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## **The Weight of Invisibility: The Effects of Child Brokering on Sibling Relationships**

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Eastern Kentucky University

The Weight of Invisibility:

The Effects of Child Brokering on Sibling Relationships

Honors Thesis

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

Of The

Requirements of HON 420

Fall 2019

By

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The Weight of Invisibility: The Effects of Child Brokering on Sibling Relationships

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This research serves to explore the definition of a child broker and the effects that such title can have on children. The research identifies the different aspects that child brokering affects the way the children interact with their families and form relationships. It focuses on the aspects that children may have difficulties with when growing up and what their ways of coping encompass. The primary research was conducted to explore the relationships that children develop with their siblings and how these may be affected by the child's responsibilities and feelings. The focus on sibling relationships discusses an aspect of child brokering that is commonly ignored in the literature since most focus on the parental relationships with the child. The research was conducted through a survey in parts of Central and Eastern Kentucky and was given to Latino/a students in three different institutions. Finally, the research explores ways that the situations for child brokers can be improved and how they can be supported to explore their feelings.

Solutions to reduce the pressures of child brokering will be given along with some of the existing obstacles to implementing these changes within our society.

*Keywords and phrases:* child brokering, language, sibling relationships, parental relationships, Latino, Latina.

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Figure 1. Response to question 7

Do you ever wish you did not need to interpret and/or translate for your parents/guardians?

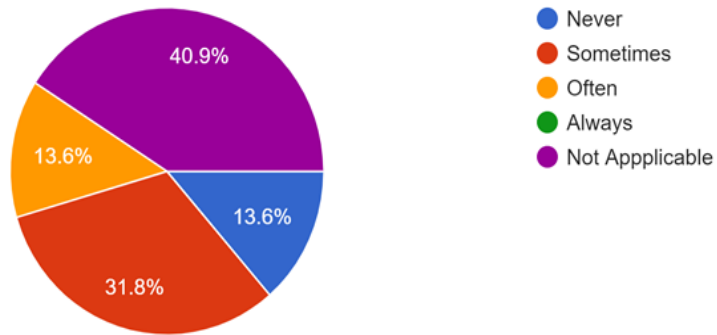
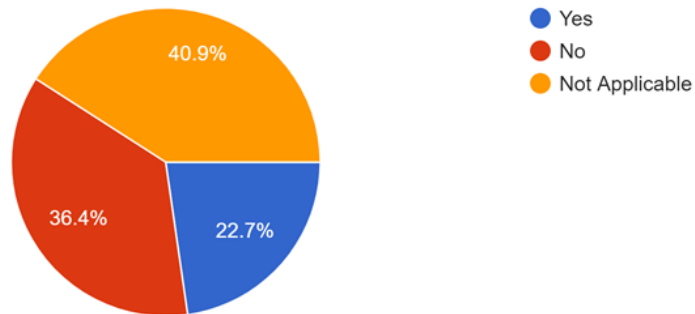


Figure 2. Response to question 10

Do you prefer that your sibling(s) interprets and/or translates for your parents/guardians?



### **Acknowledgements**

A huge thank you to my mentor, Dra. Abbey Poffenberger, for being patient with me in this research. Thank you, Dra. for guiding me through, not only the completion of this research, but the journey to find myself and to explore my own feelings. I have great appreciation for those who encouraged me throughout the research and the writing and those who constantly listened to me speak about my personal discoveries.

As a child broker myself, this research meant much more than can be accurately expressed. The journey to complete this research was at times painful, but it was completely worth it. Not just for me but for those who are still in the shadows, for those who have yet to find themselves and their identity. My goal is to shed light and hope onto some individuals who may understand me and my struggles.

