descent all the studies reviewed referred to the participants as immigrants, although, historically within

the subgroups of Hispanics there are refugee populations. The most well-known and possibly most documented refugees are Cubans. In the early 1980s, many Cubans entered the U.S. as political refugees and asylum seekers.

The variations in descendants of Hispanic origin is broad in the U.S. and is inclusive of many regions of the Western Hemisphere, such as Central America, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Cuba, and South America (Lopez & Espiritu, 1990). However, the migration experiences of the different subgroups are not explicitly well-defined in the research, and seldom are they identified as refugee but commonly referred to as immigrant. Liang et al., (2000) found the Latino immigrant mothers' views on enrollment in early learning programs were steeped in their cultural values and practices. Therefore, early learning programs did not hold the same value for them as they did for middle-class Anglo-American mothers. The Latino mothers reported programs for young children were not akin to or willing to adapt to their cultural beliefs; thus, they chose family and community to support early learning.

Across the ethnic groups discussed in this literature review the findings suggested parents of preschoolers have developed some perceptions of preschool services because of their experiences of having enrolled a child in a structured preschool setting. All the studies reported parents from the ethnic backgrounds they studied communicated feelings of mistrust of preschool classroom practices and found staff demonstrated a blatant lack of respect for their culture and cultural practices. Parents noted that program staff disregarded the physical well-being for their children after they shared their cultural practices. Examples cited were how staff dressed the children for outdoor play or foods fed to the children that the parents asked not to be consumed. They also shared that

parent voices and opinions were not honored as equal contributors to their children's education.

In all the studies, the refugee parents expressed concerns for the early childhood curriculum and child-centered play practices (Agbenyega & Peer, 2010; Dachyshyn & Kirova, 2008; Heng, 2014; Li et al., 2010; Tadesse, 2014; Waniganayake, 2001). These studies reported parents believed children should be engaged in teacher-led learning and not learning through peer play (Heng 2014). Asian, African, Middle Eastern, and Latin American immigrant refugee parents all expressed concern for the academic quality of preschool education noting peer play was unnecessary. The refugee parent perspective on early education is important, because in the same way that preschool is the foundation for kindergarten readiness parents are a critical contributor to this foundation.

### **Summary of Literature Review Findings**

Today, preschool enrollment for refugee children is characterized as low, with refugee children entering kindergarten ill-prepared to learn. In the last decade, preschool has been defined as the solid foundation that prepares children for kindergarten and future educational successes. The research has confirmed children most likely to benefit from preschool are children living in poverty, and children whose parents are immigrant and the child's first language is not English. Although the knowledge of what works and who needs it the most is pervasive, preschool education is still flawed in that children with the greatest needs are the least likely to be enrolled in a preschool or prepared for kindergarten. In the case of refugee children, they are one of the fastest growing subpopulations globally, and with their growth comes many educational needs and barriers to success. If the opportunity exists, why then is a population of children whose

needs have been determined the least served? Additionally, what factors into the decision-making process of refugee parents that contributes to low enrollment? My research study presents the opportunity to unravel the enigma of the parent perspective and possibly increase refugee children enrollment in preschool programs and programs of quality. Nationally, preschool has become the hallmark of public school systems. Public preschools have been charged with building a solid foundation for school success and closing the achievement gap before it begins. This research offers the opportunity to address the barriers that challenge the building of this solid foundation.

There were four limitations to identifying empirical research relevant to the study: The limitations were 1) empirical research on the topic of refugee preschool parents, 2) refugee parent perceptions of preschool enrollment, 3) minimizing of ethnically diverse group differences, and 4) lack of research on refugees in public preschool programs. The first limitation was finding literature that consistently identified refugees apart from immigrants. The research was found to dependably label all foreign-born as immigrants and seldom distinguish immigrants from refugees. This practice of using the terms immigrant and refugee interchangeably made it difficult to identify studies specific to the refugee population. Distinguishing a refugee from an immigrant is vital because they are two vastly distinct groups of people. The key distinction between the two populations is their journey to their resettled city and permanency status. Refugees are characterized by their life-alternating struggles and their future is predicated on acceptance into a new country. While immigrants freely make the decision to migrate from their homeland and can return at their own will, refugees are forced out of their countries, experience many years of dangers and unstable living conditions, and are permanently exiled from their

homeland. In my study, I will differentiate refugee perspectives from those of the immigrants, which may lead to increased opportunities toward success in the recruitment and enrollment of refugee children in preschool programs.

Secondly, there was no research descriptive of the ideology of refugee parent perception of matriculation into preschool prior to enrollment, nor the refugee parent's perceptions of the enrollment process. Policy briefs and best practices were found to provide suggested strategies for recruiting parents to programs; however, none enlisted an attempt to gain insight into what influenced parent enrollment decisions and what choices appealed to them. The research addressing refugee/immigrant parent perspectives after enrollment in preschool focused on the parent involvement component specific to parent teacher relationships, parent views of the curriculum, and the cultural and parental beliefs that drive their views.

Thirdly, the literature minimized the diverse voices of refugees by collectively grouping and labeling ethnic groups as a race of people or with the native-born groups. The labeling of Spanish speaking populations as Hispanic or Latino, and Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean as Asian was consistent throughout the extant research. This was especially challenging for identifying refugees of Hispanic descent because in all the research they were labeled only as immigrants. However, historically, there are persons of Hispanic descent who are refugees. Examples of this can be found in the contemporary caravans of today where thousands of Latin Americans are exiting their homeland and seeking asylum from violence, crime, and economic instability.

There is limited empirical research on the refugee parent's assessment of preschool once children are enrolled in a program. It too was akin to previously

mentioned research that did not establish refugee study participants as such. Researchers noted the broad pan-ethnic labeling of immigrants only mask information that can be critical to explaining differences in student enrollment, behaviors, academic achievement, and parent involvement. This too rendered a gap in the literature.

Finally, the research on refugees in public preschool programs is lacking; thus, leaving a void in research that gives voice to refugee parents—and how they navigate (or do not navigate) education systems in the U.S.. In the last five decades, the enrollment in U.S. state-funded public preschool programs has almost doubled, due in part to an increased national interest in early school readiness. Furthermore, the growth of preschool programs nationally has been enhanced by the investment of public school dollars in the delivery of early childhood services. Nationally, there are 43 states, plus the District of Columbia, with state-funded public preschool programs (NIEER, 2015). However, the enrollment of refugee children is not reflective of this expansion of preschool services.

The expectation that refugee families will acculturate into their resettlement communities is foreseeable as a natural progression of resettlement, but at what cost when it comes to maintaining their culture and value systems. Researchers have found refugee parents who have enrolled their children in preschool programs have communicated concerns that cultural pluralism is central to their decision-making and their children's early development. These parents have expressed desires and concerns for shaping the minds of their young children through value systems and cultural beliefs that they view as inaccessible in preschool settings. Although these findings provide



concrete data for making change, how does the parent perspective prior to preschool entry differ?

The refugee, whether child or an adult, experiences a great deal of physical and emotional traumas because of migration. As with any traumatic experience, migration carries over to all aspects of life and can positively or negatively shape views and decision-making. In the case of parenting a preschool age child the migration experience raises the question of how the experience shapes views for sending young children off to preschool. No studies were found to explore the refugee parents' perspective of preschool prior to their child's enrollment in preschool. Nor did the research address the parents' perceptions of early education and how it is shaped by culture and the migration experiences.

As the refugee population has grown over the years, researchers have addressed the significant challenges of both the child and parent post preschool enrollment. These challenges have included language barriers, parent perceptions of the early learning curriculum, student acceptance in the classroom, and behavioral discipline. Post preschool enrollment research indicates refugee parents struggle with maintaining their child's enrollment in preschool programs, noting concerns that preschool infringed on cultural values and practices, and staff lacked an appreciation for diverse cultures. Therefore, with research findings pointing to low refugee student enrollment and the lack of readiness by students, the perspective of parents before their children enter preschool can be significant for growth and change. It also signals a collaborative and effective partnership with parents who have expressed concerns for collaboration and acculturation in their resettlement communities.

The growth of refugee children globally has changed the landscape for early learning programs. Understanding the perceptions of refugee families presents the opportunity for children to flourish in education while establishing a foundation for educational and economic success. Studies and policies supporting the investment in preschool promotes preschool providing stronger future earnings and higher educational attainment for children who participate in quality preschools. Those who involve parents at the onset of early learning increase a student's chance for lifelong educational success.

## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This qualitative phenomenography study explored the phenomenon of refugee parent perception of preschool enrollment. I enlisted the authentic voices of parents to examine what ideas shape their views about public preschool programming. I sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do refugee parents describe early childhood education in their native country?
2. In what ways do refugee parents conceptualize public preschool enrollment for their children?
3. How do refugee parents perceive their backgrounds and migration experiences as influencing the decision to enroll their children in a public preschool program?

This study is significant because of the globally emergent preschool refugee population, and data that suggest refugee preschoolers are entering kindergarten lacking school readiness skills (Votruba-Drzal, Coley, Collins, & Miller, 2015; Yamamoto & Li, 2012). Furthermore, immigrant children enrolled in preschool are more likely to attend lower quality preschool programs that inadequately support readiness skills (Yamamoto & Li., 2012; Dryden-Peterson, 2015). This study is also noteworthy because the state in which the study is conducted is one of the top 10 resettlement states and the city in which the study is being conducted is the largest city in the state and is also identified in the top

20 U.S. cities serving refugees from diverse cultures, ethnic background, and various continents (Kentucky Office of Resettlement, 2017; Cepla, 2019).

This chapter explains phenomenography research, the setting, researcher's positionality, data sources, credibility, validity and reliability, ethical consideration, limitations, and summary. The research design methods are described in Figure 1. The figure explains the process taken before and after data collection and analysis. Data were collected using a questionnaire focused on the demographics of participants and semi-structured interviews. The interviews were analyzed through repeated reading and rereading of transcripts with a focus on the collective views of the participants.

The experiences garnered from the interviews are operationalized by conceptualizing the experiences, and then developing a collective view described by categories of description and dimensions that emerge and evolve from the participant interviews (DeMoss & Vaughn, 2000; Akerlind, 2012). Thus, the iterative transcription of the interviews produced dimensions and categories that are repeatedly refined to produce the outcome space (Akerlind, 2012; Dringenberg, Mendoza-Garcia, Tafur, Filaf & Hsu, 2015). Before naming the outcome space, I also expanded the name of the categories of description to reflect a more concrete explanation of the descriptions, thus leading to the category outcomes. I chose to analyze the data in this manner because the naming of the categories of description are reflective of the simplistic views of the participants which I wanted to maintain, while the categories outcomes represent a more sophisticated analysis of their views.

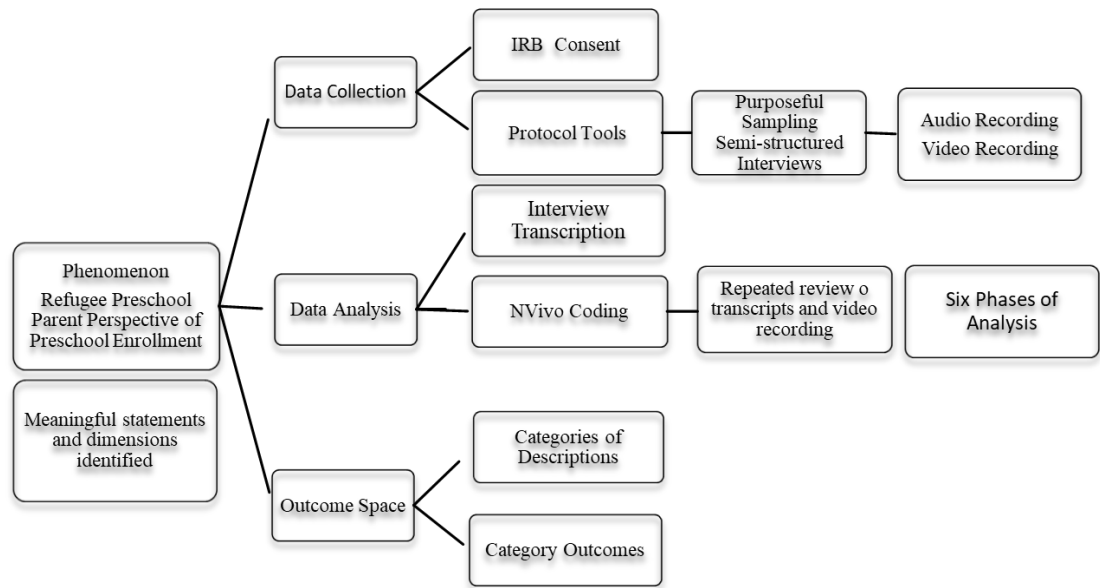


Figure 1. Flow Chart for the Phenomenography Research Design

## Phenomenography

Phenomenography was first introduced as a research framework by a Swedish research team in the 1970s, which was led by Ference Marton (Marton & Svensson, 1979; DeMoss & Vaughn 2000; Sin, 2010; Akerlind, 2012). Phenomenography is different from phenomenology. Among the differences, phenomenology is interested in a first-order perspective in which the world is described as it is, while phenomenography is focused on the second-order perspective in which the world is described as it is understood.

Ornek (2008) noted, "Phenomenography is an empirical research tradition that was designed to answer questions about thinking and learning, especially for educational research"(p.2). Yates et al., (2012) further posited, "Through this perspective, the researcher is oriented towards describing people's ways of seeing, understanding and

experiencing the world around them" (p. 99). With this as the premise for phenomenography research, researchers then began to develop and implement data analysis procedures that focused on capturing the perspective of people based on their experiences.

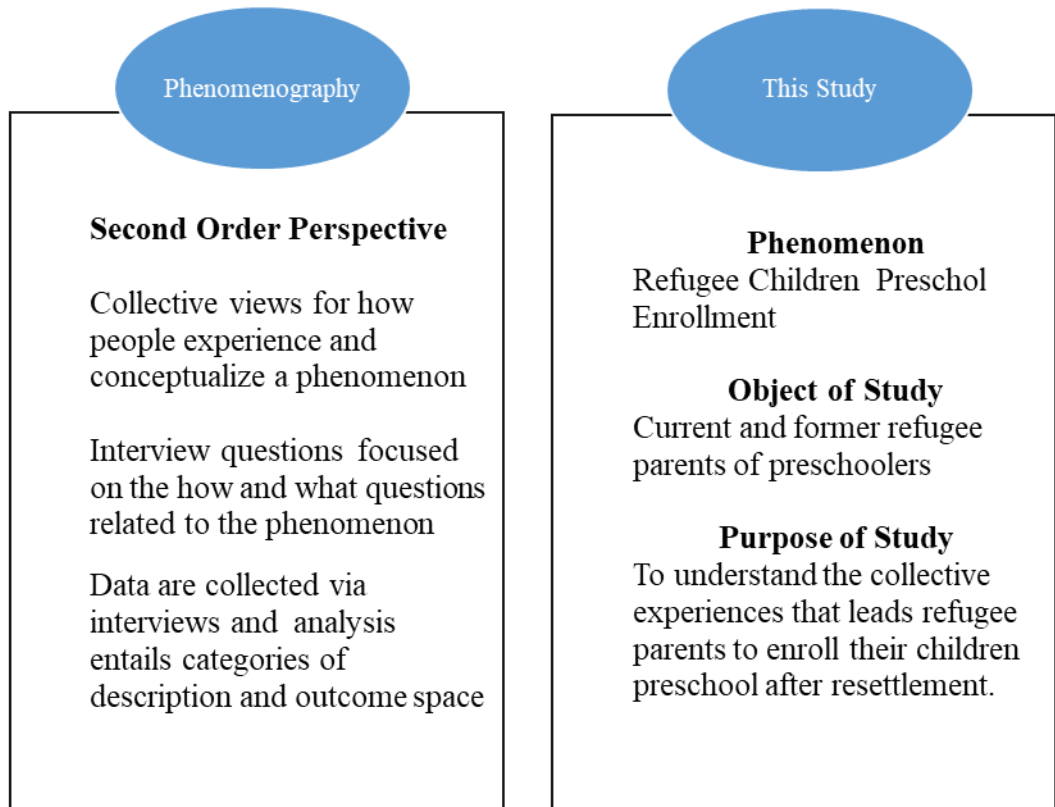


Figure 2. Second-Order Perspective and This Study

The characteristics of the second order perspective and their parallels in my research study are found in Figure 2. The first order perspective is associated with phenomenology, which explores individual views that describe the world. The researcher may be interested in the relationship to culture, gender, age, and social economic status (SES). In phenomenology, the research questions tend to be *why* questions.

