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# Assessing Social Integration of African Refugee Students Resettled in Abilene Texas: A Comparative Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to assess perceived social and cultural integration among African refugee students participating in the IRC's youth programs and those students who do not. The study looks at refugee students from a local high school in a small rural town. The sample population ( $n=20$ ) were from four different Sub-Saharan African countries: Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tanzania. The data were collected using an online survey that consisted of two scales, one for measuring social support and one for measuring acculturation. An Independent Samples  $t$ -test analysis was run to compare the IRC participants and the non-IRC participant scores. Results show that IRC participants have slightly higher social support and social integration while non-participants have slightly higher marginalization, separation, and assimilation scores. Although there is a small means difference, results show no significance.

Assessing Social Integration of African Refugee Students Resettled in Abilene Texas: A  
Comparative Analysis

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of School of Social Work

Abilene Christian University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

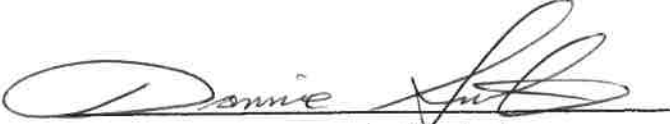
By

Hayven Tudman

May 2019

This thesis, directed and approved by the committee for the thesis candidate Hayven Tudman, has been accepted by the Office of Graduate Programs of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Science in Social Work

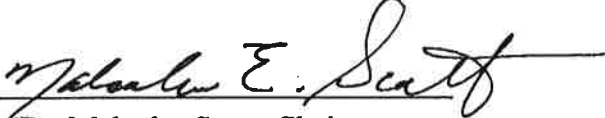


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Derran Reese

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my students at the International Rescue Committee.

You all have made this year so wonderful and worthwhile. I appreciate all the grace, compassion and encouragement I have received from all of you this year. You allowed me to teach you about my culture and learn about yours, all without judgment or frustration. It has truly been a blessing to teach and mentor you as you grow more into who you are. I love how you guys are unapologetically you and you hold yourselves with pride. Thank you for everything.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

**Introduction**

The painful realities of national and international conflict are likely most evident in the severity of human suffering. While it is true the cost in loss of human life can be catastrophic, loss of life is not the only measurable tragedy deserving of attention. The trauma and impact of tribal conflict, cultural and class warfare, natural disasters, and humanitarian crises often displace hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of families and children annually.

In recent years, the displacement of families and children resulting from scarce resources and conflict has also caused an increase in men, women, and children fleeing from their native countries. Current international estimates report that there are millions of people who have been forced to leave their homes, homelands, and communities, and are now displaced (Capps, Newland, & Fratzke, 2015). According to a recent United Nations report (2017) 68.5 million people were forcibly displaced from their homes by the end of 2017.

While many countries have experienced mixed reactions from religious, cultural and political groups on opening their borders and accepting refugees into their countries, the United Nations (2017) also reported that more than 24,550 men, women, and children were resettled as refugees in the United States. With thousands of refugees being resettled

into the United States, there are many questions and concerns about their integration and adaptation into the new culture in which they are immersed.

After resettlement in the United States there are some common challenges that many refugees encounter. These challenges may include language barriers, post-traumatic stress, cultural differences and trying to adapt to a new culture in a short amount of time (Stewart, Simich, & Shizha, 2012). Alongside many of these challenges, children are faced with additional challenges and barriers that keep them from excelling in their new receiving countries. Some of the challenges that these students face are due to minimal, if any, experiences with formal schooling, little to no English proficiency, and discrimination and social isolation (Brooker & Dodds, 2017). Although the majority of children struggle with these challenges, the degree of social integration still varies from student to student. There are many factors and reasons why each individual student's grades, integration, and highest level of education they attain differs. One key factor is social support. Research has shown social support improves overall performance and well-being of a person (Nurullah, 2012).

### **Problem Statement**

Though research indicates that social support improves the overall well-being of an individual, there has been little research analyzing whether or not social support groups for refugee students improve their feeling of social integration (Stewart, Simich, & Shizha, 2012). Because there is a lack of research, it is hard to know whether programs such as the International Rescue Committee's youth program have helped in improving the overall social integration for the refugee students they serve. The problem at hand is

the social/cultural isolation of African refugee students, and currently there is no program evaluation for the social support intervention, which is the IRC social support program.

### **Overarching Questions**

Some of the overarching questions that come up during this study are:

- What is the impact of IRC programs on African refugee students' perceived social integration as measured by the Social Support Scales (SSS) and the Acculturation Scale for Chinese Migrant Children (ASCMC)?
- Are program participants' scores for social support and social integration higher compared to non-program participants?

### **Research Gap**

There are many research gaps within the study of refugee education, but the research gap within the IRC is that there has been no research or program evaluation. There has also been little to no research over the perceived social support and social integration levels of refugee students who are resettled by the IRC

### **Purpose of Study**

The main purpose of this study is to explore whether high school students with refugee status who participate in social support programs such as the IRC youth program have higher levels of social integration and social support than non-participant refugees as measured by the Social Support Scales (SSS) and the Acculturation Scale for Chinese Migrant Children (ASCMC).

## **Significance of Study**

This research will provide the IRC with insight on whether its Student Academic Readiness (STAR) youth program is helping improve refugee students' perceived social integration based on the Social Support Scales (SSS) and the Acculturation Scale for Chinese Migrant Children (ASCMC) compared to student refugees who do not currently participate in IRC youth programs. If the data provides evidence that there is no difference in integration levels it could illustrate that the youth programs need to provide better social support services to the students, or it could be that many of the student refugees receive social support in a variety of ways outside of the IRC which were informal.

## **Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this study the following key terms and definitions help to ground the study, provide clarity and establish for the reader a base-line for basic understanding and use in this context.

**Acculturation-** Acculturation is when a person combines different elements from their old culture with elements from the new culture (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936).

**Culture Shock-** Culture shock is when an individual recognizes the difference between values and customs between their home culture and the new culture they are residing in. Often these individuals experience feeling of anxiety, confusion and homesickness.

*(Culture Shock, 2014).*

**Ecological Systems Theory-** Ecological systems theory

looks at a child's development within the context of the system of relationships that form his or her environment. Bronfenbrenner's theory defines complex

“layers” of environment, each having an effect on a child’s development. This theory has recently been renamed “bioecological systems theory” to emphasize that a child’s own biology is a primary environment fueling her development. The interaction between factors in the child’s maturing biology, his immediate family/community environment, and the societal landscape fuels and steers his development. Changes or conflict in any one layer will ripple throughout other layers. (Hopson, Schiller, & Lawson, 2014, p. 197)

**Refugee-** A refugee is an alien outside the United States who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country because of well-founded fear of persecution. Claims of persecution must be based on race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group or political opinion (Immigration and Naturalization Services, 1997)

**Resettlement-** Refugee resettlement is the selection and transfer of refugees from a state in which they have sought protection to a third State that has agreed to admit them with permanent residence status and an opportunity to naturalize (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2011).

