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The Impact of Spanish Caseload on Customer Satisfaction and Reliability of Payments

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The Impact of Spanish Caseload on Customer Satisfaction and Reliability of Payments

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for

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Abstract

In July 2017, the County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) implemented a Spanish Caseload as a means of addressing the evolving and diverse needs of its customers. The Spanish Caseload was divided among three Spanish-speaking Child Support Analysts (CSA) with the objective to increase customer satisfaction and increase reliability of child support payments. A review of relevant literature articles that align with the study discussed the impact of language access and customer satisfaction, customer satisfaction and willingness to pay, and lastly language access in the public sector. Data was collected from DCSS staff, customer surveys and data from Case Management Tool (CMT) to compare DCSS pre- and post-implementation of the Spanish Caseload. The results of this study may provide information on whether the Spanish Caseload implemented was effective in increasing customer satisfaction and increasing reliability of payments.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Background

What happened is my mom did not know what to do. They gave her some letters... So, we went to the place and they had to do this and that, and she didn't have it [a letter] with her. When asked if the materials were in Spanish she [the staff] replied, "No they are in English (Interviewee. Garcia & Duckett, 2009, pg. 122).

This interviewee's experience in navigating the public sector in attempts to obtain services is just one of a myriad of examples of barriers Spanish-speaking customers experience daily. "For the majority of individuals in the United States (U.S.), audible speech is an important method of communication" (Garcia & Duckett, 2009, pg. 120). The ability to communicate in English increases one's ability to locate and obtain services needed (Garcia & Duckett, 2009). However, "for many non-English speaking persons the national goal of access to...services are unachieved" (Garcia & Duckett, 2009, pg. 120). It is unfortunate that for many non-English speakers their access to services is unachieved because they lack the ability to communicate in English. It's discouraging that these individuals have to experience this because, instead of receiving the help and/or service they need, they are turned away, therefore creating greater disparities in access to services.

This barrier in language understanding causes a great disparity in access to public services for the Spanish-speaking population. The Latino population comprises about 17.6% of the US population (about 56.6 million) (United States' Census Bureau 2015). In California, Latinos make up about 39% of the state's total population (United States' Census Bureau 2015). Ramirez & de la Cruz (2002) state that, "by 2050, the U.S. population is likely to be 25% Latino" (p 121). These trends make it clear that the Latino population is the fastest growing

minority population in the United States (Furman, Bender, Lewis, & Shears, 2006; Iglehart & Becerra, 1995). Nonetheless, “the challenges associated with the language barriers experienced among the Spanish-speaking population are considerable and warrant attention” (Garcia, & Duckett, 2009, pg. 121). To address these challenges associated with the language barriers experienced among the Spanish-speaking population it would be necessary and essential for service providers to provide services in the customer’s native language, Spanish.

Problem Statement

The County of San Mateo, Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) plays an important role for children, parents, and guardians. DCSS not only promotes economic security for children and families, DCSS’s mission is to strive “to enhance the lives of children and families by helping parents meet the financial, medical and emotional needs of their children by establishing and enforcing child support orders” (Child Support Services, n.d). To help children and families obtain the child support needed to help provide for their basic needs, DCSS needs to address the evolving and diverse needs of its customers. To do this, County of San Mateo DCSS has had to reassess their child support program to sustain the evolving needs and demographics of families, specifically the Spanish-speaking population. In July 2017 DCSS implemented a Spanish caseload after reassessing the department’s Performance Management Plan (PMP) in efforts to address the evolving and diverse needs of its customers. DCSS assessed and decided to focus on the Spanish-speaking population, as Latinos make up 25% of the population in San Mateo County and Latinos are the fastest growing minority (United States’ Census Bureau 2010).

DCSS implemented a Spanish caseload that was managed by three bilingual Child Support Analyst’s (CSA). The Spanish caseload consisted of child support cases where Spanish

was identified as the primary language regardless if the customer had or didn't have a Social Security Number (SSN). The Department of Child Support Services goal was to provide exceptional customer service regardless of the customer's limited English proficiency and lack of understanding. DCSS understood that if it failed to provide exceptional customer service, the relevant cultural assumptions could create programmatic issues for effectively addressing the needs of the Spanish-speaking customers. DCSS not effectively addressing the needs of the Spanish-speaking customers would lead to disparities in access to child support services. Additionally, if language access is not available, not only does it create a language barrier, it can lower customer satisfaction causing friction with the Spanish-speaking customers which may hinder custodial parent's willingness to cooperate and the non-custodial parents (NCP) willingness to comply in paying their court ordered child support.