## Introduction

With the changing demographics of the United States of America, there are a variety of populations in the country. This diversity creates a demographic of people who speak different languages and not just English. Although the USA does not have an official language, the language most commonly used and accepted is English. While this may create a sense of community and unity, it serves to alienate individuals who may not understand the language well, or at all. For example, the families who migrate to the United States to seek a better life may not know the language well. In cases like these, it is more common for the children in the family to learn the language before other family members. Since the children are, many times, in the school system, they are exposed to more English and they can learn the language better. Since many times their parents only speak their native language, the parents look to their children for help navigating the different aspects of daily life. These children can range in age from pre-school years to the end of high school. In fact, many continue to help their families in their adult years (Julia and Raymond, 2007).

The children who are present to help their families may need to interpret and/or translate for their family members. When discussing interpreting, it refers to transferring information from one language to another in person. This means the person interpreting is doing it “live” and may not be able to use any resources to help with the process. This can be a stressful task because the interpreter needs to keep up with the conversation and,



if there is only one, they need to interpret for both parties. Translating, on the other hand, refers to transferring information from one language to another, specifically written information. The translator is able to use information and resources outside of themselves. They can refer to dictionaries, the internet, and other individuals for revision of the material. Although this can be more time consuming, the translator has support from many outlets (Alvarez, 2012).

When a child is asked to interpret or translate, the child may have to do so for a variety of individuals. The child may need to interpret for their parents or guardians. This is the most common situation since the children have a better grasp of the English language. The child may also be called upon to translate for other relatives, such as siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles, or grandparents. In addition, family friends may contact the family and ask that their child help them with certain situations of interpreting or translating. Finally, the child may be faced with a situation where they need to interpret for strangers. This usually occurs when the child is interpreting for the parents in public and someone hears this happening. The stranger may then approach the family and ask if the child can also interpret for them. Many times, the parents or guardians of the child will encourage them to do so because they believe them to be capable of such.

The setting where the translating and/or interpreting occur can vary. The children may be asked to translate in a doctor's office or a hospital (Katz, 2014). This usually occurs for doctor checkups or more serious visits to the hospital. The child may need to

help the family member understand a diagnosis or the results of a blood test. The child may also aid family members when they need interpreting in schools which is very common because of the high need. This usually happens when the parents have a parent-teacher conference, when there are open houses for the students to meet teachers and register, or when the parent needs to check in or check out the child. In all these situations, the child may be expected to be in charge of making sure both parties understand what is going on in the conversation.

Another situation where the child may carry the responsibility of interpreting is with law officials. These might be officers if the parent or guardian gets pulled over. Court dates and immigration offices can also be situations where the child needs to step up and allow for the clarification of the situation. These can be particularly difficult because the child may not be completely aware of what is happening. The child may not have the vocabulary necessary for the situation at hand so they are forced to explain in any way that they can (Corona, et al., 2012).

Finally, the child may interpret in everyday interactions with people outside of the family. For example, this commonly occurs in grocery stores and clothing stores. It can be as simple as an exchange with the cashier or a problem with one of the purchases. It can also occur if the child is helping the parent or guardian apply for a job or resolve a job situation. These are the most common situations in which a child can interpret and/or translate for their parents or guardians. However, there may be other outside situations

where the child is also put in a place to interpret or translate. Another important thing to note is that the examples given refer to parent or guardians but may be applied to any of the previously mentioned receivers of interpreting or translating.

As the children are placed in these situations to serve as interpreters and/or translators, they become “child brokers” (Zhang, 2018). Child brokers are children that interpret and/or translate for others from one language to another. These are defined as individuals between the ages of zero and eighteen years old, however, most cannot interpret or translate until they learn the written or spoken language. The term “child broker” is a relatively new term because research on child brokers is quite recent. For the purpose of this research, the term “child broker” will, hereafter, be used interchangeably with “child who interprets or translates for other individuals.” Although this term is not well known, it accurately represents the experiences of children in this situation.

### **Effects on the Child**

As it was explored previously, the child brokers need to interpret and/or translate in a variety of situations for a variety of people. This translating and interpreting may affect the child in a variety of ways. The effects on the child broker can best be explained in two categories: positive effects and negative effects. Though these may overlap, this division creates a sense of the “pros and cons” of the situation in which the child can find themselves. The term “positive effects” refers to the impact on the child that can lead to gains which benefit the child. On the other hand, the term “negative effects” refers to the impact on the child that can lead the child to detriment in one area or multiple. Both may either be immediate or prolonged positive or negative effects.