**Social Support-** Social support is defined as “the emotional, physical, informational, instrumental and material aid and assistance provided by others to maintain health and well-being, promote adaptations to life events, and foster development in an adaptive manner” (Dunst, Snyder, & Mankinen, 1988, p. 102).

**Social Integration-** Social integration is defined by Toseland, Jones and Gellis (2004) as “how members fit together and are accepted in a group” (Toseland, Jones, & Gellis, 2004, p. 18).



**Sociocultural Theory-** Sociocultural theory emphasizes the connection of social and individual processes in the formulation of knowledge. Vygotsky's framework states that the learning and development of a person happens through social sources of individual development, semiotic (signs and symbols, especially language) mediation in human development, and genetic (developmental) analysis (Mahn & Steiner, 1996).

**Theory of Acculturation-** The theory of acculturation states that contact, and participation taken together, result in four possible acculturation outcomes. The one that is accepted by the individual is dependent upon how the individual reacts to circumstances and reconciles the conflict between the two cultures. Integration, assimilation, separation/segregation, and marginalization are the different ways in which an immigrant may attempt to resolve the challenge of entering the dominant culture (Berry, 1997).

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review was conducted to explore previous research on refugee resettlement barriers and challenges, as well as social barriers and the effects of social support. It also looks at research on social support and its correlation to social integration to provide an understanding if social support programs have previously shown evidence of supporting social integration.

Research was gathered through two search engines: EBSCO Information System and Google Scholar. The articles were limited to peer-reviewed scholarly articles, written for academic journals. The search terms included “refugee,” “refugee resettlement,” “social support,” “education,” “social integration,” “African refugees,” “support groups,” “refugees and social support,” “refugees and social integration,” “social theory,” and “acculturation theory”.

#### **Resettlement and Barriers**

The resettlement process for refugees is a time of high turbulence and uncertainty (Fazel, Reed, Panter-Brick, & Stein, 2012). Upon arrival in their new host country, refugees are entering a whole new culture. When immersed into this new culture, refugees face many challenges that often lead to social isolation (Stewart, et al., 2012). Some of these common factors that present challenges to refugees upon arrival are language barriers, culture shock, and mental health issues (Drummond et al., 2011, Ellis,

et al., 2010, Kok, et. al., 2017). Refugee youth struggle with these same issues and are expected to integrate not only into society but also into their new school system at a fast rate (Hart, 2009). This can be difficult when there are many barriers and challenges that inhibit social integration, more difficult than research has already shown it is for minorities in general (Seaton, Gee, & Neblett, 2018). Due to these barriers, any refugees are left feeling isolated and socially alienated (Beiser & Hou, 2006). This makes it even more difficult for refugees to build strong social networks (Lawrence & Kearns, 2005, Stewart, 2008). Social networks and strong social support have proven to reduce many of the post-migration challenges that keep refugees, especially students, from integrating into their communities, as well as increase their overall sense of well-being (Ikiz & Cakar, 2010).

### **Language**

Language is one of the greatest barriers when refugee youth are resettled and immersed into the school system (Brooker, Lawrence, & Dodds, 2017). This barrier makes it hard for students of refugee status to advance in any area of the school system, not just socially. Due to lack of English proficiency students find it difficult to communicate with peers and teachers, which leads to social isolation and makes the adaptation process strenuous (Hebbani, 2010). This in effect leaves them isolated and alone, and with language barriers, it makes it quite difficult for a refugee to build social networks among the people in their host country.

### **Culture Shock**

Culture shock is another barrier that keeps refugees from successfully integrating into their host country (Drummond et al., 2011; Ellis et al., 2010). Culture shock is

defined as a disorientation or a transition shock (Furnham, 2010). Culture shock happens among refugees when, once received into a new culture, they notice the differences between the two cultures. Culture shock is one of the many challenges refugees face that produces negative consequences for their overall well-being. Cognitive, emotional and physiological symptoms are among a long list of symptoms that are induced by culture shock (Furnham, 2010). Many of these symptoms that are consequently effects of culture shock often lead to social alienation among many refugees, which as a result, hinders their integration into their new host country (Slonim & Regev, 2016).

### **Mental Health**

One of the many challenges that refugee youth are faced with are complications with their mental health that make adaptation to the new culture difficult (Drummond et al., 2011; Ellis et al., 2010). Among refugee youth, there are various other mental health disorders. Some of the disorders that are commonly developed among refugees include PTSD, anxiety, depression, psychosomatic disorders, and grief-related disorders (Schweitzer, Melville, Steel, & Lacherez, 2006). Many refugees develop mental health disorders due to experiences from pre-migration and, at times, even experiences after post-migration (Acquaye, 2017).

The most common diagnosis among refugees is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD; Perry, 2002). PTSD is a clinical diagnosis in the American Psychological Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.; *DSM-5*, 2013), which occurs in an individual after experiencing a traumatic event that causes serious injury, threat of death. During this experience, the person has an intensified fear or helplessness (American Psychological Association, 2013). PTSD usually results in

many symptoms that are reactions to the traumatic event. Some of these symptoms include re-experiencing the trauma, flashbacks, avoiding any signs or events that are linked to the traumatic event, and usually results in alterations of the person's mood and concentration (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). PTSD has been found to be higher among children than adult refugees (Perry, 2002)

PTSD brings about many symptoms, which, in turn, produce more negative effects, providing more risk to refugees successfully resettling (Ryu & Park, 2018). Just like the other challenges and barriers, PTSD and other mental health issues often result social isolation and alienation by the dominant culture in the refugee's new host country (Ryu & Park, 2018). Research has shown that PTSD makes it difficult for refugees to build social networks whether formal or informal (Ryu & Park, 2018). This inadvertently makes it more difficult for refugees to overcome social isolation.

Overall, many of the challenges experienced by the refugees that are commonly generated by resettlement that result in refugees feeling isolated (Drummond et al., 2011; Ellis et al., 2010). This, in effect, makes resettlement for refugees extremely difficult, especially for refugee youth who have expectations of quick integration within their new school systems (Suárez-Orozco, 2001; McBrien, 2005). If the barrier of social isolation is overcome and eradicated, refugees have a better chance of successfully integrating into their new country.