Phenomenography addresses collective views and is analyzed as such. The research

questions are focused on the collective experiences of the participants; therefore, *how*, and *what* questions are asked. In this study, *how* and *what* questions address refugee preschool enrollment from the perspective of the parents' experiences.

As a lesser recognized and emerging qualitative research methodology, phenomenography has evolved over the last 30 years in Europe and Australia and is becoming a more widely accepted research method worldwide. However, critiques of phenomenography suggest there is still a lack of understanding for this methodological approach (Sin, 2010; Cope 2002; Akerlind, 2012). The critiques of phenomenography have focused on the variations in practices, and the shift of phenomenography from understanding customs and behaviors to a focus on the voice of knowledge and beliefs of study participants (DeMoss & Vaughn, 2000; Sin, 2010).

As the use of the phenomenographic method has increased, quality, rigor, and validity standards have also come under scrutiny (Cope 2002; Sin, 2010). To address these issues, Sin (2010) explored the research literature that explained qualitative criteria and then evaluated phenomenography as it compares to these qualitative measures. Sin suggested there are varying perspectives regarding the appropriate criterion for qualitative research and suggested a solitary set of measures presents challenges for streamlining any type of research method. Sin described ways for phenomenography researchers to address issues for rigor, validity, generalizability and transferability, objectivity and reflexivity and reliability. Sin's overall analysis lay in a full and concise description of all data collection and analysis procedures. Another critique of the phenomenography method by Cope (2002) suggested eight checks for validity and an

interjudge communication measure for reliability. The eight checks will be discussed in data analysis.

Wright, Murray, and Geale (2007) conducted phenomenographic research to understand how university professors perceived their roles as supervisors of Ph.D. students. Wright, et al. (2007) noted the second-order perspective provides useful insight into understanding how real-life experiences shaped how the professors viewed supervision and the supervision of students. The interview questions for the professors were designed to ask *what* and *how* questions. The professors were asked whom they identified as effective supervisors and what their role was in the supervisory process. The professors were not asked what supervisory processes they were familiar with nor why they use them or why they believed they were important (Wright, et al., 2007), because asking these questions would reflect the first-order perspective, which Marton (1981) describes as “In the first and by far the most commonly adopted perspective we orient ourselves towards the world and make statements about it” (p. 178). Wright et al. concluded that there were five ways Ph.D. supervisors approach supervision: 1) Quality Assurer, 2) Supportive Guide, 3) Researcher Trainer, 4) Mentor, and 5) Knowledge Enthusiast.

DeMoss and Vaughn (2000) used the phenomenography research method to study what shaped and influenced parent involvement based on the participants' experiences and knowledge base. Their qualitative study examined the parental voice of 26 refugee mothers and fathers of school-age children. DeMoss and Vaughn did not take the ethnography first-order perspective of focusing on ethnicity, gender, economic status, but



instead on the phenomenon of parental involvement in educational decision-making for their children. The parents shared their experiences of being parented and then parenting.

DeMoss and Vaughn (2000) found five category descriptions: 1) family background, 2) gender-related expectations, 3) reactions to crises, 4) occupational identification, 5) class/culture. The family history experiences shared by families in DeMoss and Vaughn's research study presented parental involvement from the perspective of adults having experienced poor parenting, the experiences of a teen pregnancy that motivated parental engagement, and positive parenting despite economic hardships. The analysis of the interviews suggested non-school related experiences were the driving forces behind parental involvement; therefore, schools should focus on the montage of diverse families who make up its school's community. Moreover, noting a parent's voice may not be easily identified by just looking at culture, economic status, class, or gender.

The phenomenography method is important to my research because it provides insight into how reality is perceived about education and preschool and what can lead to support for a transition of thinking (Marton, 1988). It also focuses on the analysis of group knowledge for understanding the phenomena of preschool enrollment (Akerlind, 2012; Marton 1988; Rosário, Núñez, Azevedo, Cunha, Pereira & Mourão, 2013), because there is a gap in literature on the refugee migration experiences, as well as the refugee parent perspective on early learning programs.

### **The Setting**

The setting for the study is in Louisville, Kentucky. Louisville is the largest city in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and has an extensive and diverse refugee resettlement

population. Table 1 describes the state's 2015 refugee population and their homeland of origin. In 2015, some 1,900 refugees were resettled in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The refugee population is 4.9 percent of the city's population. Additionally, 59 percent (16,107) of the young children of refugee parents live in low-income families (Kentucky Refugee Ministries, 2015).

The city's school district serves more than 100,000 students K-12 and has a state preschool enrollment of almost 2,500 and a federal Early Head Start and Head Start of about 1,350. The city has two refugee resettlement agencies that serve all refugees settled in the city. Moreover, these agencies have satellite programs throughout the city that serves refugees. There are also other social service agencies in the city that serves both immigrants and refugees.

Table 1. 2015 Kentucky Refugees by Country & Continent

Country of Origin	N	Continent	Common Demarcation
1. Bhutan	195	Asia	South Asia
2. Burma	492	Asia	Southeast Asia
3. Burundi	48	Africa	East Africa
4. Cuba	66	North America	Caribbean Sea
5. Democratic Republic Congo	359	Africa	Central Africa
6. Iraq	311	Asia	Middle East
7. Somalia	360	Africa	Eastern Africa
8. Sudan	40	Africa	Northern Africa
9. Syria	63	Asia	Middle East
10. Sri Lanka (Ceylon)	9	Asia	Southwest Asia

#### The Resettlement Agencies

Catholic Charities and Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM) were the two resettlement agencies that participated in this study. The resettlement agency directors

were contacted by e-mail and postal mail in December 2017. The correspondence sent to the executive directors was the IRB approved agency participant outreach letter, the questionnaire, the recruitment flyer, and the interview questions (See Appendix A-E.). The directors were asked permission to recruit participants from their clientele. They responded to the request via e-mail, giving permission for their refugee family program coordinators to be contacted to arrange for the participation. The coordinators were contacted in mid-December 2017 via e-mail and phone. They too were sent a PDF of the appendices listed above.

In January 2018, the first interview at Catholic Charities was conducted, and in March 2018 the interviews with KRM commenced. The interviews were conducted over a period of seven months at the resettlement agencies. Participants were onsite at the agencies for either training or classes.

### *Catholic Charities*

Catholic Charities of Louisville is an official federal refugee resettlement agency and has served refugees in Louisville since 1975. Their refugee program provides comprehensive case management services that encompass ESL classes, employment training, and youth services that support the enrollment of children in educational programs. Additionally, Catholic Charities supports women empowerment and computer classes. The agency collaborates with community agencies to support a family's health and wellness and financial self-sufficiency.

Prior to the collection of data for this study, an informational meeting was held in January 2018, with the family refugee coordinator. At this meeting, I explained the purpose of the study and how it would be conducted. After our meeting, I made a

recruitment presentation to a group of 20 refugees and disbursed the questionnaire. The coordinator allowed 30 minutes for the presentation and the completion of the questionnaire. All the students in the class were encouraged by the coordinator to complete the questionnaire although some would not meet the eligibility criteria guideline. The coordinator stated she thought it would be good practice and develop skills for the whole group to learn how to complete a questionnaire. Interpreters were present to assist those whose first language was not English.

The questionnaires were collected and compiled that day to determine potential participants. Of the questionnaires collected, 10 individuals were identified as eligible for the study, however, only one person from this group participated in the study. The coordinator attempted to set up interviews with these persons, but because of the resettlement requirements and challenges that the participants face for coming to classes they were not available for an interview. Some obtained employment, others had sick children, did not have transportation, or were seeking employment when the interviews were scheduled.

The interviews began the following week, with the coordinator identifying participants based upon who was on site at the agency when I arrived. During all the interviews conducted at Catholic Charities, all the persons recruited were interviewed except for one who declined. This person did not want to be recorded by either audio or video and because she used an interpreter I did not feel I could take adequate notes to record her interview and use it as part of the study.

The interviews at Catholic Charities took place Tuesday through Friday between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Catholic Charities participants were interviewed

from January 2018 through July 2018. Participants needing an interpreter were provided one by the agency. Three interpreters were used throughout the course of these interviews. They each completed the IRB Affidavit of Accuracy for Translation form. The interviews were conducted in either a conference room, a classroom, or the preschool classroom after all the children were dismissed.

*Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM)*

As a nonprofit resettlement agency, Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM) serves its refugee clientele by offering comprehensive services to the whole family. These services are supported through outreach in the community and collaborative partnerships in the city. KRM is intent on helping families to rebuild their lives in their resettlement city. In their 2017 annual report, KRM reported 884 refugee arrivals with 35% being children under the age of 18. It was further reported that 96 families and 126 children were served in their mothers and children program (Kentucky Refugee Ministries, 2017).

Recruitment for participants from this agency was also coordinated with the refugee family program coordinator. In February 2018, hardcopies of the recruitment materials and questionnaire that had been sent by e-mail in January were delivered to KRM at the request of the coordinator. The hand-delivered materials were then distributed during class time by the staff and collected by the coordinator. Staff at KRM also used these materials as skill development tools for the adults.

All the participants that completed the questionnaire and participated in the interview were female. The interviews for this agency took place on the same day. On the day of the interviews, the questionnaires completed during the classes were collected. There were five questionnaires. None of the individuals scheduled for the interviews had

completed the questionnaire. Three female refugee parents were interviewed. One of the three participants used an interpreter. Each interview was between 30 and 45 minutes in length. The interviews were conducted in one of the childcare rooms that was not in use. No other interviews were conducted with this agency due to scheduling challenges, access to interpreters, and the waning number of families being resettled.

### **The Participants**

The participants in the study are resettled refugee parents and grandparents. Their children or grandchildren have either participated in preschool in Louisville or will be eligible for the school district's state or federal preschool programs (newborn up to age four). At the time of the interviews, the district held both state and federal preschool grants. However, during the data collection phase of this study, the district relinquished its federal grant that served children six-weeks to three years old (three years old without disabilities).

### **The Researcher's Positionality**

My background for working with preschool parents spans over 20 years and with refugee preschool families twelve years. My first experience working with refugee families began in a family literacy program. In the late 1980s, family literacy was evolving as a program that offered literacy development support to parents of bilingual children (Auerbach, 1989). As the coordinator of a family literacy child care site, I worked with refugee families from Croatia and Bosnia to provide family education, adult education, and early childhood services to newly resettled families. This experience introduced me to how education, family, and culture intersect for refugee families.

My next experience with refugee families evolved from my work in a national family literacy agency. I provided technical assistance and training to literacy staff who delivered services to refugee families. This experience opened the door for working in rural and urban areas as well as with a diverse population of refugees and program personnel. I assisted with the development and implementation of parent and children interactive activities. I also developed trainings and workshops for national audiences. This experience granted me exposure to other professionals working directly with refugees and established my knowledge and skills for working with a more diverse population of refugee families.

Finally, as a Head Start family and community partnerships manager in the school district, I worked directly with two resettlement agencies and an immigrant community service organization to recruit refugee children into the school district's preschool programs. I worked collaboratively with KRM, Catholic Charities, and Americana to provide information sessions and registration to families with preschool age children.

One of my most insightful experiences that taught me about the refugee experience involved hiring a refugee who had experienced the challenges of migration, resettlement, and adaptation to the U.S. education system. This employee shared her migration experience and the sacrifices her family made for resettlement. I learned her driving force was to give her children an opportunity for a future, which meant accepting and engaging in an education system that she had no experience navigating. She enrolled her children in the district's Head Start preschool program and responded to all the program's request that she understood. She trusted that the program was working in the best interest of her children. She also personally set the expectation that her children

would succeed in the program. Her experience and determination reflect the outcome space I found in this research. It was the combination of all these remarkably diverse experiences that made me want to engage in research that considers the refugee parent perspective on preschool enrollment.

### **Data Sources**

Phenomenography research relies on primary data to explore a phenomenon being studied (Sin, 2010; Akerlind, 2012). “With qualitative data being the source of well-grounded research, credibility, dependability, and replicability are what anchors the research and the analysis process,” (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 5-6). Hox and Boeije (2005) noted that primary data serves many purposes beyond the initial collection of data for the original research study. They further noted primary data adds to existing data which becomes secondary data for future research, as well as contributes to the data archives. The data sources for my research was a questionnaire and interviews that collect data specific to the phenomena (Sin, 2010; Akerlind, 2012).

The questionnaire (See Appendix C) solicited standard demographic data such as age, family size, and gender as well as migration questions. Participants were also asked about their country of origin, length of migration, education experiences before and after migration and the length of time in the resettlement city. The questionnaire was then used to build a profile of potential participants. Those meeting the criteria as described in Appendix F were identified for an interview.

The interview protocol was used to conduct the interviews. The tools consisted of a letter explaining the interview process, the interview questions, and an interview consent form. Prior to using the questionnaire and the interview questions, they were



submitted to two of the staff at the refugee agencies for review and feedback. The questions were piloted with one of the participants. Sin (2010) notes it is to the advantage of a neophyte researcher to pilot the interview questions and process to ensure the right questions are asked, and to establish the interview technique. The data collection began with the pilot.

### *The Pilot*

The pilot interview was critical to the study because it helped to shape the interviews and the interview process. Sin (2010) suggested, it is to the advantage of the new researcher to pilot the interview questions and the process to ensure the right questions are asked and to establish the interview technique. Akerlind, Bowden, and Green (2005) noted, "While pilot interviews are strongly recommended for novices to provide an opportunity to develop the required skills, they also represent important aspects of any phenomenographic study in order to check that the scenario or questions(s) set actually do yield information on the intended phenomenon in a way that is useful to the study at hand" (p.84). My decision to conduct a pilot interview proved to be beneficial to the study in that I was able to refine my interview questions as well as my interview skills. This was especially important because of the language barriers and the use of an interpreter.

