5-2023

The Mental Health Experiences of DACA Recipients and Non-DACA Recipients

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Social Work in Social Work

by

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University of Arkansas
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, 2019

May 2023
University of Arkansas

This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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Abstract

Millions of immigrant children without legal status grow up in the U.S. and aspire to live and thrive in American society. However, without legal status, they face challenges in integrating into society. Implemented in 2012, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was created to help immigrant youth integrate into society by providing them with work permits, facilitating educational opportunities, and protection from deportation. However, not all immigrant children qualify for DACA, and the recent legal challenges to DACA prohibit new applicants and put roughly 600,000 recipients in legal limbo. The research questions this study poses are 1.) How do the mental health experiences of DACA recipients differ from non-DACA recipients? 2.) How do DACA's current legal challenges impact DACA recipients? This study used eight semi-structured qualitative interviews to answer the research questions from four DACA recipients and four non-DACA recipients. The study included questions surrounding participants' ability to integrate into society, DACA's legal status, their personal legal status, and the impact these experiences have had on their mental health. The findings of this study indicate that both DACA and non-DACA recipients face challenges in integration and fear of deportation, have found coping mechanisms, help their families financially, and that DACA recipients have emotional responses while reflecting on DACA. Lastly, the study provides implications for social work practice, policy, and research.

Keywords: DACA recipients, Dreamers, legal status, mental health, immigrants

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank my thesis committee members. To Dr. Fields, thank you for the time, support, encouragement, and kindness you provided me throughout this process. To Dr. Plassmeyer, thank you for your knowledge of policy and for helping me get this thesis off the ground. To Professor Rosa, thank you for your unfailing support and kindness throughout the MSW program. Second, thank you to Dr. Kim Stauss and Dr. John Gallagher for showing me kindness and challenging me to grow and learn in the social work field. Finally, thank you to my amazing cohort, who were always there to share struggles and successes. To Allen, Cira, Leea, and Melissa, you kept me afloat in the final hour of this thesis, and I will forever be grateful to you. It has been an honor to know you all.

Dedication

First, I dedicate this work to my eight participants. Thank you for donating your time and allowing me to share your stories. I hope I did them justice. I also dedicate this work to all immigrants in the U.S. enduring the consequences of legal violence; you are constantly on my mind. Finally, I dedicate this work to my family. To my mother and three older siblings, without you, my passion and this thesis would not exist. To my little brother and one of my best friends, thank you for believing in me and constantly reminding me about the importance of this work. To my sister-in-law, thank you for being my family and a fiercely loyal friend and cheerleader. To my loving partner, thank you for your constant validation, understanding, support, patience, and love; without you, I would not have made it to the finish line.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Current Situation and Problem Statement

There are nearly two million young immigrants who were brought as children and now live in the United States (National Immigrant Forum, 2023). This group of immigrants are known as our Dreamers—some of whom live without legal status. Dreamers aspire to live and thrive in U.S. society. However, living in the U.S. without legal status and integrating into society is challenging. Therefore, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was created to help young immigrants integrate into society by providing work permits, facilitating educational opportunities, and protection from deportation.

However, not all Dreamers qualified for the program, and current legal challenges put DACA at risk of being dismantled, leaving roughly 600,000 DACA recipients in legal limbo (American Immigration Council, 2021). As a result, Dreamers endure negative mental health experiences caused by the inability to integrate fully into society and the fear of deportation.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program

DACA was implemented in 2012 as an executive order signed by president Obama (American Immigration Council, 2021). DACA does not grant citizenship nor a pathway to citizenship. Instead, it is a two-year permit that provides recipients with a social security number that enables Dreamers to obtain a driver's license, the legal right to work through a work permit, access to higher wages, and protection from deportation. DACA is a liminal status and must be renewed every two years to retain benefits. Since its inception, DACA has been afforded to over 800,000 Dreamers, allowing them to work lawfully, attend school, and build a life without the constant fear of being sent to a country they do not remember or know (American Immigration Council, 2021).

While there have been over 800,000 DACA recipients, not all Dreamers qualified for it due to its strict qualifications. To receive DACA, one must have the following: 1) entered the U.S. under the age of 16, 2) continually resided in the U.S. from June 15, 2012, to the time of filing for DACA, 3) have been physically present in the U.S. on both June 15, 2012, and at the time of filing for DACA, 4) not have another lawful immigration status on June 15, 2012, 5) graduated or obtained a certified high school diploma or a GED certification, be enrolled in school, or be a veteran with an honorable discharge from the Armed Forces or Coast Guard in the U.S., 6) not been convicted of felonies, misdemeanor, or pose a threat to national security or public safety, 7) and been born on or after June 15, 1981 (could not be over the age of 31 at the time of filing), and be at least 15 years at the time of applying (Federal Register, 2022; Sudhinaraset et al., 2017; Torres et al., 2018).

Due to these qualifications, many Dreamers, the non-DACA recipients, are left out and continue to struggle with limited job opportunities and low wages, limited educational opportunities, and have no relief from the fear of deportation.

DACA's Legal Challenges

DACA has undergone legal challenges in the past several years. During the Trump Administration in 2017, the acting secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Elaine Duke, announced the administration's intent to "wind down" DACA and rescinded the program in a memorandum that stated the program was likely to be found unlawful (National Immigration Forum, 2022). This rescission prevented new DACA applications from being received, even if they met all of DACA's requirements.

Additionally, the memorandum stipulated that current DACA recipients would not be allowed to apply for renewal after the arbitrary date of March 6, 2018, six months after the

memorandum was announced (National Immigration Forum, 2022). However, fifteen states and the District of Columbia filed a lawsuit challenging the administration's memorandum (Johnson, 2017), ultimately leading to the 5-4 Supreme Court ruling favoring DACA in 2020 (National Immigration Forum, 2022; Totenberg, 2020).

The Supreme Court informed the Trump administration that they did not explore potential alternatives to rescinding DACA and failed to consider the harm it would cause recipients if the program ended (National Immigration Forum, 2022; Totenberg, 2020). Additionally, the court held that the administration did not consider if they could preserve aspects of the program, such as protection from deportation, but eliminate work authorization. As a result, this decision reinstated DACA, and DHS began accepting first-time applicants again (National Immigration Forum, 2022).

In July 2021, a federal judge in Texas declared DACA unlawful, barring DHS from accepting first-time applications as of the time of this writing (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services [USCIS], 2022). However, this decision does not impact current recipients as they can keep their DACA status and continue the renewal process. Consequently, the Biden administration appealed the Texas decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit (National Immigration Forum, 2022: USCIS, 2022).

As of October 2022, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit upheld the federal court's decision in Texas and declared DACA unlawful (USCIS, 2022). The recent ruling by the circuit court will likely take DACA before the Supreme Court for a ruling on its lawful status, making it the second time DACA has been sent to the Supreme Court. If a future ruling rescinds DACA, its recipient will lose the rights granted to them, negatively impacting their well-being.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to understand the struggles that both DACA recipients and non-recipients experience in-depth and to explore how these struggles impact their mental health experiences. Additionally, this study aims to determine how DACA's current legal challenges have affected DACA recipients' mental health. As a result, this research is informed and guided by two research questions: 1. How do the mental health experiences of DACA recipients differ from non-DACA recipients? 2. How do DACA's current legal challenges impact the mental health of DACA recipients?

Significance

The significance of this study is that it provides a voice to those marginalized by the immigration system as it exists today in the U.S. Additionally, the study provides an in-depth understanding of DACA recipients' and non-recipients' mental health as affected by the DACA program or lack thereof. In addition, as DACA is undergoing legal challenges at the current time, this study provides an understanding of how those challenges impact DACA recipients' mental well-being. Finally, this study was conducted in a geographical region where the immigrant population is not typically studied, as most research on immigrants is conducted in California, Arizona, Texas, etc.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Recent research seeks to understand the experiences of DACA recipients and non-DACA recipients. Both quantitative and qualitative studies have shown that due to the temporary status of DACA and the lack of legal status of non-DACA recipients, immigrant youth face negative mental health experiences. Additionally, two major themes can be found in previous research that impact their mental health: fear of deportation and the inability to fully integrate into American society.

Fear of Deportation

Immigrants without legal status live with the fear of being deported back to their country of origin. However, for Dreamers, the U.S. is their home. For DACA recipients, the fear of deportation is primarily for their family members who do not have legal status rather than their deportation (Flores-Morales & Garcia, 2021; Garcini et al., 2022; Sudhinaraset et al., 2017).

A quantitative study used data from Latinx college students who took the UndocScholars national online survey to study anxiety levels (Flores-Morales and Garcia, 2021). The study used the generalized anxiety scale (GAD-7) to measure anxiety levels in DACA recipients and non-DACA recipients. The GAD-7 scores for DACA recipients were higher for family deportation than those scored by non-DACA recipients.

Similar findings were seen in a cross-sectional online survey (Garcini et al., 2022). Garcini et al. (2022) define a potential traumatic event (PTE), as experienced by non-citizen immigrants, as the deportation from the U.S., separation from family members, and the deportation of their family members. Of the 233 participants, including DACA recipients and non-recipients, 40% experienced high clinical levels of distress from a PTE. Additionally, DACA recipients were four times more likely to meet the criteria for clinical distress than

immigrants with legal status. Finally, levels of clinical distress were comparable to those of individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder.

In a qualitative study with a sample of 32 Asian and Pacific Islander participants, the fear of family deportation also showed adverse effects on the mental health of DACA recipients (Sudhinaraset et al., 2017). For example, participants discussed that some of their siblings were not protected from deportation by DACA. In addition, participants reported feeling anxiety over applying for DACA because they did not want to give identifying information that would put their family in deportation jeopardy. Finally, participants noted that others eligible for DACA did not apply for the program out of fear of their family's deportation.