### **Social Support**

Research has well established both the benefits and challenges of refugee resettlement. One benefit found in the literature is that social support not only provides benefits to an individual, but it also decreases the risk for many things, such as isolation

and loneliness (Stewart, et al., 2012). Many refugee students that are resettled into the United States are at high risk of experiencing things such as social isolation, mental health issues, discrimination and much more (Brooker, Lawrence, & Dodds, 2017).

Although there are high risk factors for refugees for these types of challenges and barriers, social support has been proven to decrease these risk factors (Stewart, Simich, & Shizha, 2012). Social support is defined by Dunst, Snyder, and Mankinen as “the emotional, physical, informational, instrumental and material aid and assistance provided by others to maintain health and well-being, promote adaptations to life events, and foster development in an adaptive manner”, (1988, p.102).

Because social support is assistance being provided through others it can be either formal and informal. Research has shown that both are effective and beneficial to an individual’s overall well-being (Ryu & Park, 2018). This is even more true for refugees during the resettlement process and post-resettlement. Informal social support is support that is provided through sources such as friends and family, while formal social support is provided through a human service system (Streeter & Franklin, 1992).

Although social support can be offered both informally and formally to an individual, research has proven that any type of perceived social support decreases risk factors (Ryu & Park, 2018). Though informal and formal social support provide two different support systems for an individual, both have been proven through research to decrease risks that are commonly experienced by refugee students (Ryu & Park, 2018).

The supportive relationships that are developed when providing social support services help with coping when faced with many of the common challenges that refugees experience (Ikiz & Cakar, 2010). Mental illness and mental disorders are common

challenges that many refugees must learn to cope with (Liamputtong, Koh, Walker, & Wollersheim, 2016). When social support for a refugee is low or non-existent, it makes it difficult for an individual to overcome or deal with these challenges, such as mental disorders (Kok, Lee, & Low, 2017).

Social support has not been shown to directly eliminate problems such as PTSD and other mental disorders, but it has been shown to decrease the negative impact that challenges such as PTSD have on refugees after they have been resettled (Ryu & Park, 2018). Social support eliminates the social isolation that many refugees experience and helps them with adaptation and acculturation after resettlement (Berry, 1997; Shen & Takeuchi, 2001).

Another benefit that social support offers is it allows individuals to be included in their social worlds (Wachter & Gulbas, 2018). This is an important perception for an individual to have because research has shown that having a sense of belonging that support offers is often linked with an individual's self-identity, self-worth, and life meaning (Wachter & Gulbas, 2018). Social support allows an individual to have that sense of belonging which in effect decreases the risk of an individual struggling with issues regarding their self-worth.

The perception of social support is another factor that must be considered when identifying an individual's social support networks (Aroian, Uddin, & Bibas, 2017). Social support must be acknowledged and recognized as social support for there to be the beneficial effects that research has proven to have (Stewart et al., 2012). Perceived social support identifies the individual's cognitions to have a sense of connectivity to the people in their society (Toikko, Uisimbayev, & Pehkonen, 2018). Without this perception of

social support, the supports that are in the individual's life have no positive effects. Even if there are areas providing support to the individual, if the individual does not recognize these as support, it does not allow them to feel a connection, which results in their having the sense of loneliness and isolation, even if that is not correct.

Overall, social support provides many benefits for individuals, especially immigrants and refugees (Ghazinour et al., 2004). This is important for refugees to feel and acknowledge because it has an opportunity to help with the integration and acculturation process, which is pertinent for a refugee's survival within their new country.

### **Support Interventions**

Social support has been identified as having many benefits among individuals who experience a variety of challenges (Ikiz & Cakar, 2010). Research has proven that, by incorporating social support, many support interventions have been incorporated and used to decrease risk factors among individuals. Some of these support interventions include things as mentoring, support groups, and technology to improve social networks and enculturation.

### **Mentoring**

Mentoring is a common intervention used to decrease risk factors among students who are identified as at-risk (Moodie & Fisher, 2009). Many schools have programs that allow an older individual, peer, or community member to come in and create a personal relationship with an identified student that is considered at-risk, and their main goal is to empower and be a role model to the younger individual, hoping to impact their social, academic, or emotional development (Goldner, & Mayseless, 2009). This is a widespread



intervention that is commonly used internationally. In 2008, there were over 3 million American students who were involved in a mentoring program in the United States alone (Rhodes, 2008). This data show that mentoring is an intervention is a widely accepted and used intervention. Mentoring has much research that supports its effectiveness when it comes to building friendships, emotional support and enhancing social networks (Barton-Arwood, Jolivette & Massey, 2000; Fishman, Stelk, & Clark, 1997; Utley, Mortweet, & Greenwood, 1997). This type of social support intervention has been proven to help with social adjustment (Goldner & Mayseless, 2009).

### **Support Groups**

Another support intervention that has been highly researched and commonly implemented is support groups. Support groups are groups of four or more people coming together with some identified need or problem where they regularly attend meetings that try to help them deal with the identified need or problem (Nicholas & Jenkinson, 2006). There are many different types of support groups that offer an array of help for many different things. Although each support group is different, there has been a lot of research on the effectiveness of support groups in dealing with issues such as mental health, social behavior, and academic issues. These are all common challenges that many refugee students endure during and after their resettlement.

One study evaluated support groups that were aimed at helping refugees build up social networks as well as help them acculturate after resettlement. The results showed that the refugees felt accepted when working in groups with their peers as well as felt like they had a safe place to discuss their problems and their shared experiences (Stewart,

Simich, & Shizha, 2012). Thus, according to this study, support groups have positive effects for individuals, including refugees.

There are many other support interventions that have been provided, but support groups and mentoring are among the most commonly used support interventions that are provided to at-risk individuals. While there has been much research that proves the benefits of support interventions, there is still a limited amount of research that shows how effective these social support interventions are for high school refugee students.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Research suggests that the resettlement process brings a lot of uncertainty and challenges to many refugees (Lustig, 2010). These challenges tend to disrupt the known systems that a refugee once deemed familiar and have shifted them to a place of confusion and uncertainty (Lustig, 2010). The effects that this has on a refugee student can best be seen through Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory discusses how an individual's development is dependent on the system of relationships formed in their environment (Ryan, 2001). During and after the resettlement process, many refugees have all their systems, even down to their microsystem, threatened or disrupted completely, which can impair their overall development and well-being (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The IRC helps create some stability within the refugee's microsystems when they first arrive by providing a home, food", and employment for the parents. The next area that the IRC addresses for refugee students is their mesosystem with the Youth Program. The IRC Youth Program intervenes in the mesosystem by offering social support and connecting them with other students who are going through similar experiences. Students

are connected to resources and individuals with the goal of helping to create new structures in the student's mesosystem that can help them adapt and better integrate within their new macrosystem.