The interpretation and translation by the child can allow the child to develop skills in certain areas that other children who are not brokers may not experience. As the child broker interprets for one or more parties in a conversation, they are forced to communicate the information as accurately as possible. Sometimes this means exploring new vocabulary and finding ways to express something that may not be as easily transferred from one language to another. This skill allows child brokers to expand their vocabulary in both languages. The use of words that may be out of their reach at a young age can allow them to better develop the languages that they are using. This helps expand their literary knowledge. As such, they are better able to express themselves in school and in their literary works (Alvarez, 2012).

In addition to an expanded vocabulary, the lack of knowledge on how to transfer information from one language to another allows for the child broker to develop their critical thinking skills. This refers to their ability to solve problems at hand with the information that they have. The child broker learns how to “think outside of the box” because they may be limited in vocabulary. In order to express the information properly, they must find ways to communicate it effectively that may not include the use of the exact vocabulary words needed. This development of critical thinking can be applied to other situations because they have dealt with managing problems in a variety of ways and have been placed in situations that have caused them to explore situations outside of their comfort zone (Cooper, 1999).

When brokering, the child must not only focus on the words but also on the culture and the environment in which they are brokering. Even as adult interpreters or translators, it is important to keep in mind that the culture of the individuals involved matters. This is because it can cause them to have differing dialects or different ways to understand language. Many times, there are idioms or phrases that do not transfer from one language to another in the same manner. This requires a previous knowledge of the culture in order to more accurately transfer the information. For this reason, the child broker becomes more aware of the cultures in which they are transferring information. The cultural competency of the child broker increases as the child is exposed to the different cultures continuously and repeatedly which allows them to better navigate their

daily lives since it creates an open-mindedness and prepares them for encountering new cultures (Alvarez, 2017).

The child brokers become more aware of the differences in cultures as they interpret or translate in the different settings. This means that they become more self-aware of their culture and other cultures. As they distinguish the cultures, they become more open minded and willing to understand others. This increases their sense of acceptance to other cultures and their willingness to learn about perspectives that differ from their own.

On the other hand, there are negative effects that can occur to the child broker which may impair them or limit their success. The child broker may feel a sense of responsibility that other children do not understand, and this can cause pressure on the child. The increase in this pressure may lead to stress, which can impact their academics, goals and relationships. The child broker is confronted with a situation that they may have never encountered before, and they may feel as though they must continue to broker for their family because of their sense of responsibility. Many times, the child broker may internalize the sense that this “job” is their responsibility and no one else can take over. This means that they become an integral part of the family because of the role they play. The family relies on the child broker which increases the sense of responsibility and necessity on the child. The depth of this responsibility may be hard to convey because the

child feels as though they are, in part, parents because of their role in the family (Corona, 2012).

This responsibility on a child broker causes a sense of pressure because they do not only need to focus on brokering for their family, they are also expected to deal with problems that other children must deal with. Meaning, if a child has behavioral issues, difficulties understanding a subject matter, or has been having difficulties making friends, they must also worry about making time for the responsibilities that they have for brokering at home. The children may often feel over-extended because of their roles that they need to play. These children are as young as kindergarten age and as old as eighteen years of age. To create a picture, a five-year-old may have had difficulty with reading in class on a Tuesday, which make them frustrated. They soon realize, however, that the same afternoon, their parent needs interpreting at the doctor's office. As they interpret for their parent, they realize that it's not good news. At this point, the child must not only deliver the news, but process them at the same time. This occurs as they think about their reading test the next day.

The previous situation describes the stress that the child brokers can feel when they become accustomed to the responsibilities and the pressure that comes with such a title. Although some stress is normal for children who are developing and who's families may be having difficulties, the stress that child brokers undergo is augmented because of the situation in which they live. This stress can have different consequences on the child.