My first interview was my pilot interview. This interview revealed areas for me to improve my interview skills. It also led to changes in the interview questions. First, I added the definition of preschool to the bottom of the interview questions. This was done to help the interpreters when the participants had questions about the meaning of preschool or they simply wanted to review the meaning. Secondly, I reduced the number

of interview questions to 18, and changed the questions that began with “Would you...”, “What...”, and “How” to “Tell me about...”. This provided a more conversational tone that personalized the participant's discourse. The revised questions and questionnaire were resubmitted for IRB for approval. The revisions were approved and from this point forward the revised questions were used.

In addition to the interview questions, the pilot interview was conducted using all the other IRB tools needed to gather the data. This included the interview protocol, the questionnaire, the consent letter, recruitment flyer, and affidavits. I began all the interviews by explaining the tools (except protocol). I began each interview by asking the participants to share their experiences. As they shared, I would go back to the interview questions if the questions were not addressed. At each interview, I read the questions to explain the type of information I was seeking. I noted I might occasionally ask a few questions but was more interested in hearing them share and not just answer questions.

### *The Questionnaire*

To maximize efficiency and validity, a demographic questionnaire was used for purposeful sampling (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015). The questionnaire expedited the process for identifying parents who have or have not had preschool aged children. Palinkas et al. (2015) posited that purposeful sampling contributes to maximum variation reflective of heterogeneity. Therefore, the questionnaire was significant to the research for identifying diversity and participants and who met the participation requirements.

Prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, the executive director of Americana reviewed the questionnaire and suggested that divorce and Australia be removed from the form. He stated he felt divorce was not something that would be culturally understood by the participants. He also noted Australia should be removed from the questionnaire because participants could not be resettled from Australia but could be resettled there. No one else suggested any other changes.

The questionnaire gathered standard demographic data such as ages, gender, family size, head of household, and education. Additionally, specific data relevant to the migration experience of the participant such as country of origin, number of migration camp and length of time in camps was part of the questionnaire.

#### *Semi-Structured Interviews*

Interviews are a fundamental component of phenomenography because they provide an understanding of the diverse ways people think about a phenomenon. In this study, the interviews provide an in-depth perspective of the participant's knowledge and beliefs about the phenomena of preschool enrollment for refugee children. The interviews explored the life experiences of the participants; thus, expounding on the conceptual meaning of parental knowledge and beliefs. The interviews for this research were all one-on-one with participants, except where interpreters were used, then three persons were present. All the interviews were set up in a private room such as a conference room or classroom. The room for the interviews was general setup prior to the participant entering the room. This was done to save time and to hopefully make the participants feel comfortable with the interview process. During each interview, the room was set up with a small video camera on a tabletop tripod, a digital voice recorder,

and a cell phone with a voice recorder. The participants were told about each device and were asked if it was okay to turn them on before they were used. They were also told when the recording devices were turned off.

The interview process began with introductions as described in the protocol guide (Appendix D). The guide was important because it helped to provide a thoughtful well-planned interview that supports analysis (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). It also conveyed the essence of the research concept for understanding the crucial aspects and features that expound on the collective views of the participant. The guide consisted of scripts, open-ended interview questions and prompts (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The guide was developed in accordance with phenomenographic research practices that categorizes participant responses and calls for verbatim transcription (DeMoss & Vaughn, 2000; Rosário et al., 2013; Sin, 2010) that imparts an authentic participant voice. The interview questions supported the research questions by focusing on the participant's firsthand account of their knowledge and beliefs as it relates to preschool enrollment.

Sharing information about myself seemed to relax the participants and encouraged conversation. After the introductions, the interview process was presented. This included explaining the uses of the recording devices, the consent forms, and questionnaire. The participants were given the consent form and the interview questions. The interpreter received these forms too, along with the translation affidavit form. After all the forms were signed, the participants were given the recruitment flyer and a full copy of the consent form without a signature but were told if a signed copy was wanted one could be provided.

The first interview was at Catholic Charities. On the day of the first interview, two people were scheduled, but the interview time with the first participant did not allow time for the second participants to be interviewed. The plan was for all interviews to be individual. Individual, in-depth interviews provide details and the opportunity for participants to provide firsthand knowledge of their experiences (Yates et al., 2012). This interview was conducted with an interpreter. During this interview, I decided this would be my pilot interview. I found myself challenged with conducting the interview although I was experienced with using a translator. I also felt like the interview questions were not clear and they lacked the phenomenography approach of being conversational. Qualitative researchers have found open-ended questions induces unforeseen responses, offers a more authentic view of individual views, as well as provides opulent explanations (Creswell, 2013, p. 41). After this interview, I reviewed the interview questions and revised the questions. Two of the 20 questions were deleted, and the definition of preschool was added to the bottom of the questions. The questions were reworded to solicit more conversation by using what and tell me about statements. I then submitted a request to IRB to revise the questions and my request was approved.

The interviews conducted after the first interview were more conversational and the participants appeared to better understand the questions. The recordings also provided direct quotes that are used in Chapter IV and V to explain the categories of description and outcomes. The participant quotes validate the outcome space and demonstrate minimal influence from the researcher (Akerlind 2012; Sin 2010).

### **Data Analysis in Phenomenography**

Phenomenography researchers embrace different perspectives on the process of data analysis; therefore, this opens the door for a variety of protocols for how and when analysis starts. Akerlind (2005) noted,

In the initial stages, reading through transcripts is characterized by a high degree of openness to possible meanings, subsequent readings becoming more focused on particular aspects or criteria, but still within a framework of openness to new interpretations, and the ultimate aim of illuminating the whole by focusing on different perspectives at different times. The entire process is a strongly iterative and comparative one, involving the continual sorting and resorting of data, plus ongoing comparisons between the data and the developing categories of description, as well as between the categories themselves. (p.118)

Yates et al., (2012) notes some researchers have embraced phenomenographic data analysis strategies that entail phases of analysis. These phases have been adapted over a period of 40 years since Ference Marton developed phenomenography as a research methodology. Over time, researchers have developed variations in the initial data analysis process. Marton's data analysis process has been referred to as pooling meaning (Marton, 1988). Marton and his colleagues delineated four phases in their pooling of meaning to analyze data. The four phases are: 1.) identifying relevant data, 2.) sorting data, 3.) contrasting groups, and 4.) verifying portions of data. Over the years, researchers such as Ornek and others have amplified Marton and his colleague's process by adding additional steps or refining the process. In the case of Ornek (2008), the analysis phase included feminizations, compilation, condensation/reductions, grouping/classification of interview responses, categories comparison and naming of categories.

Table 2 describes the various phases of data analysis in phenomenography and the scholars who have utilized them.

Table 2. Phases of Data Analysis in Phenomenography

<i>Marton (1988)</i>	<i>Sandberg (1996)</i>	<i>Dahlgren &amp; Fallsberg (1991)</i>	<i>Saljo (1997)</i>	<i>Sjöström (2002)</i>
<i>Four Phases Pool of Meaning</i>	<i>Five Phases Process</i>	<i>Seven Stages</i>	<i>Six Phases Pooling of Meaning</i>	<i>Seven Steps</i>
1. Identifying relevant data	1. Familiarity with transcripts	1. Familiarization	1. Identifying relevant data	1. Familiarization
2. Sorting data	2. Referential aspects of analysis	2. Condensation	2. Sorting data	2. Compilation
3. Contrasting groups	3. Structural aspects of analysis	3. Comparison	3. Contrasting groups	3. Condensation/ Reduction
4. Verifying portion of data	4. Intentional constitution of conceptions	4. Grouping	4. Verifying portion of data	4. Grouping/ classification of interview responses
	5. Establishing the outcome space	5. Articulating	5. Understanding patterns in data	5. Categories Comparison
		6. Labeling	6. Understanding conceptions	6. Naming of Categories
		7. Contrasting		7. Contrasting comparison of categories



## **Credibility, Validity, Reliability and Transferability**

The doctrine for quality research is its trustworthiness. It has been noted by researchers that the tenets for establishing trustworthiness are credibility, validity, reliability, and transferability. Each of these terms conveys different meanings to the research and its quality. Golafshani (2003) posited credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness are based on the researcher's efforts and ability and are what establishes the validity and reliability in a qualitative study. Although Sin (2010) notes, the validity and reliability of phenomenography have been criticized for not triangulating the data, I found triangulation possible through a well-developed data collection plan that gave voice to the participants. However, Sin (2010) notes, "Consistent with the principle of rigorous conduct, Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) have advocated that careful and thorough procedures that promote validity and reliability be woven into every step of the research process to ensure rigor" (p. 307).

### *Credibility*

While credibility is centered on whether the research is believable and can be supported by the conclusions, its trustworthiness is increased by its generalizability. The credibility of my research can be measured based on how the participants were accessed, their self-reporting on the questionnaire, the transcription of interviews verbatim, and the variety of methods used to analyze the interviews. The uses of resettlement agencies along with their staff's recruitment efforts substantiates the participant as authentic refugees. The data reported on the questionnaire can also be used to validate the interviewee's statements against official resettlement documents.

The diversity of the participants also helps in establishing credibility. They were diverse in their arrival to the city, their migration experiences, their education levels, family backgrounds, and homeland origins. All the participants completed a questionnaire survey and engaged in an interview that was audio and video recorded. The data were analyzed using multiple methods that honored the voice of the participants. Participants own words were used in coding and reporting.

### *Validity*

Miles et al., (2014) notes there is controversy in the research field among researchers regarding whether validity is a viable construct in qualitative research. They suggest, “Alternative terms such as verisimilitude and a persuasively written account are preferred” (p. 313). They also suggested a list of twelve things to consider when addressing validity. I found my research followed this list of suggestions. I am especially consistent with my description of the research, linking my data to the analysis, and explaining procedures for analysis.

Research validity is also supported by how the research questions are addressed and the research design. Validity ask the question, is the research design capable of answering the research questions? The intent of the research design is to measure the phenomenon, be transparent in the measurement, and to provide a conclusion based on data collected. In this research, the design incorporates interview questions that are grounded in the phenomenographic methodology of asking why and how questions. The interview questions were presented in a conversational style that allowed participants to engage in a way that was comfortable for them to converse and share. Final the research design focused on answering the research questions. For example, the how and what

questions were reflective of all the research questions and delved into preschool experiences, participant background, and migration.

### *Reliability*

Reliability clarifies whether the research is reliable for repeating consistent results. Reliability is generally defined as a key element of quantitative research (Golafshani, 2003 and Sin, 2010) where testing and evaluation establishes reliability. However, these researchers along with others have noted although there is some debate as to whether reliability can be a key tenet to qualitative research it is not always dismissed as not being a plausible principle that can be applied to qualitative research. Sin (2010) suggest researchers have found that reliability in qualitative research such as phenomenography opens the door for appraisal of a topic over time that can lead to new data and findings for future research. Further noting interpretative awareness is fundamental to qualitative research. Sin (2010) notes, "The researcher's interpretative awareness is when the researcher acknowledges and explicitly deals with his or her own preconceptions throughout the research process" (p. 311). Sin concludes, "It is important that researchers document and explain clearly how they have practiced interpretative awareness so that the reader can make a judgment about the research process and assess the reliability of the findings" (p. 311). Golafshani (2003) notes that although there are many debates among researchers about how to achieve reliability most have concluded that reliability is a direct result of validity. In this research, I concur with Lincoln and Guba (1985), "Since there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former [validity] is sufficient to establish the latter [reliability], (p. 316).

### *Transferability*

This research has generalizing possibilities. As previously noted, the participant population was recruited from resettlement agencies and they were instrumental in distributing the questionnaire as well in recruiting potential participants. The agency staff reported all refugees enrolled during the time of the research were invited to participate in the research and were given the questionnaire and recruitment flyer. In addition to participants being recruited from a resettlement agency, they were also interviewed on-site at the agency, which was a comfortable and familiar surrounding for them. Interpreters were also from the agency, thus, providing more familiarity. Participants also had access to staff if they had any questions or concerns. I maintained a journal of my research activities that detailed my interactions with the participants. The use of video and audio recording of the interviews establishes the trustworthiness of the categories of description and outcome space (Sin, 2010). Interview responses from the participant are reported verbatim in the analysis.

To establish validity, reliability, and trustworthiness for the study, I followed Cope's (2002) Eight Steps to Establish Credibility, Transferability, and Trustworthiness. In Table 3, Cope's steps along with my steps are explained. Cope (2002) posited, "Reliability in phenomenographic studies is not considered to have the same sense as reliability in qualitative research in general" (para 2).

Table 3. Cope's 8 Steps to Establish Credibility, Transferability and Trustworthiness

Cope, 2002	My research steps
1) Explain the researcher's background as it relates to the knowledge of phenomenon.	In the study, I convey my background and experience for working in early learning programs and with refugee parents. As part of the interview process I also shared my knowledge of preschool.
2) The characteristics of the participants should be clearly stated, providing a background for any attempt at applying the results in other context.	Each participant self-reported their demographic data on the questionnaire and participants provided additional data during the interview further clarifying who they were and their experiences.
3) The design of interview questions should be justified.	The interview questions were written from a second order perspective in that they ask how and what questions verses why. The questions were open-ended allowing for conversational style interviews and the participant directed responses.
4) Explain all steps used to collect data and make every attempt to avoid bias.	The data collection process was documented in an online journal and through timestamped audio and video recordings. Participant words were transcribed verbatim.
5) Attempts to approach data analysis with an open mind rather than imposing an existing structure should be acknowledged.	Inductive data analysis was used to analyze data. Data analysis was based on the data collected and represents the voice of the participants.
6) A description of data analysis method is described.	The data analysis is described in the data collection and analysis process. Data was transcribed, read, and reread, coded and then categories were defined.
7) The same processes and controls are used for all participants when collecting and analyzing data.	All the same materials were used to explain the research and introduce the research to the study.
8) Findings are detailed and allow for examination of the results. This especially holds true for categories of description and can be accomplished through quotes.	Data analysis is detailed by phases. Transcripts and recordings available for inspections by other researchers for one year. Quotes in study are verbatim.

Notes: Adapted from *Using the analytical framework of a structure awareness to establish validity and reliability in phenomenographic research* (Cope, 2002).

## **Ethical Considerations**

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) consent was obtained for the study in December 2017, to ensure the integrity of the research as it relates to the rights of the participants. This consent also ensured participants had a clear understanding of the research, the expectations, and significance of their contributions (Berg, 2016). IRB was also significant to this study because the population being studied was an at-risk and marginalized group, whose recalling of their life experiences as a refugee may be uncomfortable and possibly stressful.

## **Limitations**

There were three noticeably clear limitations for me as the researcher. These limitations were language differences, research experience, and political climate. Although interpreters were present, the secondhand nature of the conversation solicited a different type of interview as evident from the interview quotes shared in chapter IV. Over half of the participants did not speak English and their language for interviewing was limited. Interviews for these participants had to be scheduled around the availability of interpreters. Initially, I had intended to translate the questionnaires and interview questions into other languages, however, this was not necessary because most of the participants already had interpreters assigned and the agencies welcomed me using their interpreters.