Social support was an identified resource that seemed to benefit refugee acculturation and integration in their new host society (Berry, 1997; Shen & Takeuchi, 2001). To better understand the effect that social support plays in an individual's life, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory helps provide a framework. In Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, an individual learns and becomes competent in a culture through demands and instructions by an adult figure, usually parents and teachers, primarily through tools and symbols with language being the most effective (Vygotsky, 1978). An individual's cultural development appears on two planes, an interpsychological and an intrapsychological. First the individual obtains knowledge through interacting with another, which is the interpsychological plane. Then the individual adds their own personal values to the knowledge that is apprehended, which is where the intrapsychological plane appears (Vygotsky, 1978).

Mediation is another tool that is used during an individual's learning experience (Daneshfar, & Moharami, 2018). This is when other people in an individual's life help shape their learning by shaping their learning experiences. It is through these interactions with people in the individual's environment that help the individual understand the culture taught and then the individual. The individual then appropriates the culture presented to them and adds personal meaning and interpretation to knowledge that is comprehended.

This theory can be applied to refugees who are trying to integrate into their new host country. If the method of learning the culture is through interactions with other individuals in the culture, primarily through language, then for a refugee student to become acculturated and integrated into the culture and school system, they must be interacting with individuals from the dominant culture. Research showed that social isolation is a common challenge and barrier that many refugee students must overcome, but until that happens, it is difficult for a refugee student to learn and understand the culture they are in.

In addition, a theory that can bring understanding of refugee student integration is John Berry's (1974) theory of acculturation. Berry's theory presents a strategies model that identifies the four ways acculturation can take place after a refugee has been resettled (Berry & Hawaii University, 1974). He identifies assimilation, separation, marginalization and integration as the four primary ways someone can acculturate into society (Berry & Hawaii University, 1974). Assimilation happens when an individual openly embraces the dominant culture and rejects the culture they are from. Separation occurs when the individual rejects the new, dominant culture but retains their own culture. Marginalization is when both new and old cultures are rejected by the individual, and integration is when both cultures are accepted and embraced by the individual. For many of the refugee students that participate in the IRC's Youth Program, the goal is to get the students to integrate into the new society they are in. The purpose of the program is to help refugee students integrate by teaching them about the new culture they are in, and offer a support group, and embrace their own culture at the time.

Incorporating Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, John Berry's (1974) theory of acculturation, and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, provides an overall understanding of the different challenges and barriers that threaten refugee student's integration. Refugee students who are resettled into the United States deal with many things that keep them from adapting and integrating into society. By addressing their social support needs and building up their structures in their different ecological systems they have a higher chance of integration.

### **Conclusion**

Though there is a significant amount of research on the barriers that affect refugee integration and the effectiveness of social support interventions on at-risk youth, there is still little research evidence on of how a social support group effects a refugee's integration after resettlement. There is an overall gap on refugee student research and even more of a gap when looking at factors other than mental health.

Therefore, this study will look at the effectiveness of support groups for high school refugee students and their perceived social integration. This study will look at two groups: high school refugees who have participated in the IRC Youth Program and high school refugee students who have not participated in the IRC Youth Program, and it will evaluate how they perceive their social integration level by using the Social Support Scales (SSS) and the Acculturation Scale for Chinese Migrant Children (ASCMC). The hypotheses for this study are listed below:

- H1: Students that participate in the IRC's Youth Program will score higher on the Social Support Scales (SSS).

- H2: Students that participate in the IRC’s Youth Program will score higher on the Acculturation Scale for Chinese Migrant Children (ASCMC).

These hypotheses are shown in the following research and logic model:

Table 1

*Logic Model*

| Objectives   | Inputs/Resources       | Activities (Thruput)   | Outputs  | Outcomes   | Indicator/Data Source   |
|--|------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Resettled high school refugee students will be socially integrated into their school and community by the time they graduate high school | -IRC staff and interns | -IRC youth support group<br>-IRC tutoring<br>-IRC job readiness training<br>-IRC college readiness program | Number of students in IRC Youth Program<br><br>Will have support group, college readiness and job training programs set up by end of first six weeks | Students will have a higher perceived feeling of social support<br><br>Students will feel socially integrated into schools and community | Social Support Scales (SSS) and the Acculturation Scale for Chinese Migrant Children (ASCMC) surveys data collected |

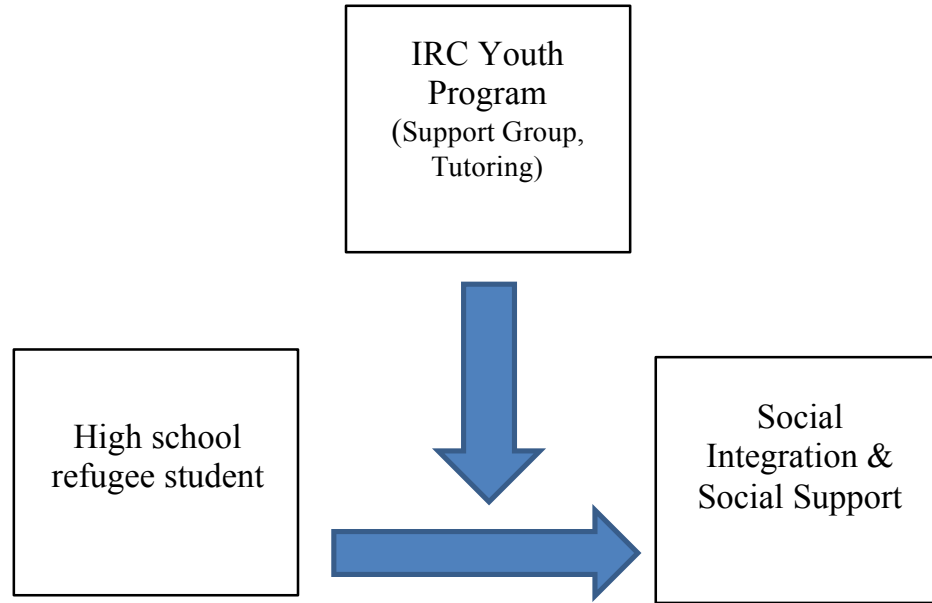


Figure 1. Research model of factors contributing to social integration

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter examines the nature and scope of the research methods that guided this study. After an overview of the study's focus and intent, the research design, sample, data collection, instruments, and process for analysis will be provided.

African student refugees recently relocated to the United States are presented with several challenges. Among these challenges are issues of isolation, cultural adjustment and fit, and social integration into their new communities, schools, and social life. The current study adapted the Social Support Scales (SSS) and the Acculturation Scale for Chinese Migrant Children (ASCMC) to characterize its reliability for use with African student refugees attending high school in Texas.