The child's physical health may be negatively impacted because of the stress that they are under. Stress can bring on physical health concerns and cause the child broker's health to decline since it can manifest itself physically. As mentioned before, other children who do not serve as brokers for their families may not deal with such a high level of stress as the child brokers, however, the child broker may not know this. Because the child broker believes that this home life is normal, they feel as though that level of stress is normal and do not reach out to other individuals for help.

The level of responsibility that the child brokers feel carries on to their later years, and even adulthood in some situations. The child internalizes the responsibilities that are placed on them and they believe that no one else can do the task but them (Villanueva and Buriel, 2010). This sense of family is especially great in Latino(a) communities because they are often told to put their families first. This belief comes from the collectivist society that Latin American tends to follow, where individuals take care of others primarily. The mention of the Latino/a community relates to the focus of this research: The Latino/a community. This community is one that places a high value on responsibility of all family members. This means that the contribution to the family is a positive thing within the family, but it also creates an expectation, in this case, for the child broker to continue doing so for the family.

While the child may feel pride to be able to help their family understand the world around them and succeed in society, other feelings can be experienced. The child brokers



can experience negative feelings toward their families, in particular, toward their parents or guardians. These feelings can include resentment, frustration, and anger because of the responsibility that was, or is, placed on them. The child can feel as though the family is using them since they constantly call to them to interpret or translate for them. This feeling can overpower their want and need to be responsible for their families. The children may feel the resentment and anger early in their child brokering life or years later. This is because they may deny it and not want their families to appear like a burden to them because of that sense of responsibility that they feel. It is important to note that the children may never admit to feeling any negative feelings towards their families (Guntzviller, 2016/2017).

For those child brokers who do admit and begin to process the feelings of resentment, frustration, and anger toward their families, guilt may follow. It is common for the children to feel as though they are being unfair to their families since their families may not have control over their lack of knowledge of the English language. For this reason, the child broker continues what they believe is their responsibility. This guilt that the child broker feels can also cause them to feel inadequate in other situations and continue to add to the stress that was previously discussed. All of these feelings and attitudes can be confusing for the child brokers and, without any help from outside sources, the child broker's mental health can be negatively impacted (Kim, et al., 2017). As a child, this may not be explicitly expressed, but it can be impactful in the child's life academically and socially.

As the child broker experiences these feelings and pressures, they must continue their academic life. Referring back to the sample situation, the child must worry about what they need to do to fully learn to read their text before their next reading test. This means that the child must keep the academics in their mind because they are expected to succeed, or they have professional and career goals that they want to achieve. The child broker's academics can be negatively impacted because of their responsibilities in a different ways. The child broker may not be able to focus completely on their academics because of worries about their family's needs. This means that they focus solely, or mostly, on the brokering that they need to do for their family and for individuals outside of their family. This causes them to not put their academics first and compromises their academics.

In addition, the child broker may choose to not pursue what they want to study or accomplish. This can refer to academics or to their career choice. The child broker may decide that they cannot move far from home because their family still needs them. This demonstrates the responsibility that the child brokers have and how they believe they are needed in their families. The child broker may also choose to stray away from their academics or career if their family members use the sense of responsibility to encourage them to pursue something that they deem more practical for the family. This can happen if the family is also low-income or if the family believes that the child must get a job to help the family succeed. Finally, the child may have lost motivation because of previous

academic experiences and may have decided to not pursue what they had initially decided (Morales, Yakushko, and Castro, 2012).

Although child brokering has some positive effects on the child, the negative effects far outweigh them. This is because when dealing with children, it is important to consider that they are in the process of developing mentally, intellectually, and physically. Anything that children experience early in their lives will follow them through their development. The negative effects are a risk that should not be considered. Through the research of child brokering, an aspect that is rarely explored is the effect on sibling relationships. The research focuses on the different ways that child brokering affects the child and the parental relationships, however, sibling relationships need to be explored as well.