My first-time experience with my research methodology also contributed to the limitations. As I conducted the research, I became more familiar with the phenomenography methodology and came to recognize it is an intense research methodology that can be challenging for an inexperienced researcher. I also became

aware of areas where I could have strengthened the study to be more reflective of the research methodology. One change would be fewer interview questions and to re-word the questions to increase the conversational flow.

The national political climate regarding immigration also added to the limitations of the research. Fewer refugees were being resettled and although the participants were protected under refugee status some were hesitant about participating in the study. I did not get a chance to speak with all the potential participants, but the coordinators noted their hesitation for being interviewed was related to what they saw in the news regarding immigrants. Several of the participants spoke of how their resettlement had been delayed because of President Donald Trump's mandate to limit refugee access to the country.

Every year, the president in consultation with Congress sets the annual refugee admissions ceiling and allocations by region of origin. In a series of executive orders, President Trump halved the Obama administration's FY 2017 admissions ceiling from 110,000 to 50,000, suspended all refugee admissions for 120 days, and limited admissions of refugees from Chad, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela, and Yemen. The administration also set the refugee ceiling at 45,000 for FY 2018, the lowest level since the program began in 1980. (Zong, Bataloya & Hallock, 2018, para 1)

Nevertheless, even with these limitations, I am confident that the research methodology I chose was appropriate for my study. This study addresses the research questions and produces a study that adds to the limited extant research on refugees' perspectives on preschool and education systems in general.

## Summary

Preschool education can be defined as the 21st-century hallmark of learning as millions of federal and local dollars are being invested in early learning programs to ensure kindergarten readiness. The first order perspective (e.g., culture, SES) has historically been the avenue for accessing parent knowledge and beliefs that are central to preschool research. Additionally, research has also been limited regarding refugee parents, yet the views of parents along with their understanding of preschool is what shapes preschool enrollment and increases its effectiveness (Yamamoto & Li, 2012).

My study has implications for preschool services and school readiness because it addresses an under-researched population wherein both child and parent enter preschool not ready to learn. Research has clearly indicated preparation for preschool is a partnership between home and school (Magnuson et al., (2006); Hill et al., (2004); Magnuson et al., (2004)). Therefore, the voice of the refugee parent is important and needs to be explored and understood. When solicited and explored, the parents' perspectives explain the nuances for how they engage as parents of children whose childhood have been characterized by instability, uncertainty, life-threatening events, and unpleasant migration experiences. As will be shown, my analysis reveals that there are undiscovered levels of complexity related to how refugee parents view and approach the education of their children. When one considers the current urban landscape comprised of extreme poverty and crime, I explore how and when early education decisions are made among refugee parents.



## CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS

In this study, I sought to address the following research questions: 1) How do refugee parents describe early childhood education in their native country? 2) What are the refugee parents' understandings and perceptions of public preschool enrollment for their young children? 3) How do refugee parents perceive their backgrounds and migration experiences as influencing the decision to enroll their children in a public preschool program? In this chapter, I report my research findings that resulted from the research methodology explained in Chapter III.

### Participant Demographics

My data analysis began with the questionnaires collected from the two local resettlement agencies. The recruitment of participants for the study was originally intended to focus on those whose resettlement was six years or less. However, accessing participants with less than six years in the city presented interview challenges, because most of the refugees did not speak English and interpreters were not always available. The use of interpreters was bound by time constraints, based on interpreter availability, class schedules, and participants' regular attendance in classes at the resettlement agencies. Additionally, the number of refugees with current preschool age children or children who attended preschool in the last six years was also limited. Patton (2002)

suggested participant selection should focus on "information-rich cases" (p. 46), wherein experiences help in uncovering variations that contribute to purposeful sampling and data relevant to the research. Therefore, the two participants who resided in the city for more than six years and had preschool age child were included in the study. The one participant who lived in the city for nine years celebrated her ninth anniversary less than a month before her interview, and the other celebrated her sixth anniversary a week before her interview. They each met all the other criterion for participating in the study. The nine-year participant was also an employee of one of the resettlement agencies and asked to be a participant after hearing about the study.

The coordinators attributed their low enrollment in classes to the ongoing national immigrant travel ban and suspension of some refugee services at the time of my data collection. The Kentucky Office of Refugees reported in 2017, that the Commonwealth of Kentucky resettled 1,583 refugees and 72% of those were resettled in Louisville. The 1,140 refugees resettled in the city in 2017 had initially been projected to be 1,380. In 2018, only 896 refugees were resettled in Kentucky.

The agency staff members were mindful of the research goals of my study and sought to recruit parents from various migration experiences and continents. The recruited participants were diverse in their English language skills; however, the majority did not speak English. An interpreter was used for the research participants with limited English-speaking skills. The survey questionnaire, consent forms, recruitment tools, and interview tools were printed in English only. The decision to print in English was guided by the agency staff and interpreters who stated they felt it was not necessary to print in

different languages because there were varying degrees of literacy and those who spoke English could also read the language. The interpreter assisted the participants with completing the questionnaire and understanding the interview questions.. Table 4 describes the participants' demographics as those relate to when they resettled in the city, their age range, gender, country of origin, number of children, number of children born in the U.S., marital status, native language, years in the refugee camp, and number of refugee camps. A total of 34 questionnaires were collected, and 12 participants were interviewed. The participants are the legal guardian(s) of the children. All but one of the parents was dual parenting. Only one parent from a family was interviewed although most participants were two-parent families. The gender of the participants were as follows: 11 females, 1 male, 10 parents, and two grandparents. One of the grandparents lived in the same household as her preschool aged children. One participant was a mother-to-be having her first child. All participants reside in the city and have not been resettled in any other city in the United States. Participant ages ranged between 20 to 65 years old. Two of the participants held steady employment within the resettlement agencies while three others reported seasonal employment, and the remaining seven were unemployed. The countries of origin for the participants varied with four of the participants being from the same country but different regions of the country. However, they all spoke the same language. The languages spoken by the participants include Arabic, French, Kinyarwanda, Nepali, Oromo, and Swahili. Several of the participants were fluent in more than one language.

Three of the participants had lived in two different camps during their migration, while three others had lived in only one camp and four in cities near camps. The longest length of time spent in camps was 22 years. This experience involved a mother whose age was between 36 and 39 years old. The youngest participant had only spent five years in a camp. None of the participants attended public school in the U.S., but one participated in Job Corp and was enrolled in community college. Another's husband is enrolled in a local university.

Although all the participants entered the U.S. as refugees, when sharing their experiences and defining their status, four noted their refugee experience did not include living in a camp. Two of these participants stated that although they were refugees, their families had chosen not to live in a camp, choosing instead to live near a camp. Although these two individuals did not live in a camp, they shared that they were treated as refugees by the host countries' citizenry and were challenged by language differences, limited employment opportunities, and access to basic needs and services. These data were used in the data analysis process to develop the categories of description and the outcome.

Table 4. Participant Demographics

Participant	Arrival in U.S.	Age	Gender	Country of Origin	# Children	Children born in U.S.	Marital Status	Language Spoken	Refugee Camp Life	# of Camps
1. Queen	05/18	30-35	F	Congo	5	Pregnant	M	Swahili	*	0
2. Amelia**	04/18	60-65	F	Congo	8	0	M	Swahili	22 yrs.	1
3. Adahila	01/18	26-29	F	Iraq	2	0	M	Arabic	*	0
4. Batsal**	10/17	56-59	M	Nepal	5	0	M	Nepali	20 yrs.	2
5. Nora	07/17	26-29	F	Ethiopia	5	0	M	Oromo	7 yrs.	1
6. Christmas	06/17	26-29	F	Rwanda	2	0	S	Swahili	*	0
7. Jewel	11/16	46-49	F	Congo	8	0	M	Swahili	17 yrs.	2
8. Mila	09/16	20-25	F	Congo	Pregnant	Pregnant	M	Swahili	*	*
9. Camilla	06/15	36-39	F	Congo	8	1	M	Swahili	22 yrs.	1
10. Dinesa	06/13	20-25	F	Congo	Pregnant	1	M	Kinyarwanda	5 yrs.	2
11. Hope	03/12	40-45	F	Burundi	3	1	M	French	*	0
12. Valencia	01/09	36-39	F	Bhutan	2	0	M	Nepali	18 yrs.	*

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

\*\*Grandparent

## Data Analysis

Sjostrom and Dahlgren (2002) describe this phase as the analysis of the empirical material that goes through an iterative process for the purpose of extracting data that is significant in describing the participants' experiences. The phases I used for analyzing my data were: 1.) Develop a familiarity with empirical interviews, audio, video, and transcripts; 2.) Identify relevant data specific to preschool and the research questions; 3.) Sort relevant data; 4.) Condense data to the most significant statements; 5.) Group data, 6.) Name categories of description and comparison. Figure 3 describes my analysis process and the phases I followed.

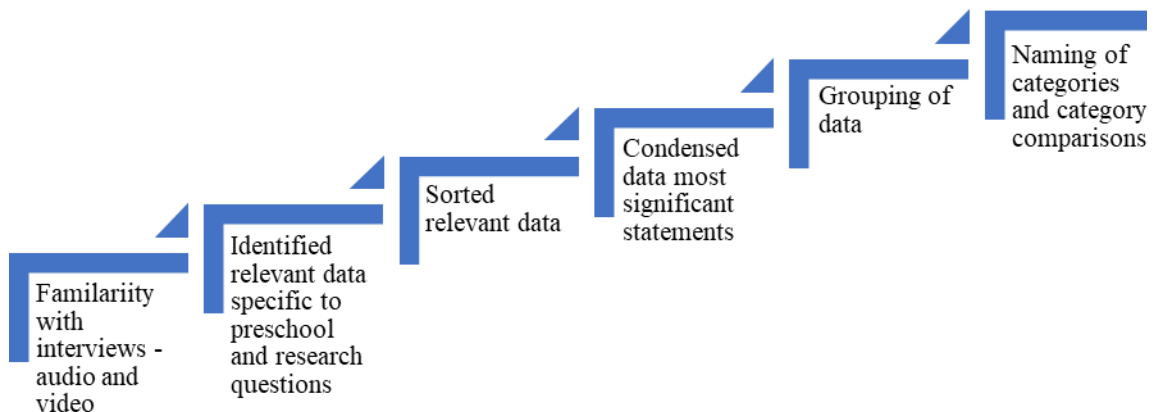


Figure 3. Analysis in Phases

### *Developing familiarity with the interviews*

Noted above, are the phases that phenomenographic researchers employ to analyze their data; however, they do not elucidate, provide a rationale nor timeline for determining when to begin data analysis. Akerlind (2012) suggested, “So far, the

description provided of phenomenographic analysis has been at the level of general principles on which most phenomenographers would agree. However, this level of detail does not provide a concrete description of what phenomenographic researchers actually do” (p.324).

Phenomenography scholars (e.g., Akerlind et al., 2005) recommend that phenomenographic analysis begin only after all the interview transcripts are completed and ready for analysis. Their rationale is that in so doing, this decreases questions about the development of categories and supports the collective analysis intent. As such, my data analysis began after all the interviews were completed. Although I was present at all the interviews, I listened to all the audio recordings collectively after all the interviews were completed. I deliberately chose to wait on reviewing the transcripts at the same time so that I had a fresh look.

I had over 15 hours of audio recordings. After listening to the interviews, I then read and annotated the transcripts. I did not take notes while listening to the interviews, but I did compare the questionnaire responses to the audio interviews. In places on the transcripts where there were questions about what was said, I listened to the audio again and made notes. Sjostrom and Dahlgren (2002) suggest that the first phase should include correcting errors in the transcripts of interviews. I reread the interviews again, reflecting on the collective views and variations in experiences.

After the transcripts were read, they were set aside for three weeks. I purposely set the transcripts aside to clear my mind so that I would be objective with my uploading and coding of data. Two weeks after listening to the tapes, I created two documents to assist in distilling the data (See Appendices G and H). The first tool (Appendix G) was

to write all comments relevant to preschool. The second tool (Appendix H) was reflective of the research questions.

#### *Identifying relevant data specific to preschool and research questions*

This phase was repetitive and included the uses of NVivo qualitative data analysis computer software and the hardcopy transcripts. In this review of the interviews, I had my pen in hand and highlighter with the focus on identifying data specific to preschool and the research questions. The transcripts were uploaded to NVivo. I then went through each transcript and the notes I had previously written. I identified nodes from those notes and then proceeded to create nodes from the quotes. Nodes were set up as: 1.) Preschool, 2.) Educational experience and culture, 3.) Migration experience and education, and 4.) Education in resettlement city. After I completed this phase, I recognized that I did not have much data that fit into the nodes because I was trying to create the story. I then went back to the transcripts. Data were highlighted, and more notes were made on each transcript. The preschool tool was designed to gather comments about preschool such as the participant's personal experience with preschool, family influences, children experiences and education during migration. The research questions tool listed all the research questions. Comments relevant to each question was listed under that question.

#### *Sorting relevant data*

In this phase, I revisited the data in the NVivo software to sort data into new nodes, which was then followed by identifying relationships, relationship types and a second set of nodes. The first set of nodes focused on all aspects of the participants. Appendix H describes this process. Included in these nodes were adult preschool



experiences, adult age at migration, children who attended preschool, children who attended preschool in the home country or migration camp, children's educational experiences, concepts of preschool in America, concerns for preschool in migrations camps, and concerns for preschool in refugee city. My next step was to identify relationships. In doing this, I did not eliminate any of the data. If I struggled with where to put a quote, I circled it with a highlighter signaling that I needed to review. I then proceeded to relationship types. The relationship types were preschool vs. no preschool; parental influence vs. self-efficacy; economic status versus access to school and refugee camp vs. refugee city; educational environment vs. non-educational environment and private education versus public education. The relationship types were then looked at from the perspective of preschool and the three research questions. It was at this point that I started to think about what categories of descriptions might look like. Background was certainly a category although they all differed, collectively they had backgrounds that were a driving force.

#### *Condensing data to the most significant statements*

The relationship types were then sorted into the second set of nodes, which entailed preschool and the three research questions. These nodes responses were compiled and reread unabridged. Data from each of these nodes was reread and sorted into preschool and the three research questions. It was at this phase that quotes of significance was identified.

#### *Grouping of data*

This phase is a preliminary phase that groups data based on similarity. As the three categories began to evolve, I grouped the data from the tools and NVivo. Another

tool was made with the four categories of description in mind. Data were transferred to each column. Background, self-efficacy, and perseverance emerged along with survival. However, as I analyzed the transcripts I concluded my analysis was more about me seeking an understanding of their survival instinct and how they survived. Therefore, I deleted this category. My next phase was to compare the dialogue to look for variations. I then uploaded my last analysis tool into NVivo.

#### *Naming categories of description and conducting comparison*

Although it became clear at this phase that the participants' perspectives were driven by opportunities and exposure to educational services, there was still the matter of naming the categories of description that led to their perceptions. As previously stated, although participant backgrounds were diverse, and their overall opportunities differed, the first category of description was background. Background was a motivator for how preschool is perceived and accessed. The second category self-efficacy was a challenge when considering the trials and limitations placed on the participants. However, whether it was the belief in self, others, or a system the participants were confident in the chances of successfully integrating their children into preschool and accomplishing the task of early education. The third category focus on the future builds on the background and self-efficacy of the participants. As the participants shared their pasts their minds were always on the future and the possibilities. Future was always an active component of how they viewed their children in education.