Non-DACA recipients also experience fear of deportation. For example, in a qualitative study, non-citizen immigrants feared interacting with local law enforcement (Valentin-Cortes et al., 2020). Possible interactions with local police symbolized the potential interaction with immigration officials. These possible encounters with law enforcement produced fear and worry about deportation and familial separation (Valentin-Cortes et al., 2020).

Lastly, the fear of deportation influences non-recipients' behaviors. For instance, in a qualitative study, some families report isolating themselves and only going out when necessary. They engage in these behaviors to reduce exposure to law enforcement and to prevent possible deportation (Valentin-Cortes et al., 2020).

Inability to Fully Integrate into American Society

DACA allowed some Dreamers to integrate into the U.S. by providing them with a social security number that permitted access to jobs and education. However, DACA recipients are still limited and cannot fully integrate into society. In a qualitative study, Roth (2018) interviewed 39

DACA recipients from South Carolina and found that DACA recipients could apply for and attend college and pursue a career.

However, while DACA provides opportunities to attend college, certain states like South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia will charge recipients out-of-state tuition even if they are state residents (Higher Ed Immigration Portal, 2023; Roth, 2018). In addition, federal financial aid did not extend to DACA recipients or non-recipients to provide support with college expenses (Paschero & McBrien, 2021; Rothe, 2018; Siemons et al., 2016). Studies found that DACA recipients experienced common feelings of worry and isolation about being unable to fully integrate and participate in society (Roth, 2018; Siemons et al., 2016).

In addition, Paschero and McBrien (2021) found that non-DACA recipients were charged out-of-state tuition because they were considered international students and were not offered financial aid. Additionally, the scholarships they qualified for were insufficient for tuition and books. Instead, non-recipients depend on their family's financial contributions and their own earnings to pay for education. As a result, non-recipients experienced high levels of anxiety (Decker et al., 2018; Paschero & McBrien, 2021).

In their qualitative study, Siemons et al. (2016) also found feelings of isolation and suicidal thoughts among DACA recipients knowing they could not integrate into society like their citizen peers. For example, not all DACA recipients had access to healthcare. Some DACA recipients reported having access to healthcare through their employers. However, this isn't the case for some DACA recipients and non-recipients who do not have access to coverage through the Affordable Care Act (Siemons et al., 2016).

The same studies provide contrasting mental health reports of DACA recipients once they received DACA status. For example, after receiving DACA benefits, recipients felt a sense of

belonging, confidence, and safety (Mallet-Garcia & Garcia-Bedolla, 2021; Roth, 2018; Siemons et al., 2016). Additionally, in Sudhinaraset et al. (2017), participants felt empowered to envision their future trajectories without limits and improved their self-identity and perception after receiving DACA.

Finally, DACA and non-DACA recipients struggle to integrate into the workforce in the U.S. While DACA recipients are afforded a work permit and have the legal right to work, they do not qualify for all occupations. For example, in Paschero and McBrien (2021), participants reported experiencing rejection, anxiety, and limited when denied jobs that require the applicant to be a U.S. citizen. In this study, a participant was denied a job in their local police department because they were not a U.S. citizen. Additionally, another study reported that DACA recipients could pursue a career in nursing; however, upon completion, they were prohibited from practicing as registered nurses because they were not U.S. citizens (Roth, 2018).

Non-recipients also experience difficulty in integrating into the workforce. In some cases, non-recipients do not have the legal right to work, and, therefore, they are limited in the jobs they can take. In a qualitative study, Dreamers were limited to working in agricultural fields, restaurants, or construction (Rodriguez & Dawkins, 2017). Additionally, non-recipients are subjected to possible or actual abuse or exploitation by their employers simply because they do not have legal status and fear speaking up. As a result, non-recipients experience symptoms of depression and anxiety (Rodriguez & Dawkins, 2017).

Gaps and Limitations

While the literature provides insight into the mental health experiences of non-DACA recipients, there is limited research comparing non-recipients' mental health experiences to those of DACA recipients. However, in comparing both groups directly, an accurate depiction can be

made of how DACA, or lack of it, has impacted both groups of Dreamers. Additionally, most studies reviewed took place in California except for two national online surveys, and other research is concentrated in Arizona, Texas, New York, etc. Therefore, more studies need to be conducted outside of the aforementioned states to accurately represent immigrants across the U.S.

Chapter Three: The Legal Violence Framework

Legal violence was coined by researchers Cecilia Menjivar and Leisy Abrego, who have done extensive research on the immigrant population in California and Arizona (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012). Legal violence was created from principles of structural and symbolic violence. Structural violence refers to social structures in place that prevent people from meeting their basic needs (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015). For example, structural violence is seen in the insecurity in wages, housing, and lack of access to goods and services. This violence is hidden within social structures like the exploitative labor market and discriminatory educational systems perpetuated by policies and practices that block access to societal goods that would otherwise facilitate integration and success (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015; Menjivar & Abrego, 2012; Menjivar & Abrego, 2016).

Symbolic violence is the internalization of social inequalities by those who have endured repeated exposure to various forms of inequality and become accustomed to that treatment (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015). Therefore, accepting inequalities legitimizes and normalizes inequality and the hierarchy of social power (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015; Menjivar & Abrego, 2016). As a result, immigrants and U.S. citizens internalize the lessons of exclusion that teach members of society that immigrants are undeserving of the rights afforded to them through legal status.

Menjivar and Abrego (2012) take structural and symbolic violence to form legal violence and discuss the experiences of immigrants in the U.S. Legal violence is the collection of punitive immigration laws, the growing enforcement of these punitive laws, and the negative stigmatization of immigrants (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011; Menjivar & Abrego, 2012; Menjivar &

Abrego, 2016). As a result of legal violence, immigrants are harmed economically, emotionally, and psychologically (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011).

In the last three decades, immigration laws have consistently grown restrictive. For example, the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) stipulates that immigrants who reside within the U.S. without legal status are not allowed back in the U.S. for five to ten years (Torres et al., 2018). In addition, the IIRIRA, for the first time, made lawful permanent residents deportable if they had been convicted of a felony, even if they had served a sentence. In addition, under new provisions, the IIRIRA expanded the class of offenses for which immigrants could get deported (e.g., shoplifting and possession of drugs) (Menjivar & Abrego, 2016; Torres et al., 2018).

Additionally, after the 9/11 attacks in New York, there was a reorganization of the Immigration and Naturalization Services into the now Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) under the Department of Homeland Security (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011). DHS was created as a response to the 9/11 attacks to safeguard national security, track down and prevent terrorism, and increase border control (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011).

As a result, immigrants are equated as terrorists and criminals, perpetuating the negative stigma and treatment of immigrants in the U.S. Therefore, unlike other punitive laws that target individual behaviors, immigration laws and their enforcement target a group of people, immigrants with and without legal status (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011). Additionally, legal statuses determine the rights granted, the level of social acceptance, the treatment by employers and authority, and the level of suffering (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011). Consequently, immigrants in the U.S. experience the current immigration system and its implementation as a form of legal violence.

In their extensive research with immigrants, Menjivar and Abrego have found that legal violence has impacted immigrants in three central areas of their daily lives – work, family, and school (Menjivar & Abrego, 2011, Menjivar & Abrego, 2012, Menjivar & Abrego, 2016).

Legal Violence in Research

Family

Research has found that legal violence impacts immigrant families due to the fear of deportation resulting in familial separation (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011; Menjivar & Abrego, 2012; Menjivar & Abrego, 2016). For example, fear of deportation drives the decisions and behaviors made by parents who try to access resources that will provide and benefit their family (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011). As a result, immigrant parents avoid interactions with government workers and agencies that would help connect them to the resources that would benefit families and improve their well-being, such as health insurance, food, rent assistance, etc., resulting in poor care (Menjivar & Abrego, 2016)

Additionally, a mixed-status family is created when some family members within immigrant families have legal status, and others do not (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012; Menjivar & Abrego, 2016). Menjivar and Abrego (2016) argue that immigration laws impact immigrants with no legal status and affect their family members with legal status (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015; Abrego & Menjivar, 2011; Menjivar & Abrego, 2012). For example, because in recent decades, immigration laws were created to work to deport immigrants and ICE was created to enforce those laws, deportation and familial separation are a reality for immigrant families (Menjivar & Abrego, 2016).

Therefore, to cope with the fear of deportation and possibly being separated from their families, immigrants engage in vigilant behaviors. For example, a qualitative study describes a

married couple living with the fear of deportation (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012). The couple worked together in cleaning services during the night shift. They have U.S. citizen children; the wife has temporary protective status, and the husband does not have legal status (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012).

They would take separate cars to work out of fear that if they rode in the same vehicle, they could both get detained by ICE and be unable to care for their children (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012; Menjivar & Abrego, 2016). The couple described the increase in ICE raids in the workplace, restaurants, and other public places as the sources of their anxiety (Menjibar & Abrego, 2016).

Lastly, legal violence can be seen in the uncertain and lengthy family separations due to raids or deportation (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012). For example, a qualitative study found that an immigrant mother was detained and separated from her baby in their home (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011; Menjivar & Abrego, 2012. The baby was nine months old and depended on her mother for breastfeeding; they were separated for 11 days.

In another case, a mother of two was petitioning to adjust her husband's legal status. However, because of the IIRIR, her husband spent ten years in Mexico because he entered the U.S. without authorization (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011). Legal violence is seen through the immigration laws that work against immigrants and their families and through the enforcement of these laws by ICE officials.

Work

Legal violence is also seen in the workplace and shapes immigrants' work experiences (Menjivar & Abrego, 2016). In addition, research has found that many immigrants earn low wages and work in jobs with no benefits (e.g., health insurance, retirement funds, and paid time

off) (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012; Menjivar & Abrego, 2016). Additionally, immigrant workers are prone to workplace violations such as safety concerns and unpaid overtime (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012). For example, a National Employment Law Project survey found that in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles, foreign-born Latino workers were most likely to experience minimum wage violations. In addition, 80 percent of immigrant workers experienced overtime violations (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012).