#### **Research Design**

The exploratory research conducted was a quasi-experimental, cross-sectional study with a posttest only design. This research design is useful for the type of research that was conducted because the sampling population is not randomized, there is no control group and an intervention was applied to identify the correlation between the dependent and independent variables. A cross-sectional study was applied because the survey was conducted at one distinct time, instead of over a period of time.

The disadvantages of using this type of design is that because participants are not randomly selected, generalizability is at a low rate, and pre-existing factors are not



considered after analyzing the results of the experiment (Beiser & Hou, 2006). Because the participants are not randomly selected, it decreases the validity of the experiment. The advantage of the design is that it has high internal validity, reduced ethical concerns, feasibility is higher and can lead to further experiments.

### **Limitations**

While there are many uncontrollable limitations to this study, there are a few limitations that were created to better fit the study. Limitations include purposely choosing not to randomly select the participants based off of the limited number of students that were accessible. Students from one high school in the area were chosen because the IRC's youth program does not work with other students from other schools as much as they do with these particular students due to proximity of the location and transportation barriers, as well as the social environment differs due to the different school environments and demographics. Due to time constraints a post-test only was administered instead of a pre-test and post-test.

### **Sample**

The study used convenience sampling. It is estimated that the population for this study is approximately 100 African student refugees attending high school and living in west Texas. Socio-demographic variables include age, ethnicity, length of time in the U.S., and IRC participation.

### **Data Collection**

Approval was granted from the Institutional Review Board of Abilene Christian University (See Appendix A), and parental consents and child assents were collected (see Appendix B), and then the data were collected. No identifying information was used

during the data collection process, so participants' identities and information were kept confidential. Permission was granted by the IRC to use their facilities to administer the surveys.

### **Instruments**

The adapted scales (SSS and ASCMC) combined for a 40-question instrument covering five distinct areas: integration, assimilation, separation, marginalization, and social support. The social support scale is divided into four subscales. A demographic section will also be included in the survey.

### **Analysis Plan**

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to see whether participants were participating in the IRC programs. This analysis determined if there was a correlation among refugee students that participate in the IRC high school youth program and their perceived social integration versus refugee students that do not participate in the IRC high school youth program.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

As shown in Table 1 the demographics of the participants had many similarities with a small variance of differences. The sample size of this study consisted of 20 high school refugee participants. There were 10 students that participated in the youth program and 10 non- participants of the youth program. The reported ages of the participants were 14 (10%), 15 (15%), 16 (25%), 17 (20%), 18 (15%), 19 (10%), and 20 (5%). There were four countries represented in the study. All participants report that their country of origin were Sub-Saharan African countries. These countries were Rwanda (40%), Democratic Republic of the Congo (40%), Tanzania (15%), and Burundi (5%).

The majority of the participants lived in a refugee camp before resettling in Abilene. There were 16 (80%) of the participants that lived in a refugee camp before arriving, but four (20%) did not. This shows that the majority of the participants had similar experiences before resettling in Abilene.

When looking at the level of English proficiency among the participants before resettling in Abilene, most students reported having no English proficiency before resettling. On a scale of 1-5, with one being no English proficiency and five being fluent, 10 (50%) students rated their English level a one, five (25%) rated themselves a two, four (20%) rated themselves a three, and one (5%) rated themselves a five

A majority of the participants reported that their length of time in the United States is three or more years. Twelve participants (60%) reported they have been in the United States more than three years, six (30%) reported two years, and one (5%) reported they have been in the United States between 6-12 months. One participant didn't report a length of time in the United States.

Table 2

*Characteristics of the Sample (N=20)*

| Variable                    | Category or Range | <i>N or M</i> | <i>% or SD</i> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Age                         | 14                | 2             | 10.0%          |
|                             | 15                | 3             | 15.0%          |
|                             | 16                | 5             | 25.0%          |
|                             | 17                | 4             | 20.0%          |
|                             | 18                | 3             | 15.0%          |
|                             | 19                | 2             | 10.0%          |
|                             | 20                | 1             | 5.0%           |
| Country of Origin           | Congo             | 8             | 40.0%          |
|                             | Rwanda            | 8             | 40.0%          |
|                             | Tanzania          | 3             | 15.0%          |
|                             | Burundi           | 1             | 5.0%           |
| Participate in IRC Programs | Yes               | 10            | 50.0%          |
|                             | No                | 10            | 50.0%          |
| Refugee Camp                | Yes               | 16            | 80.0%          |
|                             | No                | 4             | 20%            |
| Level of English Prior      | 1                 | 10            | 50.0%          |
|                             | 2                 | 5             | 25.0%          |
|                             | 3                 | 4             | 20.0%          |
|                             | 4                 | 0             | 0.0%           |
|                             | 5                 | 1             | 5.0%           |
| Length of Time in US        | 6-12 Months       | 1             | 5.0%           |
|                             | 2 years           | 6             | 30.0%          |
|                             | 3+ Years          | 12            | 60.0%          |
|                             | No report         | 1             | 5.0%           |

### **Purpose of Study and Scales**

The purpose of the study was to assess refugee students' perceived levels of social support and acculturation. The scales used were the Social Support Scales, which was comprised of four subscales: Perceived Social Support (six items), Negative Social Support (six items), Instrumental Social Support (five items), and Cultural Social Support (three items). The other scale used was the Acculturation Scale for Chinese Migrant Children. This scale included four subscales: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. The purpose of these scales was to analyze the participant's perceived social support and identify their acculturation.

### **Differences Between IRC and Non-IRC**

The IRC's programs are created to provide support and help refugee students with social integration because research has shown these are difficult areas for refugee students after resettling to a new country (Ryu & Park, 2018). This study will show if the services the IRC are providing to the students through the youth programs are increasing the students' perceived social support and social integration levels, or if the students who are not participating are getting these services from other places outside of the IRC.

### **Internal Consistency of the Composite Variables**

The present study includes some measurement scales: Social Support Scales (SSS) and the Acculturation Scale for Chinese Migrant Children (ASCMC). These scales were comprised of four subscales each, totaling to eight subscales and was used to analyze the participants social support and identify their acculturation. Therefore, similar factors were combined to calculate a composite variable. Song and colleagues (2013)

wrote that a composite variable is comprised of more than three indicators that are related to one another, These indicators often include scales, single or global ratings, or categorical variables. They stated that using composite variables is an accepted practice for particular purposes. These purposes include things such as addressing multicollinearity for regression analysis or contracting many highly correlated variables into more relevant or purposeful information. The answers that were related to questionnaires were categorized into composite variables by using the mean of the scores.