Purpose of the Study

The implementation of the Spanish caseload within the Department of Child Support Services is a critical component to determine if the Spanish caseload is able to address the evolving and diverse needs of its Spanish-speaking customers. Providing services in the customer's native language will not only help to eliminate the language barrier but will support the establishment of better rapport with either the custodial or non-custodial parent. Establishment of better rapport with either the custodial or non-custodial parent can be enhanced as the language barrier is eliminated and either custodial or non-custodial parent can communicate without the need of a utilizing the language line for an interpreter and being misunderstood, which encourages trust and rapport is built between the parties and the CSA.

The review and analysis of literature reviews and in-person interviews with six key child support professionals who participated in the creation and implementation of the Spanish caseload helped support the validity of the hypothesis:

The implementation of the Spanish caseload at the County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) will increase customer satisfaction and increase the reliability of child support payments.

The literature review for this study was organized into three themes. Each theme was described, analyzed and evaluated separately to identify trends, patterns, agreement, disagreements and insights regarding the scholarly literature of this study (Denhardt, Denhardt, & Blanc, 2014). Additionally, data collected from DCSS respondents, customer surveys and data extracted from the Case Management Tool database (CMT) provided a comparison analysis of pre-implementation and post-implementation of the Spanish caseload. The results and findings, conclusions and recommendations of this study helped key decision-makers determine whether the implementation of the Spanish caseload was effective in increasing customer satisfaction and increasing reliability of child support payments.

Significance of the Study

This study's purpose was to measure if the implementation of the Spanish caseload was effective in increasing customer service and child support payments among the Spanish-speaking customer's within DCSS. The results would benefit DCSS staff and DCSS Spanish-speaking customers. It would benefit DCSS staff as it would meet and addressing the evolving and diverse needs of its customers while bridging the service delivery gap. It would benefit DCSS Spanish-speaking customers as it would eliminate the communication barriers and address their needs without the customer jumping through hurdles to have their questions answered.

Research Hypothesis

The implementation of the Spanish caseload at the County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) will increase customer satisfaction and increase reliability of child support payments.

The researcher derived at this hypothesis as one of DCSS' goal for their Performance Management Plan (PMP) was to address the evolving diverse needs of its customers. DCSS assessed the department's goals and objectives and decided to focus on the Spanish-speaking population, as Latinos make up 25% of the population in San Mateo County and Latinos are the fastest growing minority (United States' Census Bureau 2010). Additionally, DCSS recognized that there was a gap in service delivery with the Spanish-speaking population and they wanted to bridge that gap with the implementation of the Spanish caseload. Therefore, the researcher considered it would be interesting to conduct a study to measure if the implementation of the Spanish caseload had an impact with customer satisfaction and child support payments.

Limitations

The limitations of this study include time and opportunity for this researcher to interview DCSS Spanish-speaking customers. There was only a short eight-week period of time for the researcher to gather data. Also, the researcher was not given authorization from the Director of the department to speak directly and/or interview DCSS Spanish-speaking customers due to DCSS federal, state and local rules and regulations. Since the researcher was unable to interview DCSS Spanish-speaking customers, the researcher reviewed and analyzed the Department's customer surveys records which included customer service evaluations and feedback collected during their visits.

Definitions of Terms

Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) – The Department of Child Support Services assists parents in understanding the child support process and provide services in a respectful, effective and efficient way. DCSS objectives are to locate parents, establish paternity, enforce court ordered child support against parents obligated to support their children and oversee the distribution of funds according to current Federal and/or State laws and regulations (Child Support, n.d.)

Non-Custodial Parent (NCP) – Doesn't have primary care of the child: the child lives with the other parent most of the time and the non-custodial parent is ordered to pay child support.

Custodial Parent (CP) – Have custody of the child: the child lives and is in the primary care of the custodial parent

Spanish-speaking customer – This includes Custodial parents (CP) and/or Non-Custodial parents (NCP) that have primary language of "Spanish" identified in the Child Support Enforcement system (CSE). The Spanish caseload would include Spanish-speaking customers with Social Security Number (SSN)/no SSN and/or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).

Expected Impact of the Research

The researcher expects that with the implementation of the Spanish caseload within the County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services to support the researcher's hypothesis. The researcher also expects to enhance how other Local Child Support Agencies (LCSA) provide services to the Spanish-speaking customers. Implementing the Spanish caseload will eliminate the communication barriers and have the potential impact of addressing the customer's needs, thus bridging the service delivery gap experienced within the Spanish-

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speaking customers. The researcher anticipates if the results of the Spanish caseload are successful that it can serve as a model and or approach for other LCSA's to adopt and implement within their own departments, as the County of San Mateo DCSS is the first county piloting this Spanish caseload.