Workplace raids have increased the scrutiny and suspicion of immigrant workers and put immigrant workers with legal status at risk (Menjivar & Abrego, 2016). For example, qualitative studies document immigrant workers' experiences like Josefina (pseudonym), a lawful permanent resident who fears being deported by ICE during a workplace raid. Josefina explains she feels nervous and vulnerable at work and desires to become a U.S. citizen because it is more secure (Menjivar & Abrego, 2016). Josefina's case shows that the stress and fear that legal violence produces impacts all immigrants, legal status or not.

Finally, some immigrants prove they can legally reside and work in the U.S. However, some temporary statuses, like those granted asylum or humanitarian relief, prevent people from being hired for certain jobs. For example, a U-Visa holder (a visa granted to victims of crimes who suffer mental or physical abuse and cooperate with law enforcement), Vera (pseudonym), was granted an employment authorization document (EAD) and got a job at a nutritional center (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015; USCIS, n.d.). However, when finalizing her payroll paperwork, her employer questioned the authenticity of her EAD and called it fake.

Vera sought support from her immigration attorney and maintained the job for a month. Then, however, she was fired because her employer did not want to deal with Vera's paperwork. Although Vera's legal situation had somewhat improved through her U-Visa, her status is not

citizenship or a pathway to it, and, therefore, she was still limited in where she could work (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015). Legal violence is seen through her employer's suspicion and unwillingness to recognize her legal status, which prevented Vera from meeting her full potential and held her back socioeconomically.

School

Dreamers attend public schools under the protection of *Plyler v. Doe,* which grants undocumented youth access to K-12 (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012; Menjivar & Abrego, 2016). However, that access ends after high school graduation, and Dreamers face barriers to attending college and receiving financial aid (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012; Menjivar & Abrego, 2016; Roth, 2018). Additionally, Dreamers with a temporary status, such as DACA or temporary protective status, are barred from receiving financial aid, including state and federal aid, grants, loans, and work-study programs (Menjivar & Abrego, 2016; Roth, 2018).

In addition, at the time of this writing, only 23 states provide in-state tuition to Dreamers with and without temporary status. These states include California, New York, Texas, the District of Columbia, etc. (Higher Ed Immigration Portal, 2023). Of those 23 states, 17 provide state financial aid. With little or no financial resources, the nearly 100,000 Dreamers who graduate from high school annually (Presidents' Alliance, 2022) are excluded from higher education, and their efforts toward upward mobility become limited.

As Camilo (pseudonym) describes in a qualitative study, his teachers encouraged him to pursue higher education and told him not to worry about the cost. However, upon applying and coming across barriers, he realized that it was not about going to college; it was about whether or not he could pay for it (Menjivar & Abrego, 2016).

Legal violence prohibits Dreamers from pursuing higher education and the career they aspire to follow by barring them from financial aid and, in some states charging out-of-state tuition (Higher Ed Immigration Portal, 2023; Menjivar & Abrego, 2016). Dreamers become discouraged and stop trying to excel academically when they realize they are limited after high school. For example, a high school student in Phoenix who maintained a high grade point average began to perform poorly academically. She confided to her parents that she did not want to leave school and therefore was attempting to fail her senior year so she could return the next school year (Menjivar & Abrego, 2016). The student explained she would have nothing after high school and felt that her life would be over (Menjivar & Abrego, 2016).

Finally, legal violence is seen in the fear the students endure in disclosing their legal status to school teachers and counselors who students feel may be able to help their precarious legal situation and access various educational opportunities (Menjivar & Agrego, 2012; Menjivar & Abrego, 2016). In addition, students are unsure of their teachers' and counselors' stances on immigration and fear the negative stigma of immigrants follows them and may influence their teachers' and counselors' opinions of them (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012; Menjivar & Abrego, 2016; Roth, 2018).

For example, one high school student in Los Angles recalls the mental distress they experienced when disclosing their status to their teacher. She described being nervous and stressed about being treated differently by her teachers (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012; Menjivar & Abrego, 2016).

The fear and shame Dreamer students feel toward their legal status, the lack of financial help for higher education, the limited job opportunities and unfair treatment of immigrant workers, and the fear of deportation and familial separation are by-products of legal violence.

Policymakers and scholars often describe these by-products as “unintended consequences” of immigration laws (Abrego & Menjivar, 2011). This research strives to shine a light and recognize the “unintended consequences” of the immigration system not as unintended consequences but as a result of legal violence as it exists in the U.S. through draconian immigration laws, enforcement of those laws, and the negative stigmatization of immigrants.

Chapter Four: Methodology

A Qualitative Study

This research used the qualitative method for gathering data. Qualitative research is beneficial because it allows researchers to address the "why" and "how" of research questions (Cleland, 2017). Additionally, qualitative research will enable you to ask questions that cannot be put into numbers to understand the human experience. Furthermore, qualitative research enables a deeper understanding of experiences and the context of those experiences. Finally, the answers to qualitative research questions help get to the realities of social phenomena and help extend one's knowledge of them (Cleland, 2017).

Specific Aims and Research Questions

This study aims to understand the mental health experiences of DACA recipients and non-DACA recipients more in-depth. Additionally, the study seeks to determine how DACA's current legal challenges have impacted DACA recipients' mental health. Therefore, this study poses two qualitative research questions: 1. How do the mental health experiences of DACA recipients differ from non-DACA recipients? 2. How do DACA's current legal challenges impact the mental health of DACA recipients?

The findings of this research will provide insight into how current immigration laws impact the mental health of immigrants and implications for social work practice, policy, and research. While the findings bring no immediate policy change, this research allows for the representation of this historically marginalized and oppressed population. Lastly, this study contributes to the growing research on DACA, its recipients, and the impact on Dreamers who did not qualify for DACA.

IRB and Consent Forms

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Arkansas approved this study through a review of the study's materials. Additionally, two informed consent forms were created, one in English and one in Spanish, to accommodate participants' preferred language. In addition, the IRB provided revisions twice regarding the wording of the consent forms. For example, since immigrants are a hard-to-reach population, verbal consent was requested for approval by the IRB. As a result, the IRB provided revisions to the wording of the verbal consent stipulation. Finally, the IRB approved the study to use verbal consent, and the participants were not required to sign anything to promote their privacy and safety. The IRB approval letter can be found in Appendix C.

Recruitment

Recruitment for this study's sample was purposive because the researcher was looking for immigrants who identified as Dreamers and were DACA recipients. Promotions for this study took place on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Additionally, the researcher collaborated with community partnerships such as local immigration law offices. In addition, snowball sampling proved to help recruit both DACA and non-DACA recipients. Flyers were also created in English and Spanish to promote the study. Potential participants connected with the researcher through email and phone contact to set up interviews if they met the study criteria. Each participant was given a $30 Amazon e-gift card as a thank-you for their time and participation.

Study Criteria

To be considered for this study, participants had to be a current DACA recipient or a non-DACA recipient and be 18 years or older. For example, being a current DACA recipient for this

study meant that the participant could not be a former DACA recipient. In order to determine the immediate impact of the legal challenges on recipients, each DACA recipient was a current recipient. Additionally, a non-DACA recipient for this study was considered a Dreamer and did not have another legal status (lawful permanent resident, naturalized citizen, another visa status, etc.). Finally, the study was open to all Dreamer immigrants, not just those who identified as Hispanic/Latinx.

Sample

The sample of this study is representative of the Northwest Arkansas Hispanic/Latinx immigrant community. In total, there were eight participants, four from Fayetteville, three from Springdale, and one from Rogers. Additionally, there were four DACA recipients and four non-DACA recipients, providing equal representation for each group. Demographics included questions such as gender identity, current age, age of arrival to the U.S., country of origin, race/ethnicity, etc. For a visual on participant demographics, see Appendix A.

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected through eight one-on-one semi-structured interviews with the participants and researcher, lasting one hour each. In addition, each participant was interviewed once in their preferred language. Seven interviews were conducted in English, and one was in Spanish. Semi-structured interviews were used with participants to help build a conversation to discuss their experiences as either a DACA or non-DACA recipient. The interviews are semi-structured because the researcher had an interview guide of questions but did not follow the guide strictly to help the participant build the discussion. Finally, the researcher had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions to ensure the words of each participant were represented accurately.

The interviews were recorded with participant consent using Zoom audio. Audio recordings were transcribed using Nvivo transcription services. Additionally, two interview guides were created based on instruments utilized in prior empirical studies. Each interview guide was submitted to the thesis chair and a research professor for review. Each professor provided feedback and revisions to the interview guides, which the researcher implemented. Finally, one interview guide was created for each group (DACA and non-DACA recipients interview guide). Examples of each interview guide are available in Appendix B.

Analysis

After the transcriptions were completed verbatim, the researcher cleaned up the data by reading through the transcripts. The researcher then read through the interviews once without coding. Once the initial read-through was complete, the researcher reviewed the interviews again, coding each. Finally, a hybrid approach to coding was taken through the use of deductive and inductive coding to analyze the data and identify themes and subthemes.

Deductive coding is when there are predetermined codes developed before reviewing the data. For example, deductive codes in this study came from the two interview guides the researcher created using prior empirical studies. Inductive codes were developed as the data was reviewed instead of predetermined. Finally, triangulation was achieved with the data collected. The thesis chair went through the coding process with interviews from each participant group. This process ensured similar codes were being identified and to protect against potential biases during the analysis process.

Personal Reflection and Self-Disclosure

As the researcher, I am a Latina U.S. citizen and belong to a mixed-status family. Therefore, I share identities and similar experiences with immigration laws as the participants of

this study, and there is a potential for biases to arise. Thus, I kept a journal of entries after each interview to address potential biases that emerged during the interviews, which could influence the research process. Finally, the journal entries were used to help process the emotional impact I experienced and discussed with my thesis chair.