After the categories of description were named comparison was the next step in this phase. I compared the categories looking at variations of agreements with quotes, as well as the margins between each category. This, too, was an iterative process that

involved stepping away from the finding and revisiting them with a new set of eyes as I reviewed my analysis tools. Sjoström and Dahlgren (2002) explains in their phase of comparison "The fifth step is a preliminary comparison of categories, where the researcher tries to establish borders between the categories. This is a phase which sometimes entails the revision of the preliminary groups" (p. 341). Oneck (2008) notes, "After covering multiple aspects of that phenomenon, the researcher develops the categories that explain all kinds of variations in the data. Then, based on initial categories, the researcher reexamines the transcripts to determine whether the categories are sufficiently descriptive and indicative of the data" (p. 10).

### **The Participants' Experience with Preschool**

The participants' knowledge of preschool reflected what they remembered about their homeland, what they had experienced in their refugee camps and cities, and their children's experiences. They spoke of preschool in the context of early learning (preschool), as language opportunities, the development of social skills, and a parental choice. Four of the twelve participants experienced preschool as children and the others had children or grandchild who experienced preschool.

Valencia reflected on her knowledge of preschool with the following statement:

Preschool is like they---it's small school [sic]; like where the parents can go together, play with them, talk with them, there's a preschool teacher there but there is not a good system of like teaching, reading, and writing. The teachers are engaged with some other things. So, they can go three hours. They say preschool [sic]. Sing, read some books, come back [sic]. It's not formal but to just [sic] to engage kids there to learn something in the camp.

Christmas, Hope and Queen each describe what they knew about preschool as:

Christmas: ...so what they do in Kenya, like childhood, once a kid is like three years and he can—he started speaking and speak a little bit, not quite well, they take them to – we call it – it's kind of kindergarten, But not really. I don't know how to call it. It's just childhood school.

Hope: Everybody is supposed to go to school. My firstborn, when he was two years he started school. I remembered the bus come [sic] to pick him from -- from my house. They pick him [sic]. They took him to the class. They fed them. They give them time to sleep, which was good for him. And the first days it was not easy for him because he was just off nursing and he go to school [sic].

Queen: We start primary normally at five years at my time (referring to when she lived in her homeland). But now parents are no more [sic] waiting for five. They can even take you at three or two and a half. But for me I think I started at five years.

I noted that the participants who shared their experiences and knowledge about preschool were at ease but appeared to have never had anyone ask them about their own early learning experiences. While I consider their experiences as teachable moments and culturally relevant, I questioned if they viewed them as opportunities to engage and support their children's early learning success. I pondered how their experiences could be used as cultural artifacts that enhance their children's preschool experiences and parental interaction with the classroom staff.

## **Categories of Description**

Categories of description are derived from conceptions, and conceptions describe the experiences and realities of the experience (Sanberg, 1996). Categories of description in phenomenographic research are the collective ways in which individuals experience a phenomenon. Marton (1988) noted, “Phenomenographers categorize their subjects’ descriptions, and these categorizations are the primary outcomes of phenomenographic research” (p. 145). The descriptors describe the different meanings or ways one experiences a reality. Categories of description emerged from the iterative review of the interview transcripts. Svenson (1994) notes, “The categories are based on comparison and grouping of data representing expressions of conceptions” (p.17).

In this section, the categories of description are derived from the voice of the participants and excerpts from the transcripts are provided to support the descriptions. The categories of description were developed through iterative analysis of the transcripts and audio recordings. This analysis began with the transcription of the audio tapes, followed by review of the tapes in conjunction with the viewing of the videotapes. Additionally, the transcripts and audiotapes were uploaded into NVivo to assist with classifying categories of description. This NVivo data and the transcripts were read for collective views. This was done in phases with three to four reads and over a period of eight months. The categories of description reflect the variations of participants based on quotes derived from their empirical interviews. The three categories of description: 1. background, 2. self-efficacy and 3. future reflect the participant views on preschool based on their experiences.

Table 5 Categories of description and descriptors

	<b>Categories of Description</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>
1	Background in education	Personal experience, family experiences (parents and siblings), offspring experiences, lack of opportunity, and opportunity.
2	Self-Efficacy	Mastery through experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasions, and emotion and physiological states (Bandura, 1997).
3	Focus on the Future	Belief that hopes and dreams are obtained through educational opportunities. Aspirations for stability and acceptances.

*Categories of Description #1: Educational Backgrounds*

This category is defined by preschool and the general educational experiences of the participants. Collectively, gender, age, culture, parenting and migration experiences were contributors to this first category of description. Although their backgrounds were different, the exposure to education was motivational and of importance when they conceptualized preschool and early learning. For example, Christmas grew up outside of a refugee camp because her father believed in making every effort to access a new and better life for his children. Christmas was born Congolese and lived as a refugee in Burundi and Kenya. She was very young when she left the Congo and has little memory of life in Congo. She has a seven-year-old son and a four-year-old daughter. Christmas's son went to preschool in Kenya at age three. She plans to enroll her daughter in preschool in the fall. Christmas describes her early experiences:

We had to flee from Burundi to Kenya. So [in] Kenya, we have camps. Most of people go to the camps, but luckily for us, me and my family, my dad was like, as much as we are being refugees in Burundi we didn't live in the camps. My kids

are used to a certain life, I'm not going to change it right now. So he was like, I'm not going to the camps. So when you choose to stay in the city you are on your own. We give you the status of being a refugee but we don't provide education for your kids, insurance, medical insurance, shelter, food, nothing. You are on your own. But we give you a status of being a refugee because you are a refugee. But when you go to the camp we provide you certain things, education, basic education, and stuff. So my dad chose to stay in the city.

Christmas noted, the choice for children in her culture to be educated: “mostly the parents are the ones who choose” .

Hope, who married a refugee and only lived the refugee experience as a married woman and as the mother of children born to a refugee father had a diverse background in education. Her description of her education experiences suggested she lived a more prosperous lifestyle than most of the other participants interviewed. She described her educational opportunities from age seven through university although the education of women was not a priority. Hope described one aspect of her background as:

According to traditions, girls were supposed to remain home to do domestic jobs, to help with their mom, to go to the field, to the land, and have—have knowledge according—you were educated to become moms, to take care of the kids, the husbands. Not to have knowledge from the school. But, me, I did preschool. I was lucky because I was the third child in my family. My elder brother and my elder sisters were -- they were educated. They help me. I start the first grade when I was seven.

Hope experienced two of her children attending preschool in the school district and is anticipating her youngest also going to preschool. She defined preschool as the foundation for her children to be successful in school.

Bastal, who was a refugee for 20 years and spent 18 years in one camp, described education and preschool as an opportunity all children should experience. As a father of five, three sons and two daughters, his educational experience and theirs were very different. He was educated in his home. However, it was not clear as to what age he stopped attending school. He speaks of his education as 16 year, BA, and Masters but it was not clear what degrees he earned. When he discussed his early learning experiences Bastal notes,

Yeah, at the time in the village there is no school. I go to another -- another village and there's a school. Then I stayed there. I lived there and go to school. ... near my house there is no school. I go to another place. I go in to town. One place to another place maybe half an hour by foot.

Bastal grew up in a country that is over 65% rural and later lived in a camp in another country where all his children went to school. He described the schools as either government schools and private schools. The government schools start at age six and the private schools at age four. Although his children went to a government school that did not offer preschool, he is anticipating his grandchildren will start school at age three and a half.

The participants described access to early education in refugee camps as limited or having no resources for attending. Amelia noted, "Well, some they didn't study



because there were no -- there were no -- there were no -- no -- not enough support to help them to go to school.” While Valencia, who grew up in a small village until age 10, she started school at age six. She declared “There's something in the big city [preschool] like, you know, people they have more income they can pay them. And they can put in a daycare. Or some other families can take care in the group. Or something like help the families.” Whether participants were in a camp for long or short periods, or had no formal educational opportunities of their own, or they led their children through an education system their backgrounds shaped their attitude about preschool and education in general.

Valencia was 10 when 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 another other in the U.S. The experience of preschool in the camp led her to seek out preschool services in the U.S.

Table 6 Category of Description #1: Educational Backgrounds

Participants	Participant Preschool Experience	Offspring Preschool Experience	Participant Primary Experience	Participant MS / HS	Participant Higher Education	Participant Government Private
1. Queen		✓	✓			G
2. Amelia		✓				G
3. Adahila	✓	✓	✓	✓		G
4. Batsal		✓	✓	✓	✓	G
5. Nora		✓				G
6. Christmas	✓	✓	✓	✓		GP
7. Jewel		✓				G
8. Mila	✓	✓	✓	✓		G
9. Camilla		✓	✓	✓	✓	G
10. Dinesa	✓	Pregnant	✓	✓	✓	GP
11. Hope		✓	✓	✓	✓	G
12. Valencia		✓	✓	✓	✓	G

### *Categories of Description #2: Self-Efficacy*

Self-efficacy, was a characteristic of all the participants although their life experiences are very different and their migration encounters were broad and challenging. Bandura (1997) noted there are four main sources of self-efficacy: Mastery Experiences, Vicarious Experiences, Social Persuasion, and Emotional/Physiological State. Each of the participants exhibited at least one or more of these influences on self-efficacy.

Bandura (1997) described the mastery experience as the initial and primary sources of efficacy, noting it builds belief in self. The participant's mastery experiences evolved either through their own early learning obstacles or those of their children. However, in some instances their self-belief also surfaced as they observed family and friends excel in education as a result of early learning. They learned about educational systems and acclimated themselves to those systems to make the initial access to early learning programs such as preschool.

The vicarious experiences is described by Bandura as "The second source of self-efficacy comes from our observation of people around us, especially people we consider as role models. Seeing people similar to ourselves succeed by their sustained effort raises our beliefs that we too possess the capabilities to master the activities needed for success in that area" (p.2). The vicarious experience was a pervasive form of self-efficacy for eight of the participants.

The social persuasion experience also branded as verbal persuasion is also a direct implication for self-efficacy. This experience is captured in the ability to sustain themselves as they waited. Family was instrumental in developing self-efficacy.

Previously noted, one participant's father told his children he wanted a better life for them and believed they could accomplish anything even as a refugee.

In Table 7 one finds the analysis of the participants' four main sources of self-efficacy based on Bandura research.. Five of the participants have been identified as having experienced all four sources of self-efficacy influences describe by Bandura. I drew this conclusion based on their interview responses and demographic data. When looking at mastery of the experiences, all of the participants were influenced by mastery. I based this on the amount of time spent in camp and their accounts of educational experiences. I found that of the six who stated they actually lived in a camp the average displacement time for them was over 14-1/2 years. For those who lived outside of camps in cities where they were identified as refugees, they daily faced ominous living because of their refugee status.

The participants survived many challenges that define their mastery experiences. These experiences were such things as limited access to education, substandard educational resources, economic hardships that ended educational opportunities, limited access to food, etc. When the participants experienced failures and were discouraged, they overcame and rebound from their setbacks. For example, Amelia was a refugee for 22 years and lived in a country with ongoing civil war. As the mother of eight she stated that education was not very good in the camp and children did not always attend because it was not a priority and there were limited resources that allowed them to go to school. She noted she allowed the children to attend school when resources allowed but economics often interfered.

Jewel's mastery experiences, reflects her camp life and resettlement. When she reflected on the educational opportunities for her children, she shared the differences in how education services were offered. She states, "In our country we don't have like -- in the camp in our country we don't have transportation. Like here bus come at home to take kid and to take them back. The second here, kid 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, "She say here like -- she say here is -- the building is good. The building is good for school. And the space is good. Also when you enter into the classroom you see like -- you have space everywhere."

Adahila, who is from the Middle East and the mother of two, shares her own experiences and those of her children, Her translator noted, "When she was young she live in Iraq. She's from Iraq. So when's child there's not too much care about the kids. So maybe some people go to the preschool but most of them no. They waiting until the elementary school." Adahila describes her experience as a parent as one of optimism. That her to place her focus on enrolling her children in school. She notes: They care more about the children. More than Iraq. Yeah, they hit the kids

maybe in the school. Yeah, they call the mom all the time because they couldn't fix the small thing. Something happen in the school they need the mom.

It is likely had there been more opportunities for more extensive interviews and language had not been a barrier that all four of the self-efficacy influences would have been uncovered for each participant.

Queen, , Christmas, Camille, Dinesa, Hope and Valencia were six of the participants whose source of self-efficacy came from all four influences described by Bandura (1994). Their own personal experiences as children and adults, along with the experiences of their children with preschool, were sources of self-efficacy. The other six participants expressed a combination of vicarious, social persuasions, and positive emotional and psychological experiences that guided them toward preschool and the belief that it is a source of success.

Table 7 Category of Description #2: Self-Efficacy

Participant	Mastery Experiences	Vicarious Experiences	Social Persuasions	Emotion and Physiological State
1. Queen	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Amelia	✓			
3. Adahila	✓	✓		
4. Batsal	✓	✓		
5. Nora	✓			✓
6. Christmas	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Jewel	✓			
8. Mila	✓			✓
9. Camilla	✓	✓	✓	✓
10. Dinesa	✓	✓	✓	✓
11. Hope	✓	✓	✓	✓
12. Valencia	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Categories of Description #3: Focus on the Future*

It will not be an overstatement to note that the lives of the participants and their experiences as migrants refugees were all about the future. They lived for a freedom that offered a residency of permanency, they hoped for a future of peace and longed for a future of acceptance. In regards to education and the future, some were driven by what

they had experienced, others by what they had observed, and others what they hoped to obtain.

When the participants were made aware of the public school early childhood programs that offered services to children as young as six-weeks, they expressed thoughts for the future. Although all found it difficult to perceive services for children under the age of three and questioned what the children would learn, six of the twelve said they considered three and a half years as an appropriate age for young children to start school. Christmas stated, “Because I'm this kind of parent. I need like the best for my kids. I need my kids to go to school. And do something in life, good person. So for me – my daughter, she's very intelligent. She started walking when she was I think, I don't know, one year and a half year. So for me I thought she needs to go to school. Yeah, she needs to go to school and learn something.”

Hope, did not grow up as a refugee but acquired the status through marriage. She resettled from Zimbabwe with her husband and children. She had known her husband most of her life. 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. Since moving to the U.S, she has had a third child who was two at the time of the interview. Since being in the U.S. she enrolled her second child in preschool and is waiting for her youngest to turn three. However she is concerned about getting her enrolled in preschool. Hope stated, “My plan is to help my kids grow and put education first.”

Nora, had not had her own educational opportunities but had experienced education through her children. She is the mother of five. Three of them are preschool

age. Her oldest went to preschool at age four in Kenya and her second attended kindergarten. Through her translator, she shared, “It was very good for her 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.” Nora was also driven by the fact that she had not had an opportunity to go to school and she was struggling with why her family did not give her this opportunity when her family members had gone to school.