Chapter 2 – Review of Literature

This literature review was divided into three themes and was described and examined separately below. The first theme examined the impact of language barriers on customer satisfaction. The second theme reviewed the lack of language access in the public sector and the barriers it creates for Spanish-speaking customers. Lastly, the third theme reviewed if researchers concur that customer satisfaction has an impact on a customer's willingness to pay. Each theme was described, analyzed and evaluated separately below to identify trends and patterns (Denhardt, Denhardt, & Blanc, 2014). Identifying these trends and patterns helped in determining if the scholarly literature reviewed agreed or disagreed with the researcher's hypothesis.

Impact of language barriers on customer satisfaction

In 2006-2008 over 34 million people in California spoke Spanish other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Of those 34 million people, 16 million people were identified as "spoke English less than very well" in California (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). These statistics demonstrate the growing number of people with limited-English proficiency (LEP). Lee, Batal, Maselli, & Kutner (2002), state that "because America's current ... system is geared toward English-speaking [customers] delivering quality [service] to the large population with limited English skills has become an increasing challenge" (p 641). For America's public system to be effective in delivering services to all customers it would be essential for the public system to be tailored to both English-speaking and non-English speaking customers. Given the growing recognition of language barriers ... little data exists about [customer] satisfaction in non-English speakers (Woloshin, Bickell, Schwartz, Francesca, & Welch, 1995). Carrasquillo et al., (1999) point out that a study done in California demonstrated language understanding and how the use

of an interpreter greatly affected an LEP's understanding, but that it did not demonstrate customer satisfaction. Researchers not taking into consideration how language barriers and customer satisfaction go hand in hand may help explain the lower levels of satisfaction experienced among speakers with limited- English proficiency (Carrasquillo et al., 1999). It is important for researchers, physicians and/or any service providers to take into consideration how language barriers and customer satisfaction are intertwined. According to researchers Morales, Cunnigham, Brown, Liu & Hays (1999) "Spanish-speaking patients/ [customers] have been found to be less satisfied with health-care/ [services] than English-speaking patients/ [customers] with research suggesting that communication among service providers may play a significant role" (p 409). If a customer is having a difficult time understanding what is being explained to them because of a language barrier, there is a significant likelihood that their customer satisfaction levels maybe low as their questions and/or concerns may not have been answered or addressed. Also, the customer may not have been able to explain themselves correctly creating a disconnect which can leave the service provider and customer frustrated, thus for the cause of the direct negative impact on lower levels of customer satisfaction (Perez-Stable, Napoles-Springer & Miramontes, 1997).

According to Carrasquillo et al. (1999) study, the researcher's objectives were to examine patient satisfaction and willingness to return to an emergency department (ED) among non-English speakers. Carrasquillo et al. (1999), wanted to determine if language barriers play a role in the delivery of quality of care. The researchers hypothesized that non-English-speaking patients who are treated in the ED are less likely to be satisfied with the care they receive (Carrasquillo et al., 1999). To measure the patient satisfaction the researchers utilized a cross-sectional survey and followed up with phone interviews 10 days after the ED visit. To evaluate

the hypothesis the researchers examined “data retrieved from the Harvard Emergency Department Quality Study, a quality improvement effort between five ED in urban teaching hospitals in the Northeastern United States” (Carrasquillo et al., 1999, pg. 82).

The result of the study concluded that Carrasquillo et al. (1999) hypothesis was correct. Non-English speakers were less likely to be satisfied with their care in the ED, and less willing to return to the same ED if they had a health problem that required a visit to the emergency room. This research study aligns with this researcher’s study as this article is relevant to the topic. Carrasquillo et al. (1999) study focused on measuring patient satisfaction among non-English speakers in an emergency department setting which is pertinent to the researcher’s study as the variables measured align with the researcher’s hypothesis.

Another similar study conducted by Mazor, Hampers, Chande, & Krug (2002) whose objective was to determine if teaching Spanish to pediatric emergency physicians was associated with an increase in customer satisfaction for Spanish-speaking families. The results concurred with Carrasquillo et al. (1999) study that language barriers are known to affect patient satisfaction. This study is also relevant to the research topic proposal as its objective was to measure language barriers and patient satisfaction which aligns with the proposed hypothesis for this intended study. Although the field of study the surveys are conducted are different from the proposed research topic field of study, the objective remains same which makes it relevant to the topic. The results of both studies found that non-English speakers were less satisfied with their level of care in the ED and that language barriers are known to decrease patient satisfaction (Carrasquillo et al., 1999; Mazor et al., 2002). The findings of these articles can be utilized to help support the proposed research study’s findings. The survey and questionnaire utilized were beneficial to review as it reiterated that patient satisfaction is an important indicator of the

quality of care. The research results can be used in the proposed study and can be tailored to support the research topic and highlight the importance of ensuring language needs are addressed not just in the healthcare field, but in all fields, who serve the public.