A series of reliability analyses were performed to check the scales goodness. This was done by checking the internal consistency of each scale. The internal consistency indicates the extent to which all the items or indicators measure the same construct and the inter-relatedness of the items with each other (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Cronbach's alpha is a widely-used tool for assessing the internal consistency of a scale. This value refers to "the extent that correlations among items in a domain vary, there is some error connected with the average correlation found in any particular sampling of items" (Nunnally, 1978, p. 206). Nunnally argued the alpha level equal to or higher than .70 considered to be indicative of minimally adequate internal consistency. Although there are different reports about the acceptable values, this value is widely used for a cut-off value. The following section provides information including what indicators were included in each scale and its Cronbach's alpha.

### **Social Support**

As noted in Table 2, there were four subscales of social support exhibited high internal consistency. Duran et al. (2005) divided the scale into four subscales that consisted of perceived social support (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .719$ ), negative social support

(Cronbach's  $\alpha = 8.660E-15$ ), instrumental support (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .079$ ), and cultural support (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .257$ ). After running the analysis for the results of the participants perceived social support was the only social support subscale that came back with good internal consistency as suggested by Duran et. al. (2005). The other subscales reliability came back much lower than the authors suggested. Errors in the survey was checked and no errors were found to explain why the reliability scores came back low.

Table 3

*Internal Consistency of Social Support (N=20)*

| Indicator ( $\alpha=.914$ ) | Mean  | $\alpha$  |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----------|
| Perceived Social Support    | 2.50  | .719      |
| Negative Social Support     | 1.94  | 8.660E-15 |
| Instrumental Support        | 0.933 | .079      |
| Cultural Support            | 4.67  | .257      |

**Acculturation**

As noted in Table 3, there were four subscales of social support exhibited high internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .75$ ), Fang, Sun, & Yuen (2017) divided the scale into four subscales that consisted of Integration (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .773$ ), Assimilation (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .670$ ), separation (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .426$ ), and cultural support (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .844$ ). After running the analysis for the results of the participants separation was the only subscale that came back unreliable. The results for integration, assimilation and marginalization came back with good internal consistency as suggested by Fang, Sun, and Yuen (2017).

Table 4

*Internal Consistency of Acculturation (N=20)*

| Indicator ( $\alpha=0.75$ ) | Mean | $\alpha$ |
|-----------------------------|------|----------|
| Integration                 | 3.95 | .773     |
| Assimilation                | 2.96 | .670     |
| Separation                  | 3.44 | .426     |
| Marginalization             | 2.28 | .844     |

**Hypothesis Testing**

In order to test the difference in perceived social support between IRC participants and non-IRC participants, an independent samples t-test was conducted using an alpha level of .07. Table 4 demonstrates that the mean difference for perceived social support between individuals in the IRC participants group ( $M = 2.6, SD = 0.40$ ) and individuals in the non-IRC participants group ( $M = 2.45, SD = 0.33$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t[18] = 0.91, p [=] 0.47$ .

Table 5

*Results of Independent Samples t-test for Perceived Social Support*

|                                    | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>t</i> | 95% CI       |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|
| Perceived Social Support (Emotion) |          | 2.6      | 0.40      |           |          |              |
| IRC Participants                   | 10       |          |           |           |          |              |
| Non-Participants                   | 10       | 2.45     | 0.33      | 18        | .91      | -0.197~0.498 |

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Due to the reliability being inconsistent with the original developer's reliability scores, individual independent samples t-test were run for each individual question for the negative support subscale, instrumental support subscale, and the cultural subscale. All of the means in each question that were run independently as an independent sample



t-test were close and showed no significant difference between participants of the IRC and non-participants of the IRC. Due to there being no significant difference between the two groups and the reliability showed no good internal consistency as reported by Duran et. al, 2005, one question from each subscale that came back unrealizable was chosen to be analyzed.

The independent samples t-test results for the question “How often do your friends and relatives argue with you?” from the negative social support subscale showed that the mean difference between individuals in the IRC participants group ( $M = 2.10$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ) and individuals in the non-IRC participants group ( $M = 2.0$ ,  $SD = 0.00$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t[18] = 0.91$ ,  $p [=] 0.002$ .

Table 6

*Results of Independent Samples t-test for Negative Social Support*

|                         |                  | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>t</i> | 95% CI       |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|
| Negative Social Support | IRC Participants | 10       | 2.10     | 0.74      | 18        | .91      | -0.39 ~ 0.63 |
|                         | Non-Participants | 10       | 2.00     | 0.00      |           |          |              |

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

The independent samples t-test results for the question “Among the people you know, is there someone you can count on to check in on you regularly?” from the instrumental social support subscale showed that the mean difference between individuals in the IRC participants group ( $M = 0.80$ ,  $SD = 0.42$ ) and individuals in the non-IRC participants group ( $M = 0.67$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t[18] = 0.91$ ,  $p [=] 0.23$ .

Table 7

*Results of Independent Samples t-test for Instrumental Social Support*

|                                   |                      | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>t</i> | 95% CI       |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|
| Instrumental<br>Social<br>Support | IRC<br>Participants  | 10       | 0.8      | 0.42      | 17        | .63      | -0.31 ~ 0.59 |
|                                   | Non-<br>Participants | 9        | 0.67     | 0.50      |           |          |              |

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

The independent samples *t*-test results for the question “How isolated do you feel?” from the cultural social support subscale showed that the mean difference between individuals in the IRC participants group ( $M = 1.88$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ) and individuals in the non-IRC participants group ( $M = 2.4$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t[18] = 0.91$ ,  $p [=] 0.97$ .

Table 8

*Results of Independent Samples t-test for Cultural Social Support*

|                               |                      | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>t</i> | 95% CI       |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|
| Cultural<br>Social<br>Support | IRC<br>Participants  | 9        | 1.88     | 0.78      | 18        | -1.50    | -1.23 ~ 0.21 |
|                               | Non-<br>Participants | 10       | 2.40     | 0.70      |           |          |              |

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

In order to test the difference of acculturation between IRC participants and non-IRC participants, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted using an alpha level of .70. Table 8 demonstrates that the mean difference between individuals in the IRC and Non-participants in the IRC. Table 8 demonstrates the mean difference for integration for IRC participants group ( $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ) and individuals in the non-IRC participants

group ( $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t[18] = [0.80]$ ,  $p [=] 0.27$ . The mean difference for assimilation for IRC participants group ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ) and individuals in the non-IRC participants group ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t[18] = 0.80$ ,  $p [=] 0.84$ . The table also shows the mean difference for marginalization for IRC participants group ( $M = 1.96$ ,  $SD = 0.46$ ) and individuals in the non-IRC participants group ( $M = 2.60$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t[18] = 0.80$ ,  $p [=] 0.02$ .