Chapter Five: Findings

The following findings are consistent with the literature and exemplify how legal violence has impacted the participants of this study. The quotes used to discuss the results were not edited in order to preserve their authenticity; they are legitimately in the words of the participants and how they intended. However, the meaning of the quotes were not altered but were cleaned for their meaning to be clear to the reader and to preserve accuracy. Additionally, some grammatical errors remain to achieve a full representation of participants' voices and experiences. This study identified five themes: integration, fear of deportation, emotional response to DACA, coping, and helping my family financially. Finally, each theme, except for helping my family financially, had subthemes discussed in depth in the following sections.

Integration

As discussed in previous literature, integration into U.S. society is one of the challenges immigrants without legal status face. Due to the legal violence that prohibits immigrants from being full citizens with rights (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012), the participants in the study mentioned three areas where they faced challenges in integrating: education, socialization, and employment.

Education Non-DACA Recipients

In pursuing higher education after high school, the non-recipients struggled to pay for school. In addition, they did not qualify for federal financial aid or many scholarships because they did not have legal status. The participant below discusses his experience with higher education and lack of financial aid.

> Since I couldn't get DACA, it was kind of hard to get scholarships. So for us, it was like I had to work extra hard to get the money that I could have had if I got one scholarship. So most scholarships require either a social security or a

> number… So the only scholarships that you could get without having your social security… were very few money, $100, $200.

Additionally, because they are students without legal status, they are charged out-of-state tuition, adding barriers to integration in education.

> So there's no purpose of studying it. Well, people always say well, just study … I don't have that kind of money. Do you know how expensive it is? They just charge out-of-state tuition, which is even more expensive.

Lastly, even when non-recipients complete their degree, they cannot use the skills acquired because they do not have a legal right to work.

> But even then, let's say I studied to be a nurse so we could have the title for it, but I can't work it, so basically, there's no purpose in studying it unless you wait for more options for you to be able to get a social.

Education DACA Recipients

Upon receiving DACA, recipients can now attend college with fewer barriers. However, they still do not qualify for federal financial aid and face challenges in paying for tuition. Additionally, even though recipients had DACA, some college programs did not grant them acceptance because of their temporary legal status. DACA participants discussed their experiences trying to apply for scholarships and applying for entry into certain academic programs.

> A lot of DACA scholarships out there require full-time studying, which I can't do because to afford school, I had to be working. So it was a bit of a back-and-forth. You either do one thing or the other. Luckily, I was able to afford it. And very thankful for my job because they do have a policy which – a reimbursement policy, so you pay for your classes, and then you show proof that you passed them, they'll reimburse you for that. So, luckily, I have that…

It should be noted that the participant above was reimbursed by an employer they had due to obtaining a work permit through DACA. Additionally, some programs would not accept DACA recipients as students. Therefore, DACA recipients also struggled with attending the

college of their choice and pursuing the career of their choice. The participants below discuss their experiences.

> They [university of choice] did have an online program for computer engineering when I called to see if DACA recipients were eligible. They told me that they weren't at that time; they were only taking citizens. So then, I ended up doing more research, and I ended up going [with an out-of-state university].

Another DACA recipient was able to attend the university of her choice but could not pursue the career she wanted.

> So I remember taking my first chemistry class. Since then, I really enjoyed it. And I was like, oh, well, I could go to medical school. I'm going to go to medical school, and then maybe in the meantime, something's going to happen, and DACA will not be DACA like we would have a different situation… I encountered a professor. He was the pre-med professor, and he said, sorry, I can't do anything; basically, there's nothing for you… And then when I took the MCAT and when I was ready, it was a no, you can't do it because you have DACA.

The participant above wanted to pursue medical school to become a family doctor. In addition, she wanted to help bridge the gap in medical services by providing medical attention and education on common diseases within her community.

Socialization

Participants faced barriers in integrating socially with friends and work colleagues. For example, non-recipients struggle to enjoy leisure time or travel with friends on vacation. Likewise, DACA recipients are hesitant to enjoy leisure time with friends fully and cannot travel by the same means as their peers or to the same places. In addition, legal violence creates a fear of being deported and prevents immigrants from integrating socially with peers. The following participants discuss that fear and their hesitation.

Socialization Non-Recipients

This non-recipient describes the risks of traveling if they want to enjoy vacation time with their friends.

> The group of friends that I have met they're very active, and they go out. Some of my friends that do not have documents here, they still travel with their passports, but I feel insecure about that. They have invited me to go to some pretty places like Florida or something like that. But I chose not to go because I'm scared. Because anything can happen. You're not safe. Not 100%. So yeah, you always have that something is stopping you from doing a lot of things.

Another non-recipient discusses being out with friends at local bars, but not being able to fully engage with them out of fear of what could happen.

> I feel like there's a lot of things that I could experience, but I don't get to experience that here. Like traveling or go out on Dickson, I don't go. So that's a lot of activity, and anything can happen so, and I feel like most people don't think about that … they want to chill out, but I consider that something bad will happen. Well, the consequences for me would have been ten times worse.

Socialization DACA Recipients

DACA recipients also struggle to socially integrate with friends and peers at work due to their inability to travel and participate in social events for work. While DACA recipients have work permits and driver's licenses, they cannot freely travel outside the country. This DACA recipient describes not being able to travel with friends.

> When I first started to talk to my college friends, it was like a lot of things that they would talk about … they are like, let's go to Mexico, and I'm like, I can't go. And now they know ...I have to explain it to them.

Another DACA recipient describes their struggle to integrate socially at work with co-workers and participate in work travel events.

> I know they have a recent trip coming up going to California that requires going by plane, they tell me you can go by car, but I think everyone is going by plane. They even ask me, "Are you gonna go?" No, maybe next year, but I know it is either Florida or California, so obviously, those trips are quite a bit a ways … I have to go in a car, and that's dumb. So there are some limitations when it comes to that. There is the whole I can't explore or do anything. I'm stuck here, unfortunately.

Employment

Legal violence is seen in employment because immigrants without legal status do not have the legal right to work. This lack of fundamental rights imposes barriers for immigrants to integrate into the workforce and inhibits upward mobility.

Employment Non-Recipients

In the study, non-DACA recipients discussed the limitations they face in finding employment where they can advance professionally and being limited to specific jobs. For example, the participant below discusses being limited in what industry he can work in.

> Workwise too, so there's only a few jobs that I can work at, and that kind of puts you in this – either construction or restaurant business, I don't know, like it puts you in a box. You can't even think of other options because we already know that you can't.

Additionally, non-recipients feel stuck and forced to take jobs where they know they won't have the same professional growth opportunities as those with legal status or U.S. citizenship.

> So it puts me on the back burner of where I have to go. I can't go to a company where I can start low and build my way up. I go to jobs with no growth opportunities. You're just stuck there. It's very frustrating.

Employment DACA Recipients

DACA recipients don't face the same barriers to integrating into the workforce as non-recipients. They have obtained jobs with the assistance of DACA. However, they face a different obstacle of their own. Legal violence is seen through DACA's liminal status. In other words, their work permit has a two-year limitation that needs to be renewed to maintain employment. Due to DACA's legal challenges, recipients' renewal applications have been delayed. The recipient below discusses how DACA has been beneficial in getting a job but that it is limited.

> [DACA has helped], for the most part, when it comes to getting a job. I think the main obstacle, say, right now, is that I'm looking at an investment property, so

> what does that look like for me? Do I have that security basically of every two years? What if it doesn't get renewed? Where does that leave me? Do I just go back empty-handed? So it's kind of that thing of insecurity. I already got my college degree, so I'm just ready to fit in with society, but I'm limited to what things I could become.

Additionally, DACA recipients discuss how helpful a work permit has been in getting a better job than before and the risk of losing it.

> Definitely, it [DACA] has made it easier, for sure—the work part. Most definitely, it's allowed me to get like a better job than what I had. It's just made it so much better just - Where I was working before DACA, I didn't really have any sort of future per se. It was just going to be a job … but I still worry about what happens if it gets denied. Like, so I have a job now, but. If I don't get my renewal, then I'm not going to have a job anymore…

Fear of Deportation

As a result of legal violence, the fear of deportation and leaving their family, friends, and life behind in the U.S. has caused an emotional response that affects the participants' mental health. Additionally, the possibility of encountering law enforcement symbolized possible encounters with immigration officials and deportation. This stress and worry influence the behaviors of immigrants, perpetuating extra vigilant behavior. This study found four subthemes that exemplify the fear of deportation: own deportation, DACA's legal status and deportation, familial separation, and extra vigilance.

Own Deportation – Non-DACA Recipients

This participant discusses their fear response to driving without a license because it could lead to dire consequences like deportation. In addition, immigrants who do not have legal status cannot obtain a driver's license in certain states. Therefore, driving without a driver's license produces fear of a possible interaction with local police, which could end with an interaction with ICE. This participant discusses the fear they endure while driving.

> So there's that fear that you're going to get deported for not having a license. The fear is constant; how fair is that? And that constant fear that I'm telling you about

> is trauma at this point. You can never drive, let's say, a four-hour trip. Just drive there, not having to worry. You're just always worried. It is like, okay, how am I driving? You know, it's a little depressing, overwhelming. And the more you think about it, the worse it gets. So I try not to think about it, but like I said, when you're driving, you live in fear, so there's no way to move away from it. It's with you, and it's with you always. It's just - the thoughts are horrible.

Additionally, this next participant discusses their fear of returning to a country and society they do not know. They explain life in the U.S. is all they have and know.

> I don't think I would be able to survive in that country. It's different from what I know. So I am so scared to go back. I fear that so much. I don't know what will happen to me if I go back to that country. I have nothing else. This is all I know. I know how things work here. And I don't know nothing of the country I left when I was 13 years old. So it's very scary.