Language access in the public sector and the barriers it creates for non-English-speakers

Lack of language access in the public sector can create multiple barriers for non-English-speakers like, Spanish speakers and decrease the individual's ability to identify and access services needed (Flores, Abreu, Olivar & Kastner, 1998). Additionally, factors such as linguistic and cultural barriers influence access to services and customer satisfaction (Acosta, Weist, Lopes, Shafer, & Pizarro, 2004). These barriers make it difficult to near impossible to obtain the services needed and if obtained the customer satisfaction is poor. According to Garcia & Duckett (2009) for many non-English speakers limited access to services has been linked to disparities to minority ethnic groups in the United States. Garcia and Duckett (2009) conducted a qualitative study to describe barriers experienced by immigrant Latino adolescents seeking access to health care. The research conducted two one-to-one interviews with 14 participants, one with the researcher and a visual narrative project on his or her own (Garcia & Duckett, 2009). The interviewer covered the participant's experience. The interviewer asked the participants to "Please describe your experiences accessing health care services in the United States. Follow-up questions probed details of described positive and negative experiences, including barriers and facilitators ranging from personal or familial to the provider or institutional factors" (Garcia & Duckett, 2009, p. 122). The interviewer asking these follow-up questions to the interviewees allowed the interviewer to gather more qualitative data to review and analyze to determine the findings.

The majority of the participants associated language barriers and accessibility of health care as barriers. One of the male participants shared his experience in attempting to access health care. The participant described, “It was all in English. The interpreter was helping to fill it out” (Garcia & Duckett, 2009, pg. 122). The participants experience with language barriers related to paperwork correlate with the experience many of the Spanish-speaking customers experience at DCSS. The Spanish-speaking customer’s inability to complete a document necessary to provide to the office due to the document being all in English creates a barrier and affects customer satisfaction.

Additionally, researchers, Garcia & Duckett (2009) ask participants to share their experience in accessing health care when treated with someone who could communicate in Spanish. One of the participants replied, “It was a nurse. She was talking in Spanish. She gave me a lot of confidence to talk” (Garcia & Duckett, 2009, pg. 123). The participants positive experience also correlates with DCSS goal of the Spanish caseload to meet and address the evolving needs of its customers to increase customer satisfaction and reliability of payments. If the customer has the confidence to talk with their CSA, it increases the likelihood to establish rapport, explain and answer questions related to their child support case, thus increasing customer satisfaction.

Therefore, the findings of the interviews are important because it gives readers a better understanding of how much a disadvantage and challenge it is for non-English speaking individuals to access not only healthcare but any other services. Additionally, it reinforces the need for public agencies and health care providers to hire culturally competent staff to address and meet the needs of its customers. This article is relevant to the proposed research topic because it addresses the topic regarding language access in the public sector and the barriers non-

English speaking individuals experience. This article aligns with the proposed hypothesis and can potentially be used to support data findings from the study.

Customer satisfaction and willingness to pay

The impact of customer satisfaction and willingness to pay are important factors to consider when determining if the relationship influences one or the other. Previous research supports the idea that there is a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and financial performance (Homburg, Koschate, & Hoyer, 2005, pg. 84). However, Homeburg et al., (2005) wants to examine if there is a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and willingness to pay. Homeburg et al., (2005) conducted an experimental study where 80 students read a scenario and participants responded to measure of their willingness to pay. The study's results concluded that "satisfied customers are willing to pay more for the product or service" (Homburg, Koschate, & Hoyer, 2005, pg. 89). The researcher is also in agreement with Homeburg et al., (2005) results because if the customer is satisfied with the level of customer service received, then the customer maybe more inclined to pay. This article is relevant to the proposed research study because it addresses the topic regarding customer satisfaction and payments which coincides with the researcher's hypothesis.

Another study also concurs with the previous study's results that customer satisfaction does increase one's willingness to pay. Per Anderson & Lehmann (1994), agree that providing goods and services that satisfy customers should increase profit.