## Method

The exploration of child brokering and its effect on the child broker revealed the lack of research on sibling relationships. A study was created to begin the exploration of this topic. It was targeted toward the Latino(a) population of college level students and consisted of a survey with fourteen questions. Of the fourteen questions, the first four questions dealt with the demographical information of the participant. The questions asked the participant whether they identified as Latina/Latino/Hispanic, whether they spoke Spanish, if they have siblings, and if they have ever interpreted or translated. For the purpose of the survey, the terms Latina/Latino/Hispanic were grouped together to allow for the different identities to be recognized. The survey included a definition of “translation” and “interpretation” to allow the participants to better understand the questions. The definitions used in the survey were the same that were described previously.

The next question in the survey explored the age at which the participant began interpreting. For the purposes of the survey, the definition of child was extended to twenty years old. The participant was asked to choose a range of five years that applied to them. The participant could choose “before five years old,” “between five and ten years old,” “between fifteen and twenty years old,” “after twenty years old,” or “not applicable” if they had never interpreted or translated. The questions that followed asked about the feelings that the participants experienced when brokering or afterwards. The

first question in this section asked how the participant felt brokering for their parents or guardians. The choices given were “very bad,” “bad,” “neutral,” “good,” and “very good.” The choices were given for the participants to speed the survey taking process and to allow for better data collecting.

The participants were, then, asked about their feelings of brokering and if they ever wanted to not broker for their parents or guardians. They could answer “never,” “sometimes,” “often,” “always,” or “not applicable.” In the last part of the survey, participants were asked about the role of their sibling(s) when brokering and the feelings when their sibling(s) interpreted less and when their sibling(s) interpreted more than them. The responses were similar to the choices before to allow for parallel structure so that the participants would know how to respond.

To accommodate for the participants, the term “brokering” was replaced with “interpreting and/or translating” since those terms were explicitly defined for them in the survey. In addition, the only brokering referred to was for “parents or guardians” to maintain parallel structure. It is also the most common brokering when individuals are children.

The survey was given to students in higher education, as was mentioned before. It was targeted toward Latino(a) students to focus the research on one group. The survey was sent to Central and Eastern Kentucky. Specifically, the survey was sent to Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), the University of Kentucky (UK), and Berea College

(Berea). The contact organizations were the ECU Latino Student Association, the UK Latino Student Union, and the Berea Latin American Student Association. They were contacted through media platform and their participation was requested.

The survey was completely anonymous, and the participants were at no time asked for any identifying information. The survey was also easy to access because the participants needed to click on a link and choose the option that best described them for each of the questions. The ease of navigation allowed for students to only scroll and click and increased the speed of the survey. It was estimated to take between five and ten minutes. The reasoning behind the multiple-choice survey is that it is quicker when taking and easier to navigate. In addition, participants are better able to complete multiple choice than open response because the multiple-choice surveys are easier and do not require typing.

Some of the anticipated limitations are the population size as the participants are only focused on Kentucky. In addition, the participants are only from certain parts of the state and only three different institutions were reached. This reduced the population greatly. Another limitation is the population themselves. The participants were all in higher education and, as mentioned before, some of the child brokers may not have been able to attend higher education. This creates a barrier between those students who did not attend higher education and those that did. Finally, because of the limitations mentioned above, the data generated cannot be used to generalize the entire population of child

brokers or the population of child brokers in the United States of America. Further investigation must be achieved in order to provide more accurate information. This research, however, serves to break a barrier that can start new investigation in the topic of sibling relationships.

## Results

The results were reviewed from the sample that responded to the survey given. Seventy-nine participants responded. These participants were students from Eastern Kentucky University, University of Kentucky, and Berea College. All of the responses were completely anonymous. Of all of the participants who responded to the survey, 100% identified as Latino, Latina, or Hispanic. This means that the participants were the population that was targeted. In addition, it is important to note that all of the participants had at least one sibling. This made the population meet the demographics that were targeted. This, however, was not explicitly sought out and the participants did not know of the questions before taking the survey. A possible explanation is that some of the participants did not completely finish the survey if they did not have siblings or if they did not identify as Latino, Latina, or Hispanic. Another possibility is that the target demographic responded because of the places where it was sought out.