DACA's Legal Status and Deportation – DACA Recipients

Legal violence is seen in the DACA program in that it does not grant citizenship or a pathway to it. Additionally, because it does not grant citizenship, it is subjected to legal challenges that could dismantle the program and leave the roughly 600,000 recipients vulnerable to deportation. The participants below discuss the possibility of DACA being taken away and losing the life they have built.

> Oh, God. It would hurt. I would probably cry for a good while. We think about the possibility of remaining in the U.S. At this point, I don't think there's much I could possibly do by going back to Mexico. I don't even know the workforce there. It would hurt. It would be painful. Life-changing…

> Like when the DACA thing happened, all I remember, all I wanted to do was start hitting; get all your anger and frustration out. So, I think. I don't know, depending on the situation. Like, oh, yeah, I feel sad. And it comes in waves. You get really excited when you get approved [DACA]. Like right now, with all of this going on, you don't know…you don't know if you're going to be able to reapply. And then you get anxious and nervous in the sense of, like, what am I going to do if that happens?

Familial Separation – Non-DACA Recipients

Another example of how legal violence influences the lives of immigrants is through the fear of potential familial separation. As discussed in previous literature, families with members

of varying legal statuses fear being separated from their families and their life in the U.S. The following participants discuss the potential separation from their families and the life they have known in the U.S. since they were children.

> There's always a constant fear where anywhere you go, anything can happen. You got to feel the fear, the fear of going back and leaving your whole entire life here, and leaving your family and grandparents, your whole life, and starting over. Going back in my 30s, even though I left as a child. What am I doing? So, it's just that constant fear, you know?

> Well, since I have all my family here and I have my children with me, I do get worried if something were to happen to me, that I would get deported. What would I do in Mexico? I don't have anyone over there…we're Mexican, but in reality, we don't have anything over there. So why don't they give us an opportunity? We don't have a chance.

> Then what if something happens like I crash, and the cop gets mad, takes me away, and then I leave my family? But it's like mental luggage that I have… I don't want to leave them behind.

Extra Vigilance – Non-DACA Recipients

The following participants discuss being extra vigilant to stay safe and protect themselves from possible encounters with law enforcement. The first participant discusses his fear of driving and has been taking Ubers everywhere since being pulled over by police six months ago at the time of the interview.

> It is kinda scary to drive. Right now, at this moment, I'm not driving. And I haven't for the past six months, but it's safer. Yeah. So it's a little bit scary to me … but yeah, you always have that in the back of your mind like it is possible that you're going to get stopped. You're going to get a ticket for no license or worse.

The next participant discusses engaging in extra vigilant behavior without realizing it due to that worry and fear of being pulled over because he does not have legal status.

> But the driving. I noticed one time that I was driving to Dallas; my friend says that I look around a lot at the cars that are behind me or if there are cops everywhere, even though I'm not doing anything bad. I'm like, like extra vigilant, and those are things that I didn't know I did until he was like, what are you doing? I don't know, just looking at the cars behind us. He said they're just cars; there are cars everywhere. Yeah, but I don't have papers. I don't want to get stopped, either.

> Like, what do I say? And he said, Oh, I don't really think about it since I've always had my license. Yeah, well, I have to be extra careful. And I guess driving so many years, you don't really realize you're doing it until someone else sees it. What are you doing? Just checking.

Lastly, the following participant discusses how she avoids driving by asking family members with driver's licenses to help her get around. However, she understands that her family will not always be available and does this when she can to help her stay safe.

> My daughter, since she has a license, she drives. I try when she can't…I also have a son, and he can also drive… before, I used to drive more, but now if they can drive they'll do it if I have to go somewhere far I would have to look for them or and you know my brother or sister who do have licenses.

Emotional Response to DACA

DACA recipients reported improved well-being because they had access to better jobs. Additionally, they reported that their mental health improved because they did not feel isolated anymore and were able to begin to integrate with society. However, legal violence is seen in the DACA program because it only provides temporary protection and relief. As a result, DACA recipients report their emotional response to DACA's liminal status.

Improved Well-Being – DACA Recipients

The following participants discuss how their well-being improved upon receiving the protections from DACA. Additionally, the second participant reflects on his life previous to DACA. Finally, participants discuss how they began to experience the same things as their citizen peers – for example, driving, new jobs, and spending time with family.

> So with DACA, I was able to find like a very interesting job for me because I've always loved swimming, so I became a lifeguard, and I became a teacher for some instructions, and so I was able to, like, do something that I was very passionate about and it was fun. And obviously, who doesn't get excited about driving for the first time? I started, you know, just being able to do all of the normal things like being able to just take out your mom or your dad at the time and just having ice cream or just going out as a family … to spend like intimate family time.

The next participant discussed improved-well being while reflecting on his life before receiving DACA benefits.

> I definitely think it has improved it. I mean, not feeling like I've got to be cooped up at home all the time that I can go ahead and, you know, take my car and drive around without worrying that I might get stopped at any point and not have a license. That alone is a difference in itself. That is a little bit of freedom. And then I don't know; you just feel much, much freer to be doing like everyday things that I think people kind of take for granted sometimes. And it has made me feel a little bit more open to people as well, making friends and stuff like that, not being as alone as I was.

Finally, the next participant describes how DACA has helped him achieve milestones in life. Additionally, the participant reflects that without DACA, they would not be where they are today.

> … then good because it has opened many doors … For me, I was able to go to college, get a job, get a vehicle, so that's always a positive. If not, I don't think I would be where I am today because I don't think they would accept anyone that doesn't have like a security number or visa.

DACA's Liminal Status – DACA Recipients

While DACA has improved the mental well-being of its recipients, it also causes stress and worry. As mentioned earlier, legal violence is seen through DACA's liminal status because it is a two-year permit that must be renewed. Every time the two-year mark comes around, recipients prepare for reapplication, which produces emotional distress. This distress is a result of legal violence. Below, participants discuss their emotions and thoughts about reapplying.

> Well, DACA, it's a two-year permit, so I have to renew it every two years, but there's still the possibility that it's going to be denied at any one point. So I mean, I try to stay as clean as I can because, well, like police records and all that…. But I still worry about what happens if it gets denied. Like, so I have a job now, but if I don't get my renewal, then I'm not going to have the job anymore, and I'm going to go back to pretty much living as I was before, which pretty much kind of scraping to make it.

> Well, mine expires in August. So I need to apply again. But what happens again if they make a decision in, like, mid-July when I'm reapplying? Are they going to give me my documents? Are they not? What am I going to do?

Additionally, due to DACA's legal challenges, the renewal process has been delayed in the past. This delay caused participants to receive their DACA work permit past or close to the expiration date of the previous permit. Below, the participant discusses the stress and fear of waiting for his new permit.

> …our renewal process was slowed down by a couple of months, so we did submit our renewal. But [participants employer] is requesting that we give them a new copy of our card in our work permit. And that's where the stress came in, where [employer] was requesting it. I don't have it… Three weeks before it expired, I believe, is when I finally got it. I was able to submit it to [employer]… So there was that fear of me not having DACA on top of that, possibly losing my job.

Lastly, this participant discusses her experience when her DACA renewal was delayed, and she did not receive it on time.

> Not knowing what to do. That was hard. When mine took longer, that was one of the times when DACA ended, and my application got delayed for a long time. So like, I was a graduate student and taking classes. I couldn't work because it was illegal. I couldn't go to classes because I didn't have a driver's license because a driver's license is only valid until your card expires. So that was really hard…stress and nervous and anxiety was always super high. And when right now, like when I think about what's going to happen if they take it away like it's like....what am I gonna do? I have bills to pay and things to do. And when I start thinking about it, it gets to my head.

Coping

This study identified the consequences of legal violence that the participants experience. As a result, DACA and non-DACA recipients have developed strategies to cope with the legal status they hold. DACA and non-recipients use the following methods to cope with their precarious legal situation.

Working Harder – Non-DACA Recipient

The participant below discusses his experiences watching his peers with DACA or another legal status start a family, advance in their careers, and buy a home. Unfortunately, due to the participant's legal status, he cannot achieve these goals as readily as his peers.

> I'll probably go for or get another job to get my own house. And I can't even get one. But, you know, I am working towards getting my own house. It takes longer to process than someone that has DACA or papers. So I guess that sense of jealousy. It's not like, hate; it's more like it's pushing me a little more. Now I have to work extra hard. But even at the same time, it's now I have to push myself harder to work…

Additionally, this participant acknowledges that he has worked hard, possibly harder than most, to achieve financial security.

> And I feel like I make twice as much as them. Maybe because I've worked harder than them or I don't think about buying things I don't need. I don't know how to explain it. If you work hard here, you can be okay here, but you have to work more or harder, which I don't mind because I understand my legal status.

Working Harder – DACA Recipient

This participant has had U.S. citizen friends with whom he graduated high school and moved on to higher education. Unfortunately, due to the lack of financial aid, the participant graduated with his bachelor's later than his friends.

> I am still kind of stuck around that it shouldn't be like that. So I always try to push to be there, to be equals but to say, hey, you know I also made it on my own, and I brought my family with me. So basically, you have two friends that are making it together, but I'm doing it alone and bringing everyone with me. So yeah, it makes it harder trying to achieve that goal.

This next participant discusses not being able to apply for medical school even though she had the grades and felt that she worked harder than her peers to pay for school due to a lack of financial resources before she got DACA.

> I had started my first year of college…and having to pay twice as much and not being able to apply for any scholarships and all of that. I had to work more… It's like, you know, you're as good as your peers, and you've worked three times more…

Shut Out the News & Social Media - DACA Recipients

During the 2016 campaign and eventual presidency of Donald Trump, there were hateful messages, anti-immigrant rhetoric, and news outlets perpetuating hurtful stereotypes and

misinformation about immigrants. Unfortunately, some of that rhetoric was aimed at DACA recipients and negatively impacted DACA recipients of this study. As a result, they stopped paying attention to the news and social media to protect their mental health from the hateful commentary on the news and comments on social media.