Camila’s education experiences were driven by a lack of money that interfered with her children attaining an education. There were education opportunities while in camp but also financial and survival priorities. She noted, “We needed to look for money to pay for school, to eat, to rent. And it’s not an easy life, but we try the best. But it’s very hard in our country. But here it’s --- it’s a little bit better because we don’t assess school fees. This is the good thing we appreciate here. This is the good thing we appreciate here. And this make us—make me easy—make us happy and no stress.”

Valencia holds steady employment and had the longest experience with education in the U.S. As the mother of two, both of her children attended preschool in the U.S. Her experience with the oldest child attending preschool presented challenges that informed how she planned for the future of her second child. “So she start [sic] preschool when she was four years old. School starts 9:00a and she will come back 1:00p. So that -- that help us to improve a lot for her than when she stay home, she don't learn anything because we speak our language.” She went on to state that she wanted her children to have a future in the United States.



### *Reflecting on the Categories of Description*

The categories of description suggest the experiences of refugee parents have been a driving force in how they approach education at any stage of learning. Whether it is preschool or high school the refugee parents willfully take on the task of assimilating into education programs without having a full understanding of what it means to adapt. Some may have followed the directive of others when making educational decisions while others may have made decisions for themselves about their educational journey. Whatever the case, they all conveyed an appreciation for the opportunity to access educational services and self-efficacy guided them to take on the challenges of becoming educated or accessing educational serves for their children.

### **Category Outcomes**

I elected to further expand on the categories of description by defining them as category outcomes (not characterized in phenomenography research but relevant to this research). Selecting to expand the categories of description to category outcomes provides a more explicit and less abstruse description of the categories. The categories of description are a simplistic overview of the participants' collective views. Their lives were unsophisticated yet enveloped in complicated and challenging experiences. For example, the category description *background in education* is a rudimentary description. The category of description *education is a privilege* provides a more profound collective explanation that helps to shape the outcome. Privilege is defined through the direct and indirect education background that shapes the participants' views of preschool. The participants conceived preschool as a privilege because they had witnessed it firsthand and those who had the opportunity were further along than those who had not.

In the case of the descriptor self-efficacy, expounding on the descriptor as an outcome of educational perseverance indicates the depth of their self-efficacy as it relates to their educational challenges during migration. Some used education to survive (for themselves and their children) although the systems and resources were limited or unfamiliar. Their perseverance toward preschool was evident in their continued efforts to pursue preschool for their children despite challenges for understanding services, systems and laws, and barriers such as language and education

Finally, education acculturation describes the participants' overall hope for the future. García-Vázquez (1995) notes, "In essence, acculturation is a way to describe the adaptation process of diverse individuals to the dominant culture" (p.306). In the case of the participants, they resettled with the steadfast determination that they would adapt to the education system not because they understood the system but because from experience it had led to success and it was their hope for their children. Table #4 describes the categories of descriptions and the category outcomes.

*Category Outcome #1 - Education is a Privilege*

The educational experiences of the participants varied, and the variations were significant contributors to their collective views on early learning. Collectively, their personal education experiences or lack thereof ignited a passion for education and future success for their offspring. The traumatic events of becoming and being a refugee presented participants with an array of experiences that shaped their educational views and that of their children. Whether the participants had extensive experiences in education or no experience at all, they all perceived education as a life changer. Furthermore, they believed early learning propelled education into motion.

In this category, parental influences and parenting of children describes the participants' experiences. Although there were varying degrees of educational experiences the perspective of the participants always led back to an appreciation for the opportunity for themselves, a family member, or children to access education. All the participants discussed the access to government services and how the services extended education into a privilege when there were no other services they could access or afford. Adahila, Nora, Christmas, Mila and Bastal provide their knowledge and views of government school as:

Adahila: Yeah, they have different schools in the camp. Some they have to pay. And other they don't have to pay. So, her children they used to go to free -- the free school.

Nora: In the camp they have--how can I call it? They have people who are in charge of people who lives in the camp. So, they have to tell them to take kids at [sic] school. They have school for private and they have like a government school, which is free. So, they are the one who tell them to take your kids to school.

Christmas: The government, [sic] they -- and back in Congo it's different. The government -- because I think the school -- you have to pay for school back in Congo. Primary education level, which is preschool, they -- you have to pay high school, college, you have to pay. So, it's like most of the kids, they don't go to school because they don't have -- they can't afford it.

Mila: I went to government school.

Batsal: There is two kind[s] of school[s] in Nepal. One is a government school.

In government school they teach children after six years.

However, Jewel and Camille's experiences and thoughts about paying for school were centered on change to revolving around families having money and support to finance schools. They each noted it was never about not wanting an education but being able to afford one.

Jewel: But this kindergarten or preschool depend for [sic] money. When parents have money [sic] can take kids early in preschool. Depend for your money [sic].

Camille: Well, some they didn't study because there was not enough support to help them to go to school.

The Global Partnership for Education (2012) states, "Access to education is not a privilege, it's a right. And yet, 61 million children are not in school, most of them girls. Educating children, no matter where they are, is one of the biggest steps we can take toward ending extreme poverty" (para. 1). Although this statement may be factual for Western Civilization and understood in its entirety by parents in the Western Hemisphere, the refugee parents' in this study are yet to arrive at this conclusion. Of the 11 female participants, all had experienced some form of educational discrimination at some point in their educational journey. Even those who had opportunities for early

learning experiences. Therefore, they embrace education as a privilege and look to it as a hope for the future.

*Category Outcome #2: Educational Perseverance*

This outcome emerged as the participants reflected on their challenging migration experiences. For some, their persistence to access education was about preservation of the future and survival. Whether it was the early opportunities made available to the participants by their parents, the cultural environment they migrated to, or the desire to achieve despite difficulties and delays this character trait evolved. Perseverance was noted in the form of accessing educational services before and after migration, traveling distances to attend school, and separation from family for prolonged periods to engage in learning. Some reported having to repeat grades to acculturate while others migrated into cultures where education was valued and promoted, and it was a first-time experience for them and their parents. The participants' perseverance can be explained in the following way:

*Nora: After the interview ended, the interpreter sharing comments about the conversation she was having with participant.*

Interpreter: She is really struggling about [sic] why she didn't go to school. Because her parents haven't sent her to school. And now here she's really like regretting because she don't [sic.] know anything. Like to go somewhere she don't know how to talk. She don't know nothing [sic.]. So, she's really worried about it.

Nora: If there's school for two years I would take her, yeah. She had experience of taking her children to school when they still young. It's because she knows that

when you are young, you catch things early, fast. When you -- when you get old it's really hard for you to learn. So that's why she's fighting to take them to school.

Queen, who was the most recently resettled and was fluent in English was focused on acculturation because her two-week experiences had already informed her that education in the U.S. presented opportunities for her children that she had not experienced. She stated:

I'm not used to education being taken this serious [sic]. So, it's like me learning. You know, I'm learning. And I'm like it's too much [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. And I like the pressure. It's too much but I like it. Yeah, I'll say education is really different from Africa.

In the case of Dinesa, she shares her journey of being successful in school and then having to start all over because of migration and different educational systems, yet she and her siblings persevered.

So, and after that we moved from the place that we were living to another place. So, at that time I didn't go back to my preschool school. I went to -- how do you call? Kindergarten. And it was really hard for me already because we moved. We [sic] changed the language. We [sic] changed -- it was new place. We didn't know anyone. It was really a challenge. After there we moved -- there was a war in my country. We moved from there to Burundi country. And I didn't have a choice to go to school because it was a refugee camp. We stayed there for six

months. I, and my mom, and dad, and my one big sister, and one [sic] my little brother. I didn't go to school. My big sister, she did go to school. And I and my brother, we didn't. For six months we moved again to Rwanda country. And we stayed there for ten years. I went to school. I started grade three, four. It was really challenge because the language is different, yeah. So, grade three, four, five, six, yeah.

She further chronicled her experiences through high school and the heartbreak of having to start over each time she moved.

So, we went to Kenya. They speak different languages. We went to -- I started over senior one again. Senior two, senior three, senior four. About getting my high school diploma, there they said, no, you cannot get your high school because you are a refugee. It was not good. So, I asked them so [sic] 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, which is Kenya. You need to get certificate from grade eight, so you can join high school. And I was already finished high school. So, we -- I, and my sister, and my brother, we went back to middle school, which is class eight. We studied there and took exam -- national exam for the country. And I think I failed -- I failed the exam. I didn't -- we didn't pass. Because it's really hard. It's something for long time -- it's for young kids and I was already finished my high school. So, I failed the exam. My sister, she failed. My brother, he passed. Well, we was about to go to take exam for high school diploma we came in America.

Dinesa concluded her interview by sharing her education journey after resettlement. Her experiences validates her ability to persevere despite obstacles and challenges presented by others.

When they kept [sic] me in America it was 2013. I went to Job Corps. You know what is [sic] Job Corps? Yeah, because I was 19, I could not go to high school. I and my sister went to Job Corps. We spent one year there. I get my high school diploma, my drug license [sic] (pharmacy), my office administration certificate. Well, it -- it's kind of really hard for me to not being [sic] at one place my entire life. I have been keep moving, keep moving, keep moving, keep moving. So, it's affected my life. My education especially.

Perseverance has proven to be a strong character trait of the participants in this study. In the field of education where participants have had limited experiences, and there are skills and language barriers, their perseverance is not fleeting. Even when faced with challenges that present inequities, they moved forward. Perseverance defines their hopes for the future and the belief that there will be a future. In the case of preschool, the refugee participants focused their energy on gaining access to early learning programs that they believed would make the difference for the future of their children.

### *Category Outcome #3: Educational Acculturation*

The final category outcome I have termed *educational acculturation*, as it is specific to education and not the overall concept of acculturation. In the instances of the participants, their mindset about education was established during migration. Resettlement further defined their hopes and dreams. As previously stated, the participants and their families experienced education from varying degrees and these



experiences were far-reaching in shaping their perspective about education and their futures. Their experiences shaped a futuristic perspective that assimilating into education was key to their future successes.

Although much of their past and present experiences had been void of them having a clear understanding of the educational systems where they had lived for many years, they conveyed a belief that education was their lifeline to the future. Therefore, educational acculturation became a priority and an avenue to the future.

The common belief about acculturation for refugees is that most often children acculturate faster than parent (García-Vázquez, 1995). García-Vázquez noted that the acculturation of immigrant refugee families is complex in how youth and parents embrace acculturation. He further posited, the rates of acculturation differs for each family member. However, the actions and perceptions of the participants in this study suggest they embrace integration into a foreign education system long before their children and viewed acculturation as a priority. However, it is not clear as to how their children are prepared and what they understand about their parents' expectations for them as students in a formal education setting. Nora reflected on educational acculturation with her children in mind.

Nora's Interpreter: Her experience, she say it's incredibly good for her when the children went to school at the youngest age. Because they started to learn to read A-B-C-D and something else [sic]. It was very good. Even now, the baby they [sic] 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 over there.

When asked, “At what age do you go to school in your home country?”

Nora’s Translator: She didn't go to school. Everybody go to school. Not gender. Girls and boys. Ages six and five. Her family didn't send her to school. She don't [sic] know why. Her youngest will start preschool in U.S.

When asked about preschool as young as six-weeks Nora stated:

Nora’s Translator: If there's school for two years I would take her, yeah. She had experience of taking her children to school when they still young. It's because she knows that when you are young you catch things [sic] early, fast. When you -- when you get old it's really hard for you to learn. So that's why she's fighting to take them to school.

Christmas’s focus on educational acculturation was driven by her experience in Kenya. There she saw technology advancements and opportunities she had not previously experienced. She noted,

In Kenya -- Kenya it's different. It's a developed country. They are developed so they are kind of trying to change the whole system in the education where they giving free education, introducing laptops for preschool. Which it's getting interesting. But I still [sic] – because it's Africa you have to have responsibilities. Yeah, and it's a challenge. I will say that.

The participants further expounded on their hopes for the future of their children by describing preschool as the best. When asked about enrolling their children in preschool

their comments always focused on the future. When asked why she would put her youngest in preschool, Christmas responded:

Because I'm this kind of parent. I need like [sic] the best for my kids. I need my kids to go to school. And do something in life, good person. So, for me -- Nia, she's very intelligent. She started walking when she was I think, I don't know, one year and a half year. So, for me I thought she needs to go to school. Yeah, she needs to go to school and learn something. I want them to be like [sic] fluent in English. That's what I always dreamed of, my kids to have like the perfect English. Yeah, and I -- I thought like going to school that would the perfect solution [sic] because of -- if she stayed at home it's different, we speak Swahili. I speak English too. That's one thing I'll say. To every -- it's not just certain group of people. It's for everybody. Where -- whereby even the government is involved. Which it shows how important it is -- that education is to everybody. And I like it. It's -- for me I will say it's kind of too much for me. Not in a negative way, in a positive way. Because it's too much because I'm like I'm not used to this. I'm not used to education being taken this serious [sis]. So, it's like me learning. You know, I'm learning. And I'm like it's too much. 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. And I like the pressure. It's too much but I like it. Yeah, I'll say education is really different from Africa.

Dinesa reflected on the impact of education and future possibilities stating:

But long-ago woman it was not about [sic] -- they were -- they were not allowed to go to school. But now they can go to school. So, this country it's really good country. Everybody go to school. You do what you want to do. We have gender [sic]. Back home, no, just men go to school. Boys.

When asked her views on the future impact of school Mila noted (through her interpreter), "... she take all kid there to school. Because the first one come here in America when he is in five grade [sic], yes. She say it's better because this beginning is very important. And make kid change their mind, change the thing, and help so much kid to -- to grow up good."

Finally, Valencia equated education as an opportunity for her whole family. "So, if they go to school at least they learn something. They did something. They are there all day. And the parents are free to go to work, you know."

Acculturation is generally associated with adaption that takes place over time as one is emerged in an environment. However, the participants in this study conveyed a variety of concepts of acculturation that were bound by time constraints, survival instinct and future aspirations. Although they had spent much of their lives displaced, and their futures had been bound by uncertainty, the refugee parents set educational goals and imagined opportunities that were not defined by a lengthy acculturation period. Instead they were focused on surviving by gaining access to an unfamiliar education system that they believed would lead to future goals and dreams. The participants chose education as their first step toward surviving.

### **Reflecting on the Category Outcomes**

These category outcomes helped to define the collective views of the participants. As a result of their experiences, education (inclusive of preschool) was found not be an afterthought but a deliberate goal for the future. Therefore, preschool figured prominently into their perception of education as an opportunity for change. It was found that preschool is expressly important in the resettlement city and all the participants sought access without having a full understanding for its future implications.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I presented my findings based on the phenomenographic research method. The participants were 12 resettled refugee parents from Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. My data was analyzed in six phases: 1) Developing familiarity with the interviews, 2) Identifying relevant data to preschool and the research questions, 3) Sorting relevant data, 4) Condensing data to the most significant statements, 5) Grouping of data, and 6) Naming categories of descriptions and conducting comparisons. These phases were reflective of phases that are used by renowned phenomenographic researchers. My analysis of the data garnered three categories of description. These categories were developed from interview and survey data that were based on the collective views of the participants. The three categories of description are 1) Education Background, 2) Self-Efficacy and 3) Focus on the Future. Additionally, the three categories of descriptions were further expanded into three category outcomes 1) Educational Privilege, 2) Educational Perseverance and 3) and Educational Acculturation. These outcomes explained the deeper meaning of the descriptors.