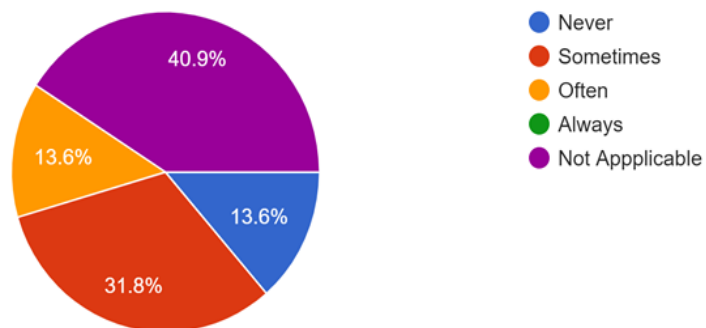
Something very important when reviewing the responses from the survey is that, according to the results, 40.9% of the individuals who took the survey had never brokered for their parents or guardians. This means that much of the information and the percentages that were obtained from the research came from the other 59.1% of the participants who had brokered, or interpreted and/or translated, for their parents or guardians.



When reviewing the results from the survey, it was found that the participants reported that they began brokering for their parents or guardians between the ages five and twenty. As mentioned before, for the purposes of this survey and because of the population for which it was targeted, the term “child” was extended to fit ages zero to twenty years of age. It was also found that, of the participants who reported that they had brokered for their parents or guardians, 73.3% reported that they began brokering between the ages five and ten years of age. This means that most of the participants began brokering when they were in their elementary school years. The information regarding their age classifies the participants as child brokers.

Figure 1. Response to question 7

Do you ever wish you did not need to interpret and/or translate for your parents/guardians?

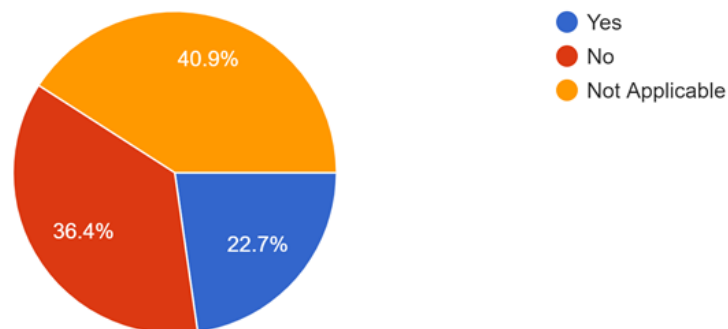


The figure above shows the results of one the first questions that asked regarding the feelings of the participants. The participants that responded “not applicable” were those that had never brokered for their parents or guardians. Of those students who did

broker for their parents or guardians, 76.8% reported that they wished they did not broker at least sometimes. The other 23.2% of the participants who had brokered for their family reported never wishing that they did not broker for their parents or guardians. This information is important to keep in mind because the participants encountered this information before encountering the questions about their feelings of their siblings brokering. This reflects solely on their feelings.

Figure 2. Response to question 10

Do you prefer that your sibling(s) interprets and/or translates for your parents/guardians?



The figure above represents question 10 of the survey that the participants took. This was after the participants had been asked whether they had siblings or not. As mentioned before, all of the participants that took the survey had at least one sibling. In addition, the 40.9% that listed “not applicable” refers to the percentage that did not broker for their parents or guardians at any point. Once the question is focused on the

participants who have brokered for their parents or guardians, it was found that 38.4% of the participants who did broker for their parents or guardians would prefer that their siblings' broker. This means that they would rather leave those responsibilities to their siblings rather than take it on themselves.

In later questions, it was found that of the participants who reported that they had brokered for their parents and that their siblings had brokered for their parents, 15.9% had negative feelings when they interpreted more than their sibling(s). On the other hand, 15.9% reported having negative feelings when their siblings brokered more than they did. It is important to note the same percentage of negative feelings. When asked how the participants felt when they brokered the same amount as their sibling(s), over half of the participants responded having positive or very positive feelings. To be specific, 61.1% of participants reported the positive or very positive feelings when their sibling(s) brokered the same amount as they did.