Additionally, due to DACA's current legal challenges, the anti-immigrant sentiment continues on both news outlets and social media today. Finally, anti-immigrant rhetoric contributes to the negative stigma that DACA recipients have endured over the past several years and, as a result, perpetuates legal violence.

Below are DACA recipients who discuss how they have coped with the DACA program being challenged and what elimination of it means for them.

> Whenever I see an article about that, I kind of skim through it. If it's something positive, then I'd read it more in-depth. But if it's something that's just going to make me crumble, I don't… it's you're just worrying all the time. You're with your brain. You're this. Trying to, I guess, work it in your head, like all these different scenarios that could go wrong, and then kind of think, OK, so if it gets taken out. What's next? Yeah, it's challenging; it's a struggle.

This participant discusses DACA during the Trump administration and his coping strategies. Additionally, he explains how social media harmed his mental well-being.

> I knew DACA was in danger of being removed. But during those four years, it really did impact me to the point where even on Facebook, people felt free to, you know, start talking bad about it...I was seeing that a lot on Facebook, and that actually caused me to just get rid of Facebook altogether just because it got to a point where it was just nothing but negativity, and I couldn't deal with it. So, I got rid of Facebook and did my own research… they were speaking in a general manner, you know, oh DACA, to go back home or they should just get rid of it. It's in a general manner, so I know they're not naming me, but at that same time, they're talking about me… so yes, it was hard. So, I decided to shut it all out. In a way, that was my way of therapy. It was having a negative impact on my life.

Another DACA recipient stopped watching the news because of how harmful it had been for her to watch anti-immigrant sentiment.

> I don't think it helps. I also don't watch TV lately. I don't know, but it's like how that impacted me in the past. It's like what the media has to say or what's in the news, especially when it has been harmful; I try not to watch.

Finding Alternatives Non-DACA Recipients

Non-DACA recipients in the study discussed their thoughts about not having legal status and how dwelling on it and the possible negative consequences did not help them. Dwelling on their precarious legal situation would not allow them to live a life where they could be productive and provide for themselves and their loved ones. Therefore, participants describe finding alternatives to work as a way to cope with their legal status.

This participant discusses finding a way to provide for his family after graduating high school and being unable to pursue higher education. He describes a mental bar and finding ways around the system.

> Well, I guess you like mentally put a barrier, so it doesn't really bother you. You know, you just can't. So it's, I guess, you start growing a mental bar… And, you know, we say that you shouldn't let it bum you out… But there's always a way around it. I know that they say, no, we can't. But there's one in a million ways to do things…you always find a way to work around it.

This next participant discusses being unable to register a car under his name because he does not have a social security number. And therefore, finding a way around the system to register his car.

> And it is difficult to even get a license plate for your car. I know it's those things that are probably not legal to achieve for me, but you have to find a way to go around it. Pretty much those things aren't so simple if you were illegal.

Lastly, this participant discusses her emotional reaction and alternatives to moving forward after finding out she cannot attend cosmetology school because of her legal status.

> …I was just mad. I said, just because I don’t have a social, I'm not going to do that anymore. I didn't care about doing that anymore because I thought I just had to do something else because I did like styling hair, but when I realized I couldn't do that to make a living out of, I didn't want to do it anymore. I wanted to focus on what I could or thought I could do.

Advocacy

Advocacy was another way for participants to cope with the implications of their legal status. Advocacy to the participants was joining immigrant community groups that provide support. Additionally, some participants discussed raising awareness within their friend group as their form of advocacy. Lastly, this study's participants saw their participation as a form of advocacy to spread awareness of the hardships immigrants who do not have legal status in the U.S. experience.

The following two participants are DACA recipients and describe their experience educating their friends and others about their legal status.

> I feel like they make up this story in their head, but they don't actually know the struggles that we face to become a legal citizen of the US because there's so much that they don't know. So, my friends, I was telling them I have a permit. And then they asked, well, why don't you just become a resident or citizen? So they go straight to citizenship like, well, why don't you become a citizen? And it's like, no, and we're good friends. I didn't take it bad. And like this is why, you know, and I explain it to them. And then they're like, I didn't know any of that. So the way they think about it changes. So I feel like people kind of need to learn that, you know, like the process of how to even get DACA, the struggles that people face to even get a permit.

Another DACA recipient discusses her experiences educating her peers about the importance of DACA.

> I feel like I've always tried to explain to my peers in a way that they know who I am and that DACA is super important. But then, I also don't want them to feel sorry for me. And that is a small line. Like, let me educate you, but I don't need your pity. And if you want to debate and talk about this. Yes. And if you have heard this in the news, and even though you already know the person that I am, and my ethics and everything. And you still have your opinion; I don't need your pity. That's not what I want. I want them to know so we can educate and inform them about things happening. Not what they see, sometimes on fox news.

This DACA recipient discussed his experience with joining a DREAMER's club in his local community. The participant shared that before the club, he was taught not to say anything

about his status, and after joining the group, he did not feel like he had to hide his status anymore.

> As far as immigration goes, my parents would tell us not to talk about it. But once I got to college, I learned about a Dreamers club they had. Of course, this was also once we had DACA, so, of course, people felt more comfortable about sharing that. You know, when you're around people who are willing to share it. And maybe they have DACA themselves, or they knew someone in their family that has it, you know, they're encouraging everybody to kind of stick together. And, of course, at that point, I didn't feel like I needed to hide it. But that's because of those events.

Lastly, this non-DACA participant was thankful for the opportunity to participate in this study and help raise awareness of the traumas the immigrant population endures because of U.S. immigration policies.

> When I found out that you were doing this, I wanted to talk to you. I said, 'You know what? That sounds like something she's going to share with other people.' Thank you for asking me to do this because it's awareness. It's not just about people. It's just about traumas, being left out, and feeling excluded from everybody and the system. Thank you for giving me that opportunity.

Helping My Family Financially

For the participants in this study, helping their families financially was one of the most important aspects of their lives. Unfortunately, due to legal violence that does not grant all immigrants the right to work legally, there are limited job opportunities. As a result, participants expressed giving back to their families and caring for them is essential.

This non-DACA participant expresses concerns about leaving his family in the U.S. to pursue education in Mexico. Additionally, he explains how he has taken on the role of head of the household because he is the eldest son.

> I have to help them out in the ways that I can give them, but not the ways that I should. So my mom is with us, and I'm the oldest one. So, I'm basically like the head of the family. I'm supposed to be the one that takes care of them. I can't in the way I want to because of my status…my dad always told me, why don't you want to come and study here in Mexico? There is this really good school. You can stay with me. You already know English, and you're really smart. But that is also

> me having to leave my brother, sister, and my mom here. And they also need me in a way because I pay most of the bills.

This DACA participant reflects on the lack of opportunities his parents will have once they hit retirement age. Due to their legal status, they will not qualify for the benefits Americans over 65 receive. In addition, the participant discusses his plans to care for his parents financially.

> They are getting older, and obviously, they can't have a retirement plan like most typical Americans do… hopefully you know I can help retire them. That way, I can make enough to support them and myself. I think I've told them in the past about it. I don't say it anymore. They just know that hey, I gonna be able to provide for you; just give me time. That way, I can build myself…

Additionally, this participant discusses her gratitude for her mom and that now she can care for her.

> I think it's great, and it's being able to.... how do you say this? Just being able to take care of my parents. Like Giving back to the person who took care of me, now let me take care of you. It is very rewarding… it's like this, it's okay if you don't want to work or if you do work. My mom does not stay still. But if you ever just want to relax, it's okay. You don't have to work. So yeah, it's been very rewarding.

Summary

Legal violence is evident in the lives of the participants of this study. Both DACA and non-DACA recipients have endured the consequences of the immigration laws in the U.S. and the stigma that follows immigrants. Legal violence in the participants' lives is demonstrated through their struggles with integration and the fear of deportation. Additionally, DACA recipients experience an emotional response to DACA's current legal challenges. Also, because of the consequences of legal violence, participants found ways to cope with their precarious legal statuses. Finally, participants are helping their families financially because of limited opportunities for upward mobility.

Chapter Six: Discussion

The first aim of this qualitative study was to explore and compare the mental health experiences of DACA recipients and non-DACA recipients. Secondly, this research aimed to determine how DACA's legal challenges have impacted the mental health experiences of current DACA recipients. Previous literature indicates DACA recipients and non-recipients experience fear of deportation, familial separation, and challenges to integrating into American society. Therefore, the questions created for the eight qualitative interviews were to help elicit responses about fear of deportation and how the inability to integrate into society has impacted their mental health. Additionally, questions were to produce responses about their personal legal status and DACA's current legal challenges. The following sections will discuss the study's findings, strengths and limitations, and implications for social work practice, policy, and research.

Five main themes were identified in this research. Themes include integration, fear of deportation, emotional response to DACA, coping, and helping my family financially. The themes are discussed through the legal violence framework to bring to light the negative consequences of the immigration system in the U.S.

Themes Through the Legal Violence Framework

Legal violence is the culmination of punitive immigration laws, the enforcement of those laws, and the negative stigmatization of immigrants in the U.S. (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012). Legal violence is seen in the lives of the study's participants through the immigration system, which makes accessing legal status challenging with a lengthy and expensive application process (Torres et al., 2018). For example, Menjivar and Abrego (2016) interview Josefina (pseudonym), who arrived in the U.S. in 1993. At the time of the interview in 2010, Josefina was still one year

short of citizenship eligibility because her legal resident application took over a decade to finalize.

Additionally, the immigration system does not provide the means for upward mobility simply because immigrants were not born in the U.S., and laws inhibit their integration into society and cause emotional distress. Laws such as the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act bar immigrants for 5-10 years from reentry to the U.S. after deportation (Torres et al., 2018). Additionally, because DACA is a temporary relief and does not provide a pathway to citizenship, recipients risk deportation and losing the life they built because of DACA.