## CHAPTER V: SUMMARY OF FINDING AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify how refugee parents of preschool age children perceive the phenomenon of preschool. The phenomenographic research methodology identifies the categories of description that establish the *outcome space*, which describes the diverse ways the participants collectively perceive preschool. This chapter provides a discussion on the outcome space, how the research addresses the research questions, implications for practices, and a conclusion.

### **Outcome Space: Survival Instinct**

The critical aspect for developing the phenomenographic *outcome space* was to identify the meaningful relationships between the categories of description by showing the qualitatively diverse ways refugee parents perceive preschool. The *outcome space* "*survival instinct*" evolved from the participants' own educational experiences, as well as of those of their children and family members. Although some participants directly experienced education and others had only experienced it through family or children, these experiences had a significant impact on their perception of preschool. The outcome space of survival instinct is poignantly representative of the life the refugees have lived. The categories of description and the category outcomes that define the outcome space are the collective views of the participants based on how they have experienced the world of preschool education. Figure 4 demonstrates how the categories connect and support the outcome space.

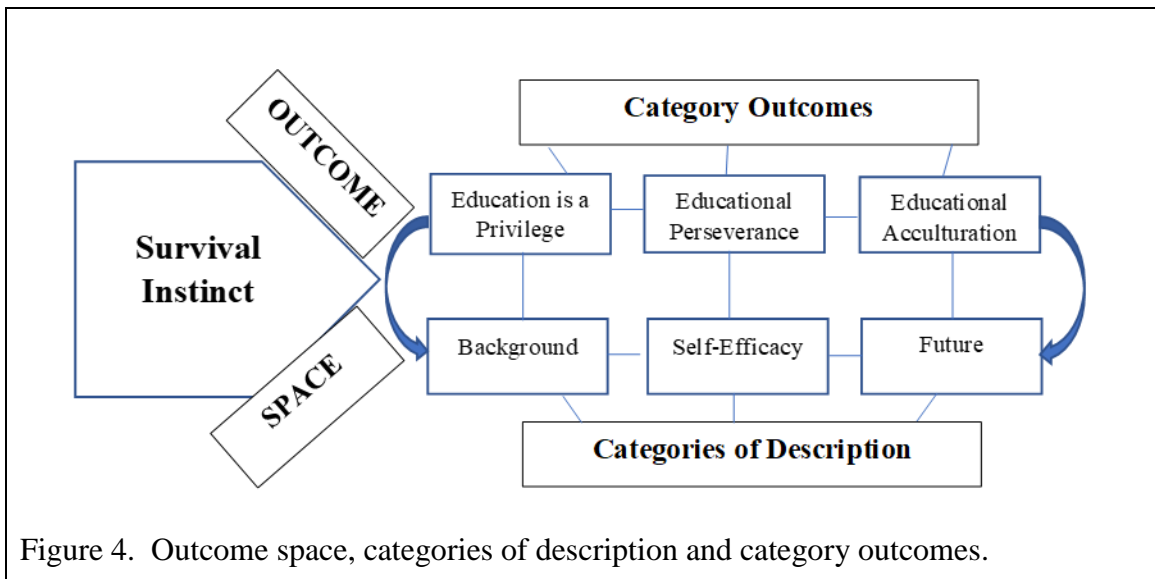


Figure 4. Outcome space, categories of description and category outcomes.

Education is a privilege denotes the educational experiences of the participants and their children's experiences. 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 acculturating their children into the educational system in their resettlement city, beginning with preschool. However, the participants found that they were not prepared for how their children would respond to schooling and they were not prepared for the role they as parents are to take on as contributors to their children's academic success. The participants lacked an understanding of how to navigate the education system as a parent. They also lack an awareness of adult accountability and skills that

lead to student engagement, academic achievement, and parental advocacy. Yet, they were set on their children being enrolled in an educational institution and then surviving in education.

### **Participant Perceptions of Preschool**

All the participants articulated some knowledge of preschool or the concept of early learning based on their own experiences or those of their children. Their exposure to preschool as children themselves varied with only four having attended some form of an early learning program. The participants described their preschool experiences as school, preschool, daycare, and government schooling. Government schooling was most significant to all the participants because it offered a certainty for an education. Some of the participants spoke of private school and noted these experiences were short-lived for economic reasons. However, the fact that some experienced preschool at all while being a refugee verified that early childhood is expanding globally.

### **Summary of Findings by Research Question**

Three research questions were the center of this research. The intent of the research questions was to understand how refugee parents view preschool and what influence (if any) did culture, migration and resettle play in shaping their perceptions.

#### *Research Question #1*

My first research question sought to understand how refugee parents describe early childhood education in their native country. The most pervasive description of early childhood that the participants conveyed was "government schooling", whether it was in their homeland or as a refugee in a camp. Not all the participants could offer a description of early childhood in their homeland because of age, length of time in camp



or no experience. The participants offering specifics described small schools, limited teaching staff and no food for children. They also spoke of the interactions between parents and teachers, and the skills taught.

Only a small amount of information was obtained about preschool in homelands because only four had experienced preschool. Two of them had this experience in their homeland. When discussing preschool in their homeland, they described participation as a parent choice both when they and their children attended. The participants noted preschool has evolved since they were enrolled as students and that children today are entering at a younger age and have access to technology. They expressed hope for the future of education in their homeland but could not say with certainty if it was happening or how the change is to occur.

### *Research Question #2*

My second research question sought to understand the refugee parent's' understanding and perceptions of public preschool enrollment for young children. The concept of how to access preschool educational services was a shared familiarity for all the participants although at various levels of knowledge and experience. Many of the participants described early learning as their first opportunity to experience education. For those who had not, they reflected on the experience of family members and their children. When speaking about their knowledge of education systems and services, most reflected on the opportunities they gained because of what they called government education.

All the participants expressed some knowledge of public preschool programs in the U.S. but could not fully disclose the processes and procedures for accessing

preschool. Although they had the support of the refugee agencies for gaining access to preschool they still lacked an understanding for the expectations and their role as a parent. None of the participants were familiar with Early Head Start which was introduced to them during the interview. They were especially interested in how to enroll three-year-old children. However, since this research study began the district dismantled its Early Head Start program (six-weeks to three-year-old) and new services for young children are still being defined.

### *Research Question #3*

My third and final research question sought to understand how the backgrounds and migration experiences of refugee parents influence their decision to enroll their children in a public preschool program. Although the research was never intended to focus on culture, when discussing family background, surprisingly, culture was never noted as a reason for enrolling or not enrolling refugee children in preschool. Yet, refugees are sometimes typecast as not participating in educational services because of cultural traditions (e.g., male-dominated family structure, defined gender roles, child-rearing guidelines specific to the home). Culture had the least influence on enrollment of refugee children in preschool while the migration phase of resettlement had the most influence. This influence was in the form of acculturating. All the participants were most interested in accessing "government education" so that their children were acclimated and accepted in their resettlement city. As stated above, the participants drew a line at three years old as the age children should enter preschool. None of them stated that culture was a reason for this age limit. One parent noted when the child could walk and talk that was a sign of being ready for school. Another noted the size of a child

determined readiness. Only two considered Early Head Start as an option. They all asked about the educational activities' children under the age of three might engage in so young.

### **Implications**

I began this study with remarks on how refugee migration has expanded globally. Thus, increasing the number of children entering education systems in which their parents lack the skills or knowledge for navigating educational services. This study has implications for future practice and research on how refugee parents take on the role of an educational leader for their children. It contributes to the literature gap on refugee parent engagement, parental decision-making, and the creation of inclusive preschool environments for refugee parents. The outcome space, *survival instinct* suggest that refugee parent resettle with the intent of assimilating their children into the educational system, beginning with preschool although they lacked experience and knowledge about how to navigate the preschool services. Additionally, it can be concluded that educational professionals will benefit from having more comprehensive teacher training relevant to the refugee parent and how they view their role as a partner with the school.

#### *Implication for Policy*

An implication for policy is to designate funds for the creation of education program initiatives that engage the refugee community. This initiative could unite and empower refugee parents as learners and advocates for their young children. Such an initiative would allow access to the marginalized voice of refugee parents so that they can understand the role they play in their children's learning, and so that they express their views and cultural perspectives while ensuring that the children are successful in school.

For example, a refugee *Pre-K through– 5th grade Community Parent Engagement Program* could safeguard that parents are learning about what it means to be their children’s first teacher. This could possibly ensure positive and supportive parent outcomes and could be linked to the outcome space as a survival outcome component for both parent and child.

Another implication for policy is that all educational professionals (administrators, teachers, and instructional staff) take educational coursework related to refugee family engagement, as well as ongoing professional development training focused on serving refugee children in preschool. This course of action can alleviate practices based on secondhand information and the collective labeling of refugees based on their immigration status. If the school district and educational institutions collaborate with refugee resettlement agencies to gain access to parents this will then 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 to implement and carry out the task.

### *Implications for Practice*

As part of their resettlement, resettlement agencies have a strategic plan for settling refugee families. This plan focuses on numerous aspects of daily living. Refugees are taught how to access a variety of services that meet their basic needs. They learn how to use public transportation, apply for employment, shop for food, access medical services, and are guided in the process of enrollment in the public school system. Although parents learn how to enroll their children in school, this experience does not lay

the foundation that outlines the role or expectation the district has for partnering with refugee parents. Therefore, the district may want to consider coordinating with the resettlement agencies a strategic plan that focuses on maximizing the knowledge of refugee parents about early learning programs and their role as their child's first teacher.

Though there may be differing opinions about how expectations and roles are laid out for refugee parents, it should be expected that this partnership may differ for refugee parents than for non-refugee parents (e.g., native citizens) because of the refugee's rudimentary knowledge of the Western Hemisphere education system. However, a divergent partnership with refugee parents would not negate the parental role or expectations but would support the refugee parent being given an opportunity to acquire knowledge for becoming engaged parents and partners.

While preschool enrollment is included in the support services that the resettlement agencies offer parents, a formal arrangement with concrete plans and processes does not appear to have been established with the school districts. My experience for seven years was to coordinate with refugee agencies specific enrollment dates and times for refugee families to enroll their children in preschool. I also coordinated presentations to refugee families that explained the early childhood program and the importance of literacy. However, there was not an official written agreement. I often wondered how and if our assistance impacted parental knowledge and supported the engagement of parents since so few followed through with enrollment and if they did they did not remain enrolled. Could this have been because there was not a formal agreement or plan that conveyed the intent and expectations for all involved?

Although eager for their children to begin their formal education process, participants in this study conveyed a lack of understanding of how to navigate the education system for success. They did not recognize that they played a role in guiding their children and that they were held accountable for their children going to school. Two of the participants in this study stated that their experiences had been that if a child did not want to go to school, he or she could choose not to go, even at an early age. This perspective clearly contradicts U.S. laws as well as state and district policies but indicates a need to identify and address misconceptions that can influence success and collaboration.

The parents also lacked an understanding of what it meant to advocate for their children. Several suggested they needed specific information related to the educational journey of their children when they enter the system and after they have been engaged in the system. Some also stated they needed time to process and ask questions as the journey progresses. Hamilton (2004), summed up the educational experiences of refugee children as one demanding adaptation and preparation by teachers and school administrative staff. He noted interventions must entail manifold relationships that are reciprocal and adaptive. Hamilton stated:

One way to open communication between the child, school and parents is through a mediator. Mediators, who need to have an in-depth understanding of both the culture of the school and that of the refugee family and child, can act as brokers to develop good communication channels between the child, school, and parents.

Although the mediator can be thought of as an individual there is no reason to

suppose that an organization or set of individuals could not play this vital role. (p. 89)

If, indeed, children will benefit from such services, it is highly likely that parents could also need these resources. However, there is not any research that specifically addressed the needs of the refugee parent in this manner nor how to address their adaptability and communication needs so that they, too, are engaged. Thus, providing a rationale for my study.

A starting point for accomplishing the task of building relationships with parents could begin with the district developing a concrete plan with the resettlement agencies for a collaborative educational orientation plan and follow up strategies that address the needs of the refugee parents after the students have been enrolled in school. This partnership may need to consider providing monthly presentations from a district professional knowledgeable of relevant district policies that support parent engagement (e.g., a liaison); training for interpreters and staff members on sharing and explaining district policy (agency professional development); development of a welcome to district and parent engagement packet (materials); and a refugee parent engagement mentoring program (refugee parent engagement academy). The district may benefit from being better informed about who the parents are and the education level of children. Having this information has the potential to allow for the preparation of materials and presentations specific to the families. This information may also allow the staff and interpreter the opportunity to prepare for their role in conveying district information beyond the basic instructions and support for enrollment. My analysis revealed evidence of parents waiting for someone or something (e.g., documents) to explain the process for

a child entering preschool. The district and resettlement agencies may consider having liaisons who are trained and knowledgeable of complex policies such as school attendance, truancy, special education programs, bullying, student choices, and counseling services 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 skills that are often overlooked due to language and cultural differences.

Staff members 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. For example, as I attained knowledge about how a journey might transpire, became familiar with some of the refugee camps and areas the refugees originated from, I learned about educational systems within (or proximal to) the camps and found I had been misinformed about educational services and possible experiences. The participants debunked stereotypes (e.g., refugee women do not have educational opportunities; and culture and refugee status define interest in education) associated with being a refugee. Several of the parents in this study had extensive educational backgrounds but because of perceptions about refugees and their language and cultural differences they are not easily or quickly uncovered.

Finally, the district 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. Parent-teacher conference days would also provide an opportunity for engaging parents. As noted in the implications for policy, this suggestion also has cost implication; however, with over 101 languages being spoken in the district and the city identified as a refugee resettlement city and immigrant sanction city, the potential for a return on investment could be substantial.

Two weeks, after my last interview for this study, I made a presentation to a group of refugee women at Catholic Charities. I presented on school resources and parental responsibilities. The questions the parents asked about education were reflective of a lack of understanding about district procedures and state education laws (e.g., compulsory attendance policies). None of the persons participating in the presentation were persons who had participated in the study; however, their sharing and perspectives were consistent with the participants in the study. They were excited about supporting their preschool age children, but ill-informed about their role and expressed concerns for how they were learning about their role and responsibility for their children as it relates to education. All their questions were framed as, what am I supposed to do, and was followed by, I want my child to do his best, help me.

### *Implications for Research*

Future researchers may want to focus on identifying research tools that garner information from refugee parents that inform classroom teachers about parental educational views and experiences, in hopes of developing classroom partnerships and practices that support refugee children preschool success. Additionally, researchers may study how parents could benefit from access to information and strategies that focus on

integrating their parenting skills and backgrounds into the successful support of children throughout the child's educational journey. This may include providing support that creates an inclusive acculturating climate for refugee parents. Further studies could focus on designing refugee parent engagement programs that support refugee parents over a dedicated period (e.g., preschool and kindergarten). Another study might examine which parent engagement research strategies are most effective in addressing ways to support refugee parents and educators working with refugees. Educators could benefit from being better informed about the refugee parent saga and their educational experiences.