The wording for the questions was specifically used to reduce bias. For example, the use of the words positive and negative were used in place of more biased feelings such as "anger" or "frustration." This was to allow for more participation of the students and to remove any preconceived notions.

## Discussion

The results mentioned above were completely anonymous and reveal that some of the participants had never interpreted or translated. This can be due to not knowing their native language or because their parents or guardians did not need the participants to broker for them since they knew English and were able to communicate in all situations. The participants who completed the survey and determined that they had brokered for their families were determined to be child brokers according to the definition that was discussed previously. It was noted that there is a possibility that some of the participants were older than eighteen years of age, but the definition of child broker was extended for the purposes of the research.

The first result discussed the participants who wished they did not broker for their parents or guardians is one of the biggest indicators of the feelings that were found in the scholarly research. Over two thirds of the participants indicated wishing this at least sometimes. This demonstrates that they may not feel completely comfortable brokering for their parents or guardians. Because of the nature of the survey, there is no more information on how the students may feel. Some explanations, however, for the wishes of the participants could be that they feel like the pressure or the stress is too overwhelming and would rather not be put in that situation.

This topic is visited again when exploring the responses from the participants regarding whether they would prefer when their sibling(s) brokered for them. Over one

third of the participants determined that they would prefer if their sibling(s) brokered for them. Again, the participants were child brokers themselves, so they are likely to understand the pressure and responsibility that comes from taking on that role for the family. Their conclusion that they would pass on the responsibility and would rather place such pressures on their sibling(s) is impactful because of the familial responsibility mentioned before (Updegraff, et al., 2004). The child brokers may sometimes take on the role of parents for their siblings. Something that could further be explored is whether the feelings of brokering in relation to the sibling(s) change based on who is the oldest sibling.

Of the participants who reported brokering and that their sibling(s) also brokered for their parents or guardians, the same number reported negative feelings when they brokered more than their sibling(s) as when their sibling(s) brokered more than they did. This was an interesting discovery because both numbers were relatively low. The majority of the responses were that the participants felt “neutral” in those situations. The “neutral” response could be due to a variety of possibilities. The participants could have felt inclined to not admit the negative feelings when taking the survey. This would be due to the responsibility of the child broker and the inference that the child broker does not have a choice and must continue to help the family effectively communicate with their surroundings.

Another reason for the “neutral” response could be that the participants were not aware of any negative feelings that may come up when the situations arise because they were not in immediate presence of such. In addition, it could be that the participants may not realize when they interpret more than their sibling(s) or when their sibling(s) interpret more than them. This would cause them to not know of any feelings that they might go through. Finally, it could be that the participants truly did not mind either situation and simply focused on making sure that their parents understood what was being brokered.

The finding that almost two-thirds of the participants reported positive or very positive feelings when they brokered the same amount as their sibling(s) is an important one. This shows that the participants were more likely to feel better when they and their sibling(s) shared the responsibility and the pressure of brokering for their parents or guardians. This is most likely due to the reliability of individuals on their sibling(s) when growing up (McHale, et al., 2012). Children rely heavily on the support of their siblings and, although there are exceptions, it is widely a pattern. Child brokers, like other children, rely on their familial connections and their sibling relationships. This is the reason why it was found that over half of the participants are likely to feel better when sharing the task.

These findings demonstrate just how impactful child brokering is, not only when the child broker is involved, but also in relation to their sibling(s). As child brokers develop and grow, any negative feelings towards sibling(s) may amplify and create a

relationship where their support network is disturbed. The disturbance of their support network leads to the increase in the negative effects mentioned previously because many times, child brokers rely on their own family members for support, instead of reaching out outside of the family connections (Weisskerch, Alva, 2002). When these feelings overpower their ability to rely on their family connections, children are more likely to have negative experiences while developing and this can cause them to have difficulties when developing and creating relationships as they grow.