Table 9

*Results of Independent Samples t-test for Acculturation*

|                 |                  | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>t</i> | 95% CI       |
|-----------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|
| Integration     | IRC Participants | 10       | 4.04     | 0.84      | 18        | 0.80     | -0.53 ~ 0.89 |
|                 | Non-participants | 10       | 3.86     | 0.65      |           |          |              |
| Assimilation    | IRC Participants | 10       | 2.74     | 0.68      | 18        | -1.41    | -1.10 ~ 0.22 |
|                 | Non-participants | 10       | 3.18     | 0.72      |           |          |              |
| Marginalization | IRC Participants | 10       | 1.96     | 0.46      | 18        | 1.09     | -1.47 ~ 0.23 |
|                 | Non-participants | 10       | 2.60     | 1.17      |           |          |              |

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Due to the reliability being significantly lower for the overall separation subscale, an individual independent samples t-test analysis was run for the question “I am more attached to the people from my hometown.” The results shown in Table 9 are from the independent samples t-test for separation. The results showed that the mean difference between individuals in the IRC participants group ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ) and individuals

in the non-IRC participants group ( $M = 3.80$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ) was not statistically significant,  $t[18] = -0.95$ ,  $p [=] 0.33$ .

Table 10

*Results of Independent Samples t-test for Separation*

|            |                      | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>t</i> | 95% CI       |
|------------|----------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|
| Separation | IRC<br>Participants  | 10       | 3.40     | 1.07      | 18        | -0.95    | -1.29 ~ 0.49 |
|            | Non-<br>Participants | 10       | 3.80     | 0.79      |           |          |              |

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

Alongside these studies, other studies have found that by incorporating social support programs and mentoring programs increases a student perceived social support and social integration.

#### **Discussion of Findings**

The results of the study showed different trends of the participants social integration levels and social support levels. In this section those results will be discussed in further detail, as well as how this study's finding will contribute to future policy and practice.

#### **Social Support**

One of the hypotheses of this study was that students that participate in the IRC's Youth Program will score higher on the Social Support Scales (SSS). After running all of the independent sample t-tests for all of the social support subscales: perceived (emotion), negative, and instrumental and cultural, it was found that there was no significant difference between IRC participants and non-participants. It is noteworthy, however, that IRC participants had a slightly higher means difference than did non-participants on perceived social support, negative social support and instrumental social support. Non-participants had a higher means difference in cultural support. While there was no statistically significant difference between the groups and both of the groups had

higher levels of social support than what most research has suggested about refugee students, more research is clearly suggested.

### **Social Integration**

The other hypothesis that was explored during this study was that students that participate in the IRC's Youth Program will feel more socially integrated into their community as measured by the Acculturation Scale for Chinese Migrant Children (ASCMC). Another independent t-test was run for the four different subscales that were included in this scale, integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. The results from this analysis showed that participants of the IRC had a slightly higher integration level than non-participants. Non-participants score higher in the other subscales of assimilation, separation and marginalization. Although there was a slight means difference between the two groups the analysis showed there was not a statistically significant difference among the two groups.

There are some possibilities to provide explanation of why some of the reliability scores were significantly lower than what the authors reported for the SSS and the ASCMC. Having a small population sample could have been a reason as to why the reliability came back significantly lower. Both of the scales that were used had larger population samples when they tested the validity and the reliability of the instruments. This small population sample might have also compromised the variability and significance of the results as well. The study showed no statistical significance, but there is a possibility that the study is showing maybe there are trends that the results are displaying about the population.

## **Implications and Future Recommendations**

Though this study did not find a significant difference in social support and social integration among the refugee students that participated in the IRC youth programs and the refugee students that did not participate in the IRC programs there are a few implications this study's finding may have on future practice and research.

This study's findings may have implications on future practice in working with refugee students is because all the students that participated in the study reported having social support, whether it was perceived emotional social support, negative social support, cultural social support or instrumental social support. This shows that Abilene's community is providing refugee students social support from avenues outside the IRC. There may be many reasons that refugees in Abilene report higher rates of social support than what research suggests.

Some of the reasons that social support for refugee students may be high can be due to several factors, including some considerations include the city's size, the religious nature of the town, and the large immigrant community within the city. Abilene is a small city that has one of the largest number of Christian churches per capita and also has a large immigrant community. All these things can contribute to the refugee students' social support systems and help with integration. These are some of the things that can be researched in future studies, such as comparing the IRC Abilene agency to a bigger city such as IRC Dallas or IRC Denver where the students are less concentrated in one area.

This study's findings could also have possible implications for practice with the students' negative social support. Both groups showed that negative social support is an adamant source of support in their lives. By focusing practice methods towards helping

the students deal with negative social support it could help towards reducing the amount of student refugees effected by negative social support. This could be incorporated in the IRC's youth programs, local schools and city programs or recreation centers. This can help educate not only the students but other people in the city, so not only do refugee students are educated about positive social support and negative social support, but also it teaches other people in the community how to not only notice but help offer positive social support.

### **Recommendations for Future Studies**

Suggestions for future studies include finding or developing a more culturally relevant scale. Many of the subscales' reliabilities had lower alpha scores than were expected and were less than the those reported by instrument developers. After working with this population for a few years it has been observed that this population does not always comprehend negative questions; therefore, making or choosing a scale that focuses on more positive questions might have more reliable internal consistency than the scales that were used for this study.

Another recommendation for future studies would be to do a qualitative study versus a quantitative study. Qualitative studies would provide more information about the clients and the reasoning behind their answers. This is important information for the agency because it tells them exactly how and what areas they need to provide more support for their clients in. Although this type of study would be less valid it would increase the reliability of the participants' answers, which is more important when working with a population with limited English proficiency.



## **Limitations of Study**

Many limitations were factors to this study. The first limitation the study ran into was that many of the participants were under the age of eighteen, which made the process of obtaining participants lengthy, and ultimately limited the number of participants that were a part of the study, due to the small length of time given to collect data.

Another limitation that affected the number of participants in the study was the IRC database system. The system lists all clients' addresses, but the addresses listed in the system were not all updated. This made it difficult to find all the clients' correct addresses, which limited the number of participants. Because it was difficult to find the students' addresses the number of participants ended up being very limited. With the number of participants being so small, it is hard to know whether the participants fully represent the entire population.

Other minor limitations to the study consisted of finding times to administer the survey due to lack of computer access, not having access to eligible participants' emails and language barriers for new arrival clients. These are all things that contributed to the small sample size of this study.