Additionally, research on the development of a refugee family engagement model that contribute to increasing and sustaining refugee family engagement has implications for future research. Researchers may be able to draw from such parent engagement models as Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement Model, and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Parent Involvement Process to develop a refugee family engagement model.

Research in the future may also address ways refugee parents can benefit from group and one-on-one services that help them with ways to motivate refugee students to engage in school and access resources that support academic success. Refugee parents would also benefit from being taught how to identify and address signs of social and education struggles for their children.

### **Conclusion**

This research study addressed a gap in the literature. Whether having experienced preschool as a child or as a parent supporting a preschooler, the participants in this study provided a collective view on how refugee parents perceive preschool. The parents perceived preschool as the foundation for future success but could not define their role in

assuring this success. The perspectives of the participants are deeply rooted in their desire and need to survive. Yet, their perspective represents another challenging circumstance in their life as a refugee post-resettlement.

For the refugee parents, they chose education to survive, but when engaged in education, they found roadblocks they had not expected. Nowhere in their perception was the understanding that they played an intricate role in their children's educational success at any stage of the journey. This study illustrates the need for plans and strategies that focus on the successful inclusion of refugee parents to ensure parents are well informed so that they can become educational leaders and advocates for their children's academic achievement. Schools systems must consider the parental perceptions of education and seek to offer guidance where perceptions are flawed, and survival is challenged.

The research findings indicate that parental engagement is a key element to efficacy and student academic success (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Hill & Taylor, 2004). To avoid adding on to the current struggles for engaging non-refugee parents, it is critical that educators identify strategies to engage refugee parents before the lack of engagement presents the same crisis and challenge that we are experiencing with non-refugee parents. Educators and educational researchers espouse preschool as the foundation for early learning, but for refugee parents, it is also the foundation for parental inclusion and survival in the education system of western culture.

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## APPENDIX A: AGENCY AND PARTICIPANTS OUTREACH

### Refugee Parents' Perspectives on Preschool Enrollment after Migration and Resettlement

December 1, 2017

Dear Madame/Sir:

You are being invited to participate in a research study by answering questions on the attached survey about the perspectives of refugee parents on public preschool enrollment. Survey/questionnaire subjects' responses will be used to determine which survey/questionnaire subjects are also eligible to continue to the interview portion of the study, and that persons eligible to continue will be asked to provide separate consent for interview participation. The purpose of the study is to understand the decision-making process about preschool education as it relates to the refugee cultural and migration experiences.

This study is conducted by Dr. William Kyle Ingle, professor at the University of Louisville in the College of Education. There are no known risks for your participation in this research study. The information collected may not benefit you directly. The information learned in this study may be helpful to others. The information you provide will be used in a dissertation research project. Your completed survey will be stored at my home in a locked office desk and on a password protected laptop. The survey will take approximately five minutes to complete.

Individuals from the Department of Educational Leadership Evaluation and Organizational Development in the College of Education, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the Human Subjects Protection Program Office (HSPPO), and other regulatory agencies may inspect these records. In all other respects, however, the data will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Should the data be published, your identity will not be disclosed.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. By answering survey questions, you agree to take part in survey portion of this research study. You do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to be in this study, you may stop taking part at any time. If you decide not to be in this study or if you stop taking part at any time, you will not lose any benefits for which you may qualify.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research study, please contact Kathy Y. Stovall at (XXX) XXX-XXXX. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Human Subjects Protection Program Office at (502) 852-5188. You can discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject, in private, with a member of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may also call this number if

you have other questions about the research, and you cannot reach the research staff, or want to talk to someone else. The IRB is an independent committee made up of people from the University community, staff of the institutions, as well as people from the community not connected with these institutions. The IRB has reviewed this research study.

If you have concerns or complaints about the research or research staff and you do not wish to give your name, you may call 1-877-852-1167. This is a 24-hour hotline answered by people who do not work at the University of Louisville.

Sincerely,

Signature of the Investigator

Signature of the Co-Investigator

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT FLYER

UofL Institutional Review Boards  
IRB NUMBER: 17.1075  
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 12/01/2017

University of Louisville College of Education  
Department of Educational Leadership, Evaluation and  
Organizational Development

## **Volunteer Participants Needed for Research**

REFUGEE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON PRESCHOOL  
ENROLLMENT AFTER MIGRATION AND RESETTLEMENT

### **Volunteer Participants must be:**

- **Parents with current preschool age children or**
- **Parents of children who exited preschool in the last 5 years.**

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to:

1. Complete a confidential questionnaire (5 minutes)
2. Give an interview (30 to 45 minutes)

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study,

Contact:  
Kathy Stovall  
Email: [kystov01@louisville.edu](mailto:kystov01@louisville.edu)

The principal investigator for the study is Dr. Ingle. He may be contacted at:  
Dr. William Kyle Ingle  
(502) 852-6097  
[William.ingle@louisville.edu](mailto:William.ingle@louisville.edu)

**APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE**

# \_\_\_\_\_ Refugee Parents' Perspectives on Preschool Enrollment after Migration and Resettlement

**Participant Demographic Questionnaire**

Mr. Mrs. Ms. \_\_\_\_\_  
*Adult Last Name* *First Name*

1. First Language: \_\_\_\_\_ English Fluency: Yes No Some

<p>2. Parent Gender: <input type="checkbox"/>Female <input type="checkbox"/>Male</p> <p>Marital Status: <input type="checkbox"/>Single <input type="checkbox"/>Married  <input type="checkbox"/>Widowed <input type="checkbox"/>Divorced</p>	<p>3. Parent Age: 15 – 19                      20 - 25  26 – 29                      30 – 35  36 – 39                      40 – 45  46 – 49                      50 – 55  56 – 59                      60 – 65  66 – Above</p>
<p>4. Employed: <input type="checkbox"/>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>No</p> <p>Both parents <input type="checkbox"/>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>No  Employed?</p>	<p>5. Place of Origin: Africa    Asia  Europe    South America  (Circle) Cuba,    Haiti  Other _____</p>
<p>6. Employment Type: <input type="checkbox"/>Full time <input type="checkbox"/>Part-time  <input type="checkbox"/>Self-Seasonal</p>	<p>7. When were you resettled in this city?  Year _____ Month _____</p>
<p>8. Ages of preschool children in family in U.S.:  <input type="checkbox"/>Newborn    <input type="checkbox"/>1 year    <input type="checkbox"/>2 years  <input type="checkbox"/>3 years        <input type="checkbox"/>4 years    <input type="checkbox"/>5 years</p> <p>In the last five years have you had a preschool age child in the U.S.? <input type="checkbox"/>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>No</p> <p>Did this child attend preschool? <input type="checkbox"/>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>No</p> <p>How are your preschool age children cared for?  <input type="checkbox"/>Center childcare    <input type="checkbox"/>Family childcare  <input type="checkbox"/>Relative                <input type="checkbox"/>Mother or father  <input type="checkbox"/>Friend                    <input type="checkbox"/>JCPS Preschool  <input type="checkbox"/>Other</p>	<p>9. Family Income: \$0- 10,000  \$11,000 - 20,000  \$21,000 – 25,000  \$26,000 – 30,000  \$31,000 - 40,000  \$41,000 - 50,000  \$50,000 – up  Hourly Wage \$ _____</p>
<p>10. Are you aware of the free public preschool programs in the city? <input type="checkbox"/>Yes  <input type="checkbox"/>No</p>	<p>11. Does the family share housing with persons other than spouse and children?  <input type="checkbox"/>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>No</p>

**Migration and Resettlement**

- Were you ever in a refugee camp? Yes No How many camps? \_\_\_\_\_
- How long did you live in a refugee camp?



**Camp #1** \_\_ Yrs. \_\_ Months **Camp #2** \_\_Yrs. \_\_Months **Camp #3** \_\_Yrs.  
\_\_Months

3. Was your entire *\*immediate family* in a refugee camp with you? Yes No How many?
4. Is this the only city in the U.S. your family has lived in? Yes No
5. Did the entire family resettle in the city at the same time? Yes No

*\*Immediate family* is sisters, brothers, husband, wife, mother, or father. *This includes in-laws.*

## APPENDIX D: THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

### The Interviewer's Opening Script

#### **Explaining the Study**

I am studying the refugee parent's perspective on the enrollment of young children (between the ages of six-weeks and four years old) in public preschool programs. I am interested in learning about your decision to enroll your preschool age child into a public preschool. I am studying parents of preschool age children.

#### **The Consent Form**

Before we begin the interview, I must ask for your written consent to be interviewed and for me to use the information you share in my study. Before you read the consent form, I want to bring your attention to the highlighted sections that states your name, your family member names and any other names you share will be given a pseudonym. No real name will be used other than my own.

Please take your time to read the consent form. If you agree with what I am asking in the form then please sign and date. If you do not agree with what is on the consent form then we will not conduct the interview. I will thank you for your time and end the meeting.

#### **Building Trust and Introduction**

Before, we begin I would like to tell you a little about myself. I am a mother of three adult children. They live in other states. I have lived in this state for 15 years. I moved to this state with no friends, family, or relatives. The experience was very new and sometimes challenging, especially when it came to parenting my children, and supporting their education. Before moving here, they had all attend one school. When we moved here they were in three different schools.

Although, I have lived here for 15 years I am still learning something every day about the culture of the city and the people.

#### **The Interview Process**

Our process for today will take 45 to 60 minutes. Will this timeframe still work for you? I will be recording the interview both video and voice. I may take an occasional note to remind me to follow up on something; however, most of the time there will not be much writing. After the interview is completed, I will transcribe the interview and analyze your interview with other interviews.

#### **Starting the Interview**

If you are ready, I am going to turn on the video camera and the tape recorder and begin the interview.

**Thank you**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview and share your experience. I especially appreciate the sharing of the difficult and sometimes unpleasant memories.

**Next Steps**

My next step is to take the recording and turn it into a written document that will be used in my dissertation.

If you have any questions for me after today or would like to share more information, you may contact me (502) XXX-XXXX.

I am turning off the recorders now.

## APPENDIX E: THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Refugee Parents' Perspectives on Preschool Enrollment after Migration and Resettlement

#### Interview Questions

##### **Educational experience and culture**

1. Describe formal education in your homeland? Would you include:
  - 1a. What the earliest age children start school?
  - 1b. If all boys and girls, no matter their economic status start school at the same time?
2. What age did you start school in your homeland?
3. When you were a child who made decisions about your education?
4. Who in your homeland cares for young children daily before they begin formal schooling?
5. The description you just shared about education in your homeland was it your experience too? Was it your experience as a parent?

##### **Migration experience and education**

6. Tell me about education for yourself when you were in a migration camp.
7. Tell me about education for child(ren) in a migration camp.
8. Has your migration experience taught you anything about education?
9. Has your migration experience influenced how you make educational decisions for your child(ren)?

##### **Education in resettlement city**

10. In this city who cares for **your young child** (ren) daily?
11. Is your child(ren) in preschool? Where?
12. Why did you enroll your child(ren) in preschool? What was the child's age?
13. Tell me about **preschool education** in Louisville and how does it differ from your homeland?
14. Children in this city can be enrolled in a public-school preschool program as young as six-weeks.
15. Why do you think parents enroll a child as young as six-weeks in preschool? Would you enroll a six-week old in preschool?
16. Why do parents enroll a child between the ages of two and three in preschool? Would you?
17. Why do parents enroll a child in a preschool at age four? Would you? Why or Why not?
18. At what age will you enroll your child in preschool?

##### **Definition of Preschool**

Preschool is an early childhood program in which children combine learning with play in a program run by professionally trained adults. Children are most commonly enrolled in preschool between the ages of three and five, though those as young as two can attend some schools.

## APPENDIX F: ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

### Checklist Identify Interview Participants

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Holds refugee status.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Is the parent, guardian, or grandparent of a preschool age child.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Child(ren) six-weeks to four years old that is not in preschool.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Child(ren) has attended preschool in the last two years.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Has not lived in any other resettlement city.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Lives in the school district reside area.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Has lived in the city no more than six years.

APPENDIX G: PRESCHOOL DATA ANALYSIS

Participant	Comment/Quote on Preschool
Valencia	Preschool is like they---it's small school like where the parents can go together, play with them, talk with them, there's a preschool teacher there but there is not a good system of like teaching, reading, and writing. The teachers are engaged with some other things. So, they can go three hours. They say preschool.
Christmas:	...so, what they do in Kenya, like childhood, once a kid is like three years and he can—he started speaking and speak a little bit, not quite well, they take them to – we call it – it's kind of kindergarten, But not really. I don't know how to call it. It's just childhood school.
Hope	:..., everybody is supposed to go to school. My firstborn, when he was two years he started school. I remembered the bus come to pick him from -- from my house. They pick him. They took him to the class. They fed them. They give them time to sleep, which was good for him. And the first days it was not easy for him because he was just off nursing and he go to school.
Queen:	We start primary normally at five years at my time. But now parents are no more waiting for five. They can even take you at three or two and a half. But for me I think I started at five years.

APPENDIX H: NVivo CODING EXAMPLE

<b>Nodes #1</b>	<b>Relationships</b>	<b>Relationship Types</b>	<b>Nodes #2</b>
Adult's Preschool Experience	Access to Education	Preschool vs. no preschool	Preschool
Adult Family Members Preschool Experience	Government schools	Parental influence vs. self-efficacy	RQ #1
Adult Highest Education	Parental influence	Economic status vs. access to school	RQ #2
Age of Adult in Migration camp	Camp Services	Refugee camp vs. Refugee City	RQ #3
Age of Children	Spouse Influence	Educational environment vs. non-educational environment	
Children Attended Preschool	Length of migration	Private education vs. Public education	
Children Attended Preschool in Another Country	Country of origin		
Children Attended Education in Migration Camp	Personal goals		
Children Attended Preschool in America			
Concept of Preschool in America			
Concern for American Schools			
Concerns about Preschool in Camp/Refugee City			
Early Head Start			
Education in Home Country			
Employment			
Preschool Enrollment			
Spouse's Education			





## **Presentations and Workshops**

*2017 System of Care Academy- Strengthening Families – Connected to Empowerment, June 19, 2017*

*Kentucky Strengthening Families Summit – Empowering Families: The Heartbeat to Success. April 19, 2017*

*JCPS Parent Engagement Workshops - Connecting the Dots- Managing Child Behavior in the Home, October 2015: What to Do for Healthy Teeth 2016*

*KIPDA Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Conference, 2014: Safe Today, Healthy Tomorrow*

## **Special Training /Certification/Accomplishments**

Family Development Credential Trainer (2012- 2017)  
National Head Start Association (2009 - 2016)  
National Even Start Association (2003 - 2009)  
Kentucky Early Childhood Trainer Credential, Level 5 (2003 - present)  
Washington State Special Education Teacher Certificate (1999)  
Washington State Teacher Certification (1986)

## **Special Assignments**

2017- Present FRYSC Regional Advisory Council

2011 - 2013 Kentucky Department of Education  
Governor’s Early Childhood Advisory Council  
Assessment Work Group  
Contributor to the Early Childhood Parent Guide revisions

2008 – 2009 Humana Foundation Well Zone  
Health Literacy Project Development and Training

2006 - 2009 University of Kentucky, Collaborative Center of Literacy  
Kentucky Reading Project (KRP)