As a result of legal violence, participants experienced chronic stress, fear, and worry. The cause of these emotional responses was due to struggles to integrate into society through education, employment, and socialization. Additionally, chronic stress, fear, and worry were seen in DACA recipients when asked about DACA's current legal challenges and the prospect of their deportation to a country they don't remember. Non-DACA recipients experienced this emotional response when thinking about their possible deportation and familial separation. Finally, the enforcement of the laws was seen by participants through personal experiences or others' experiences. Therefore, fear was tied to local law enforcement and ICE officials known to enforce laws and carry out raids (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012).

This study found that when comparing the mental health experiences of DACA recipients and non-DACA recipients, they experienced the same emotional distress through chronic stress, fear, and worry. The difference was what caused the emotional distress in each group. For example, due to not having legal status, non-DACA recipients had limited access to educational and employment opportunities and feared deportation and being separated from their families.

By contrast, DACA recipients experienced emotional distress because of their temporary protection. DACA recipients have to renew their permits every two years, and they expressed worry and stress about their permits potentially being denied. Participants also discussed what it would mean if their DACA permits were rejected. For example, they discussed the possibility of being deported back to a country they left as children and leaving the life they have created in the U.S. and the fear that causes them. They also discussed worry about not having a job and what that meant for their financial responsibilities. Therefore, each group of participants experienced chronic stress, worry, and fear due to the consequences of legal violence because either they did not have legal status (non-recipients) or were temporarily lawfully present (DACA recipients).

This study also aimed to determine how DACA's current legal status impacts the mental health of DACA recipients. The DACA participants of this study reported an emotional response to DACA. First, DACA recipients reported an improvement in their well-being upon receiving DACA. Participants discussed feelings of isolation, being limited, and the fear they experienced due to legal violence before DACA. However, after receiving DACA and experiencing the benefits of a temporary status, 75% of recipients reported feeling open to others and making friends. Additionally, all four DACA recipients reported improved quality of life because they could work for higher wages. Finally, 75% of recipients discussed having the opportunity to live a normal life and spend intimate family time without the fear of being exposed and vulnerable to possible deportation.

Second, DACA participants reported that the legal challenges to DACA threatened their new life and improved well-being. The legal challenges to DACA attempt to get rid of the program on the basis that it was not lawfully created because it was an executive order (Totenberg, 2020). These legal challenges to DACA are a form of legal violence because, if

successful, they would leave recipients subject to the previous challenges they faced without legal status before DACA.

In previous literature, DACA recipients showed chronic stress, worry, and fear about their family's deportation rather than their own. However, this study shows that emotional distress has now shifted toward fear of their own deportation and losing the life they created because of the benefits of DACA. Therefore, if DACA is rescinded, its recipients have a lot to lose, which could decrease their well-being and further deteriorate their mental health.

Due to legal violence, immigrants without legal status have limited job opportunities, and their upward mobility is restrained (Abrego & Lakhani, 2015; Menjivar & Abrego, 2012). The participants of this study experienced this limitation. For example, participants felt it was their responsibility and a way to give back to their families to help them financially. Therefore, 6 out of 8 participants contributed significant financial help for their family's expenses. Additionally, one participant described building a retirement fund for their parents because their parents will not have the same retirement opportunities as those with legal status. Finally, another participant reported giving back to their parents financially and giving them the option not to work as they are closer to retirement age.

Throughout their negative mental health experiences, the participants of this study have developed coping strategies to help them move forward despite the consequences of legal violence. Participants reported working harder than the norm because of their legal status in order to obtain their goals. For example, 75% of non-recipients worked multiple jobs to save more money, and 50% of DACA recipients worked as much as they could to build wealth in the two years before their permits expired.

Additionally, due to the increased anti-immigrant rhetoric in recent years, DACA recipients had to cut out social media and news outlets. This increase in negative stigmatization toward immigrants perpetuates legal violence by normalizing the harsh treatment immigrants receive and the punitive immigration laws created. Furthermore, non-DACA recipients coped with the social systems of the U.S. by finding alternative ways to work and provide for themselves and their families. Finally, 62% of participants chose advocacy to cope and educate others on DACA and its importance and raise awareness of the negative mental health experiences immigrants endure.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. First, the intended number of participants was twelve. However, the researcher encountered challenges with scammers and bots at the recruitment stage of the research and had to discard fake data reducing the total number of participants by four. A screening process should be created for future replication of the study. Second, the participants of the study all identified as Hispanic/Latinx. While gathering data from this population is essential, it does not allow for a full representation of other immigrant groups, particularly those from Northwest Arkansas (NWA), e.g., Asian Pacific Islanders, Chinese, African immigrants, etc.

Additionally, there was a lack of representation of other languages. For example, the consent forms, interview guides, and recruitment flyers were only created in English and Spanish. Therefore, the lack of language representation could have contributed to the lack of representation of other immigrant groups in the study. Finally, as the researcher, I have a bias because I share the same identities and similar experiences with the immigration system as the

participants. Although measures were taken to address my biases, there is still a potential that they could have influenced the research process.

Strengths

One of the strengths of this research is that it contributes to the growing studies of the NWA immigrant population. The immigrant population in NWA has increased in the past several years. For example, from 2017 to 2022, there was a 1.4 % increase in the immigrant population in NWA (Northwest Arkansas Council, n.d.). Therefore, more research is needed to investigate the experiences of immigrants in this region. Additionally, it is essential to determine the experiences of immigrants with policies in a conservative state like Arkansas.

Another strength of this study is that it focuses on a geographical region not typically studied involving immigrants. Most research is concentrated in California, Arizona, Texas, etc. This research helps contribute to a more representative depiction of immigrants across the U.S. Finally, this study focuses on how policy impacts the mental health experiences of DACA and non-DACA recipients, particularly how the current legal challenges to DACA are affecting the mental health of its recipients.

Implications

One of the values the social work profession promotes is social justice (National Association of Social Workers [NASW] Code of Ethics, 2023). Social workers challenge social injustice by pursuing social change for vulnerable and oppressed populations. Another social work value is the dignity and worth of a person (NASW Code of Ethics, 2023). This ethical principle means that social workers are to treat individuals with care and respect, remembering cultural and ethnic diversity (NASW Code of Ethics, 2023).

Additionally, by respecting the dignity and worth of a person, social workers also respect the self-determination of individuals and support them while they make decisions that will empower and enrich their lives. Therefore, social workers should apply these values and ethical principles to working with and advocating for the immigrant population in the U.S.

Practice Implications

A common occurrence described by 62% of participants was their encounters with school teachers and counselors who encouraged them to seek higher education. However, encouragement to go to college is all they received. The lack of knowledge from their high school staff speaks to the need for education on this vulnerable population. Therefore, school social workers must educate themselves on this diverse population and the barriers they face after high school. Additionally, school social workers need to research and help connect immigrant youth to appropriate resources.

These resources should include scholarships immigrant youth qualify for regardless of legal status, help with filling out a college application, and connection with immigration attorneys to help them explore legal options. An immigration attorney is essential to consult with because of the many nuances that each immigration case entails; immigrant youth may qualify for options they did not know. By providing these resources to immigrant youth and educating themselves, social workers respect the dignity and worth, and self-determination of immigrants.

Policy Implications

In February 2023, the Development Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was reintroduced to the Senate. The DREAM Act would provide nearly two million Dreamers, including the roughly 600,000 DACA recipients, the right to remain and work in the U.S. (National Immigration Forum, 2023). Ultimately, the DREAM Act would provide a

pathway to citizenship and address the concerns participants of the study have regarding their legal status. Therefore, social workers need to call, write, lobby, and advocate for social justice by supporting the DREAM Act and this historically marginalized and oppressed population.

Research Implications

While there is a growing amount of research surrounding DACA recipients, there is not a lot on non-DACA recipients. Immigrants are a hard-to-reach population because of the fear they experience of being deported; they shut themselves out. However, future researchers should partner with trusted local agencies to help gain the trust of potential participants. In doing so, social workers will show respect for the dignity and self-determination of participants.

Additionally, by partnering with local agencies, there will be more opportunities to explore the differences between DACA and non-DACA recipients to determine how immigration policy impacts them and how reform could impact their mental health. Finally, since DACA is temporary, future research should focus on the liminal status of other programs, such as TPS (temporary protective status), to determine the effectiveness of temporary statuses.

Conclusion

Immigrant children who grow up in the U.S. without legal status are known as Dreamers. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program was meant to help them integrate into U.S. society, but not all Dreamers qualified for this program. Additionally, DACA's legality is constantly and currently being challenged by federal courts and states. Previous literature shows that DACA and non-DACA recipients endure negative mental health experiences due to legal violence, not allowing them legal status to help integrate into society and protect them from deportation.

Furthermore, this qualitative study found that participants struggled with chronic stress, worry, and fear. However, when comparing the mental health experiences of DACA and non-DACA recipients, they only differed in what was causing the chronic emotional distress. In addition, the study found that the improved well-being DACA recipients have experienced is under threat due to the legal challenges of DACA. Finally, this study leaves implications for school social workers practicing with this population, for which policy to advocate, and where to focus future research.