Sibling relationships are crucial when children are developing because they can find an outlet for their feelings and a support whenever they need to rely on another person. In addition, children are more likely to trust their sibling(s) than their parents with information that they deem inappropriate or offensive. This is due to the nature of the relationship between the siblings (Tarakeshwar, et al., 2006). In the case of child brokers, the children are already going through the stress of being children and being brokers. The added pressures of a disturbed sibling relationship can cause more negative effects on the child.

The importance of this information is that these added pressures and the disturbed, or lack of, support network can deter the child broker from pursuing the career or the education that they want. If the sibling relationship is the disturbed, the child does not have that added layer of support that child brokers need. These child brokers that participated in the survey are individuals that have been able to pursue what they want.

There are many more who have not been able to. The child brokers mentioned are in classrooms, in hospitals, in everyday situations and many times they are invisible to onlookers because they are not certified and are just another family member “helping out” but this is greater than helping out. Brokering is a full-time job that these children take on and continue to take on (Antonini, 2016).



### **Possible Solutions**

Through the scholarly research, many possible solutions were discussed to improve the situation for child brokers and to support them. There are some regulations in place currently, but they are vague and may not always be followed. According to the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, institutions and programs receiving federal funding must provide “meaningful access” to individuals with limited English proficiency (Communication Research, 2017). The idea of “meaningful access” is not clearly defined. What this means is that the institutions are able to reach out to someone who has a level of the non-English language to help interpret or translate. Title VI does not establish whether the individual needs to be certified or must prove they have achieved a certain proficiency in the target language.

What occurs often is that the institution or program reaches out to the school system and requests a student that has previously been known to broker (Cline, et al., 2014). This means, they ask an existing child broker to broker for a family that is likely not their own. As the institution or program does this, they are perpetuating the use of child brokers instead of reaching out to a certified agency and paying for an interpreter or translator. As the institution or program perpetuates this, they add stress and pressure to the child because the child receives another task to complete. This is another clear example of the differentiation of child brokers versus children that do not broker. This system of meeting the requirements of Title VI is ineffective. This of course, is only one

example. Another example is not providing any resources to aid in brokering for an individual.

To counteract this situation, the institutions should implement a policy to call to certified interpreters or translators for the purpose of brokering with individuals. This would mean setting aside a budget for the purpose of improving the situations in which child brokers find themselves and to be assured that the information is conveyed accurately and completely to the needed individuals (Kale and Syed, 2010). This is especially in high risk situations such as hospitals, courts, and immigration offices. It is also important for other places such as schools (Gustason, 1985), however, there are other solutions that can also be implemented into schools and may be less costly.

Many schools are incorporating language into their curriculum, particularly high schools and middle schools. A way to improve the situation for child brokers is to utilize the existing resources that the schools have. If the school has a language teacher and that language is in high demand for brokering, the teacher could be given an incentive to become certified and act as a part-time interpreter or translator and a part-time teacher (Colomer, 2010). This would require adjusted pay but would relieve the pressure that the child brokers feel in the school setting when they need to broker parent-teacher conferences and other school functions.

In addition, school systems can support the existing child brokers by promoting bilingualism within the school systems. This means promoting the implementation of

different languages in the curriculum and promoting the use of the language by creating a welcoming environment through the intolerance of comments targeted towards minority groups. In addition, connecting students to resources such as mental health counseling or connecting them to other child brokers with whom they can connect. Providing the child broker with support networks can increase their likelihood of success in later life and allows them to be recognized.

Child brokers are present in most, if not all, communities. They may go unnoticed or grow into young adults, but their identity remains. Although many times they do not understand that they are child brokers, they may recognize that they are different and feel as though they have no support from those around them because of the lack of understanding of their situation. They are invisible and this pressure can turn into a large impediment in their career and academics. This research brings light to this topic and allows the recognition of these children, some now young adults. The solutions are at hand, it is only a matter of implementation.

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