## **Conclusion**

The main aim of this study was to do a comparative analysis of social support and social integration scores between IRC students that participated in the IRC youth programs and the IRC students that didn't participate in the IRC youth programs. This study showed slightly higher levels of social support and social integration for IRC participants, but there was no significant difference. Although this study did not have any significance between the two groups' social support scores and acculturation scores, there

were still many implications and things learned about refugee students in Abilene. The study showed that refugee students have high rates of social support even if they do not participate in IRC programs, which is an important aspect for the agency to know and be able to use for practice and policy. This study not only provided implications for practice and policy, but it also provided information that can be pertinent to future research over refugee students in the United States.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Letter

**ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**  
*Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World*  
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs  
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103  
325-674-2885



January 16, 2019

Hayven Tudman

Department of Social Work

Dear Hayven,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Assessing Social Integration of African Refugee Students Resettled in Abilene Texas: A Comparative Analysis,

(IRB# 18-136 ) is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

*Megan Roth*

Megan Roth, Ph.D.  
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

## APPENDIX B

### Informed Consent and Assent to Participate in Study

You may be eligible to take part in a research study. This form provides important information about that study, including the risks and benefits to you, the potential participant. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions that you may have regarding the procedures, your involvement, and any risks or benefits you may experience. You may also wish to discuss your participation with other people, such as your family doctor or a family member. This research is not conducted by the International Rescue Committee and will have no effect on your participation or involvement in any IRC services or programs.

#### **Introduction: Assessing Social Integration of African Refugee Students Resettled in Abilene Texas: A Comparative Analysis**

**PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION:** The main purpose of this study is to explore whether high school students with refugee status who participate in social support programs such as the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) youth program have higher levels of social integration than non-participant refugees. It will show the International Rescue Committee an evaluation of their program to be able to make improvements and changes.

If selected for participation, you will be asked to attend 1 visit with the study staff. Your visit is expected to take 30 minutes. During the course of this visit, you will be asked to participate in completing a survey that will measure your perceived social support and social integration level.

**RISKS & BENEFITS:** There are no foreseeable risk to this study, but there is invariably a slight risk of breach of confidentiality.

Some of the potential benefits for this study include feedback that could be used to improve the services provided through the youth program as well as create more awareness to non-participants about the IRC's youth program. The researchers cannot guarantee that you will experience any personal benefits from participating in this study.

**PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY:** Information collected about you will be handled in a confidential manner in accordance with the law. Some identifiable data may have to be shared with individuals outside of the study team, such as members of the ACU Institutional Review Board or individuals affiliated with the International Rescue Committee. Aside from these required disclosures, your confidentiality will be protected by not asking any identifiable names such as name, school or alien number. All information will be stored for three years in the graduate office of social work and destroyed afterwards.

**CONTACTS:** If you have questions about the research study, the Principal Investigator Hayven Tudman, BA may be contacted at [hjt13a@acu.edu](mailto:hjt13a@acu.edu) or 325-675-5643. If you are unable to reach the Principal Investigator or wish to speak to someone other than the Principal Investigator, you may contact Malcom Scott, PhD, MSW at [mes18b@acu.edu](mailto:mes18b@acu.edu). If you have concerns about this study, believe you may have been injured because of this study, or have general questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact ACU's Chair of the Institutional Review Board and Executive Director of Research, Megan Roth, Ph.D. Dr. Roth may be reached at

(325) 674-2885  
megan.roth@acu.edu  
320 Hardin Administration Bldg, ACU Box 29103

## APPENDIX C

### Survey Questions

#### **Demographic Questions:**

1. What is your age?
2. What is your country of origin?
3. Do you participate in the IRC programs?
4. How long have you participated in IRC? \_\_\_\_\_#years/#Month
5. Did you know English before you came to the U.S.?
6. How well do you speak the English 1 2 3 4 5 (1=none at all and 5= very proficient)
7. Length of time in the United States?
8. Did your family live in a refugee camp before coming to the United States?

## Social Support Scales

### Items

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#### Perceived Social Support (*often , sometimes , never*)

1. How much do your friends or relatives really care about you?
2. How much do they understand the way you feel about things?
3. How much do they appreciate you?
4. How much can you rely on them for help if you have a serious problem?
5. How much can you talk to them about your worries?
6. How much can you relax and be yourself around them?

#### Negative Social Support (*often , sometimes , never*)

1. How often do your friends or relatives make too many demands on you?
2. How often do they argue with you?
3. How often do they criticize you?
4. How often do they let you know when you are counting on them?
5. How often do they get on your nerves?
6. How often do they drink or use drugs too much?

#### Instrumental Social Support (*yes , no*)

Among the people you know, is there someone

1. you can go with to play cards, or go to bingo, a powwow, or a community meeting?
2. who would lend you money if you needed it in an emergency?
3. who would lend you a car or drive you somewhere else if you really needed it?
4. you could call who would bail you out if you were arrested and put in jail?
5. you could count on to check in on you regularly?

#### Cultural Social Support

1. How isolated do you feel? (*very isolated , somewhat isolated , not very isolated at all*)
2. How often do you purposely avoid family gatherings? (*a lot , sometimes , or not very much at all*)
3. Of those family gatherings you go to, how likely are you to leave early? (*very , somewhat , not at all*)

### Acculturation Scale for Chinese Migrant Children

#### Items

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##### Integration

1. I am comfortable speaking the dialects of the city and my hometown.
2. I am equally adjusted to the city and my hometown.
3. I enjoy food in the city and my hometown.
4. I am familiar with the customs in the city and my hometown.
5. I enjoy spending time with friends from the city and my hometown.

##### Assimilation

1. I am more comfortable speaking the dialect of the city than my hometown.
2. I am more adjusted to the city than my hometown.
3. I prefer food in the city than my hometown.
4. I am more familiar with customs in the city than my hometown.
5. I feel closer to people in the city than my hometown.

##### Separation

1. I am more comfortable speaking the dialect of my hometown.
2. I have more close friends and relatives in my hometown.
3. I prefer spending time with friends from my hometown.
4. I am not used to the food in the city.
5. I am more attached to the people from my hometown.

##### Marginalization

1. I feel that I neither belong to the city nor my hometown.
2. I dislike the surroundings of the city or my hometown.
3. I am not adjusted to the city or my hometown.
4. I am not comfortable speaking the dialects of the city or my hometown.
5. It is difficult for me to make friends in the city or my hometown.

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Note. Items are rated on a four-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree," "disagree," "agree," to "strongly agree." The score range for each orientation is 4-20, with the higher scores indicating higher levels of adherence to one acculturation orientation.

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