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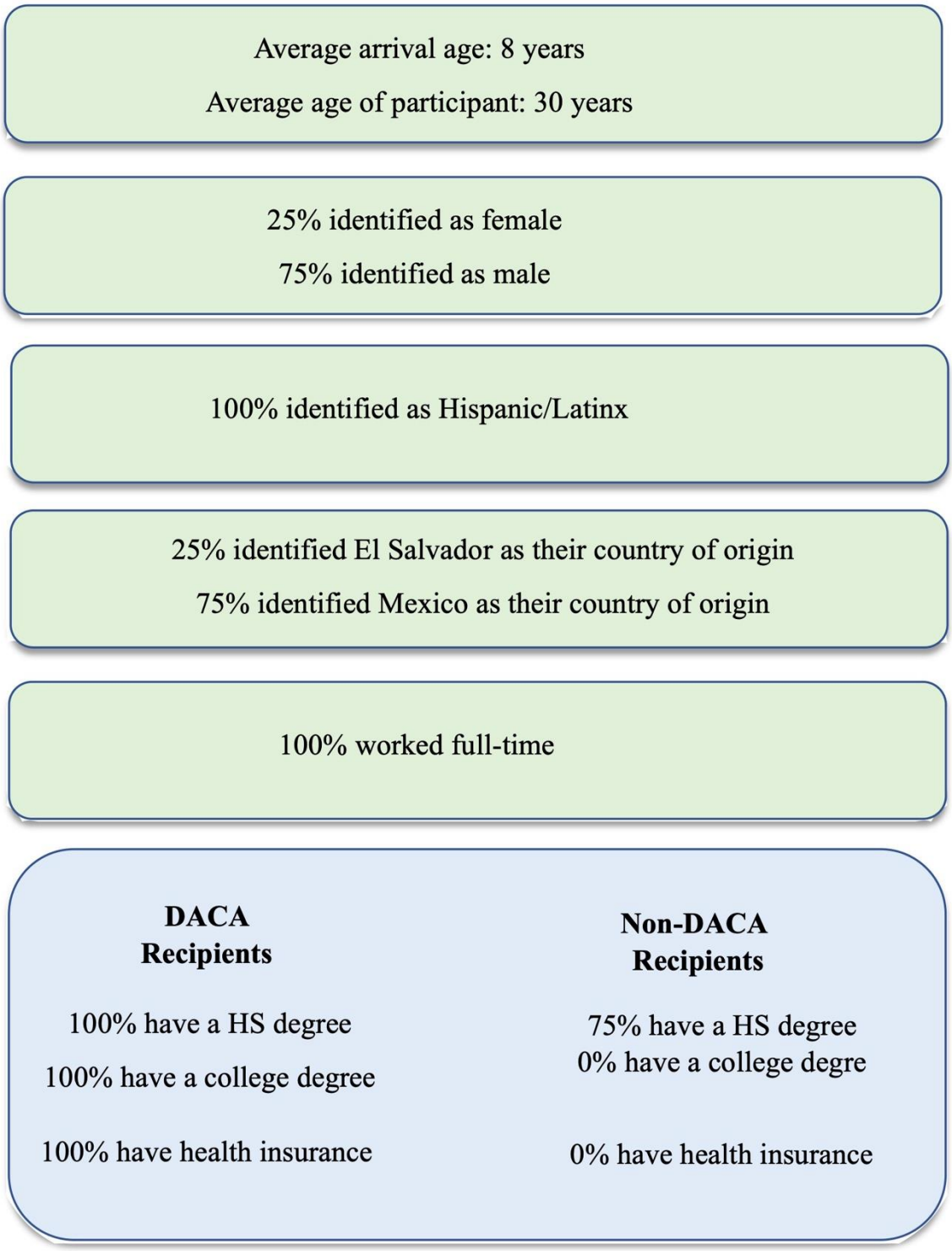
Appendix A: Participant Demographics



Note. HS = High School

Appendix B: Interview Guides

Interview Guide – DACA Recipients

Demographics

1. How old are you?
    a. How old were you when you immigrated to the U.S
2. What are your race and ethnicity?
3. What is your gender identity? (Female, male, transgender, non-binary/non-confirming, etc.)
4. What is your country of origin?
5. What is your employment status?
6. What is your student status?
7. Are you insured or uninsured?
8. Are you DACA-eligible? If not, do you not qualify or cannot apply under DACA's blocked status?

Interview Questions

1. Has DACA allowed you to participate in U.S. society (work, school, driver's license, buying a home, etc.)?
    i. And how has it affected your experiences with mental health in terms of depression, anxiety, stress, alcohol and substance use, or trauma?
2. As a DACA recipient, what, if any, are the worries that you experience?
    i. Ex: family needs, family deportation, employment, etc.
3. Before DACA, did you experience feelings of being left out or feeling like an outsider? If so, can you please describe your feelings?
    i. Have you experienced these feelings since having DACA? Please explain.
4. How has receiving DACA impacted your mental well-being, if at all?
    i. Please explain why or why not.
    ii. How do you think receiving DACA would change your mental well-being, if at all?
5. Have you ever had a negative experience accessing mental, medical, or dental healthcare due to your immigration/documentation status?
    i. Has receiving DACA improved your experience in accessing care?
        i. Do you feel hesitant to disclose personal information to healthcare staff?
6. What concerns or thoughts do you have about DACA's current status? (Explain the federal judge's challenge on DACA and the pending decision from the circuit court).
7. How are you and your mental health affected by DACA's current status?
    i. Please explain.
    ii. What would it mean for you if DACA was determined unlawful?
8. What do you think has changed most since receiving DACA?
    i. Please explain.
9. Do you feel a sense of belongingness after receiving DACA?

i. Please explain.

10. What vulnerabilities do you experience being a DACA recipient?

i. Please explain how the vulnerabilities impact your mental health.

11. What challenges did you face in transitioning into adulthood? (e.g., employment, driver's license, school, etc.)

i. How do you think DACA helped or did not help?

ii. How do you think DACA would help or not?

12. At what point in your life did you realize you did not have the same opportunities as your U.S. citizen peers? How did this impact your mental health?

i. Are there any long-term mental health needs due to a lack of opportunities?

13. Before DACA, did you ever experience financial stress or feel you were a financial burden to your family?

i. If so, has DACA helped with those feelings or not?

14. Has DACA allowed you to help support your family financially? What are your thoughts and feelings about supporting your family financially?

15. At any point in your life, did you feel that you had to hide your immigration status from your peers or other adults like teachers?

i. If so, please explain the feelings or thoughts that you experienced.

ii. How has receiving DACA changed this, if at all?

iii.

Interview Guide – Non-DACA Recipients

Demographics

1. How old are you?

a. How old were you when you immigrated to the U.S

2. What are your race and ethnicity?

3. What is your gender identity? (Female, male, transgender, non-binary/non-confirming, etc.)

4. What is your country of origin?

5. What is your employment status?

6. What is your student status?

7. Are you insured or uninsured?

8. Are you DACA-eligible? If not, do you not qualify or cannot apply under DACA's blocked status?

Interview Questions

1. Has not having DACA affected your ability to integrate into U.S. society (work, school, driver's license, buying a home, etc.)?

i. And how has it affected your experiences with mental health in terms of depression, anxiety, stress, alcohol and substance use, or trauma?

2. As a non-DACA recipient, what, if any, are the worries that you experience?

1. i. Ex: family needs, family deportation, employment, etc.

3. As a non-DACA recipient, have you ever experienced feelings of being left out or feeling like an outsider? If so, can you please describe your feelings?

2. i. How do you think DACA would change those feelings?

4. How do you think receiving DACA would impact your mental well-being, if at all?

3. i. Please explain why or why not?

5. Have you ever had a negative experience accessing mental, medical, or dental healthcare due to your immigration/documentation status?

i. How do you think DACA would improve your experience in accessing care?
ii. Do you feel hesitant to disclose personal information to healthcare staff?

6. What concerns or thoughts do you have about DACA's current status? (Explain the federal judge's challenge on DACA and the pending decision from the circuit court).

7. How are you and your mental health affected by DACA's current status?
- **i.** Please explain.
- **ii.** What would it mean for you if DACA was determined unlawful?

8. What do you think could change upon receiving DACA
- **i.** Please explain.

9. How has your immigration status impacted your sense of belongingness?
- **i.** Please explain.

10. What vulnerabilities do you experience being a non-DACA recipient?
- **i.** Please explain how the vulnerabilities impact your mental health.

11. What challenges did you face in transitioning into adulthood? (e.g., employment, driver's license, school, etc.)
- i. How do you think DACA would help or not?

12. At what point in your life did you realize you did not have the same opportunities as your U.S. citizen peers? How did this impact your mental health?
- **i.** Are there any long-term mental health needs due to a lack of opportunities?

13. As a non-DACA recipient, do you ever experience financial stress or feel you are a burden to your family?
- **i.** If so, how do you think DACA would help with these feelings or not

14. How do you think DACA would allow you to support your family financially? What are your thoughts and feelings about supporting your family financially?

15. At any point in your life, did you feel that you had to hide your immigration status from your peers or other adults like teachers?
- **i.** If so, please explain the feelings or thoughts that you experienced.
- **ii.** How do you think receiving DACA would change this, if at all?

Appendix C: IRB Approval

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

To:	Lizeth Ariana Guadalupe
From:	Douglas J Adams, Chair IRB Expedited Review
Date:	12/21/2022
Action:	**Expedited Approval**
Action Date:	12/21/2022
Protocol #:	2209421928
Study Title:	Mental Health Experiences of DACA recipients and non-recipients
Expiration Date:	10/13/2023
Last Approval Date:	

The above-referenced protocol has been approved following expedited review by the IRB Committee that oversees research with human subjects.

If the research involves collaboration with another institution then the research cannot commence until the Committee receives written notification of approval from the collaborating institution's IRB.

It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without Committee approval. Please submit continuation requests early enough to allow sufficient time for review. Failure to receive approval for continuation before the expiration date will result in the automatic suspension of the approval of this protocol. Information collected following suspension is unapproved research and cannot be reported or published as research data. If you do not wish continued approval, please notify the Committee of the study closure.

Adverse Events: Any serious or unexpected adverse event must be reported to the IRB Committee within 48 hours. All other adverse events should be reported within 10 working days.

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of this study, such as the procedures, the consent forms, study personnel, or number of participants, please submit an amendment to the IRB. All changes must be approved by the IRB Committee before they can be initiated.

You must maintain a research file for at least 3 years after completion of the study. This file should include all correspondence with the IRB Committee, original signed consent forms, and study data.

cc: LaShawnda Fields, Key Personnel
Mark P Plassmeyer, Key Personnel
Ananda E Rosa, Key Personnel