The findings of the studies are relevant because it aligns with the proposed research topic and hypothesis. This study would be relevant to the proposed research study as it would provide information whether providing child support services in Spanish via the Spanish caseload would increase the Spanish-speaking customer's customer satisfaction and increase their willingness to

pay their court ordered child support consistently. This study would support the dependent variable, increase reliability of child support payments as both studies show positive correlation among customer satisfaction and willingness to pay. It will be interesting to conduct own study to determine if the proposed research paper concludes with similar findings.

Conclusion

Overall, the literature review analyzed helped identify trends and patterns of scholarly literature that supported the researcher's hypothesis. In the process of analyzing the literature reviews the researcher found studies that aligned with the hypothesis and were relevant to the research study. Some commonalities that concurred with other previous studies demonstrated a positive correlation between language access and customer satisfaction. Along with customer satisfaction and willingness to pay. There was evidence that supported the notion that there is a positive correlation between both variables. All scholarly literature reviewed supported the researcher's hypothesis that having availability of language access will have a positive impact on customer satisfaction and willingness to pay.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Research Design

This is a mixed-methods research study using a combination of cross-sectional design, meta-analysis and qualitative designs. A cross-sectional design “collects data on all relevant variables at one time” (O’Sullivan, Rassel, Berner, & Taliaferro, 2017, pg. 30). Lastly, a qualitative design “produces information or data difficult or impossible to convert into number” (O’Sullivan, Rassel, Berner, & Taliaferro, 2017, pg. 43). These methods serve as a vital tool to conduct interviews, collect data, review case management tool (CMT) databases, and analyze existing studies to effectively demonstrate if there is validity to the proposed hypothesis.

Research Hypothesis

The implementation of the Spanish caseload at the County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) will increase customer satisfaction and increase reliability of child support payments.

Through a data collection strategy that assessed customer satisfaction and child support payments the researcher was able to measure the impact of the implementation of the Spanish caseload. The data collected was raw data utilizing the CMT database to extract quantitative reports, and customer satisfaction surveys. In-person interviews with key DCSS respondents were conducted to collect qualitative data. Key respondents selected for the in-person interview were the Department Director, Department Managers, Spanish supervisor and Spanish-speaking CSA’s. These key DCSS personnel were selected to be interviewed as they were instrumental in creating, implementing and managing the Spanish caseload.

Dependent and Independent Variables

In order to gather information concerning the research study, variables needed to be identified. Two dependent variables were examined in this study: (1) customer satisfaction of the Spanish caseload customers and (2) child-support payments from the Non-Custodial Parent to Custodial Parents from the Spanish caseload. The independent variable examined in this study was, the implementation of the Spanish caseload at the County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services. The two identified dependent variables would help to determine whether they had a positive correlation with the independent variable, the Spanish caseload. If there was a positive correlation between the dependent and independent variables, then it would validate that the Spanish caseload was effective. The researcher anticipated that with the implementation of the Spanish caseload customer satisfaction would increase within the Spanish-speaking customers and child support payments would also increase. Definitions of the dependent variables have been defined below.

Customer satisfaction:

Customer satisfaction will help DCSS determine if customer's questions and needs are being answered along with providing great customer service with the implementation of the Spanish caseload. Some methods to measure customer satisfaction will be,

- Utilizing customer surveys to determine if customers are satisfied with service being provided at DCSS.
- Compare the number of customers dropping in to DCSS pre-implementation of Spanish caseload effective July 1st, 2016 to December 31, 2016 and post-implementation of Spanish caseload effective July 1st, 2017 to December 31, 2017. To extract data the

researcher utilized the Case Management Tool database (CMT) to gather data to review analyze.

- Interviewing Director, Manager, Spanish supervisor, and Spanish CSA's, to gather inputs on Spanish caseload and/or case example that demonstrate customer satisfaction

Child Support payments:

Increase of reliability of child support payment can be measured by comparing data from pre-implementation of Spanish caseload effective July 1st 2016 to December 31, 2016 and post-implementation of Spanish caseload effective July 1st 2017 to December 31, 2017 such as,

- Reviewing financial reports of child support percentage bands
- Number of enforcement legal actions taken (e.g. file legal contempt actions (OSC/C), file motions to set payment on arrears (OSC/A))

Data Collection Plan

Data for this study has been derived from three main sources, review of existing data via CMT database within DCSS, interviews with key respondents (Department Director, Department Managers, Spanish caseload Supervisor and Spanish caseload CSA's), and secondary data from government documents, reports, and literature review articles. Extracting data from CMT database provided the researcher with quantitative data to measure one of the dependent variables, increase reliability of child support payments. Interviews with key respondents provided the researcher with qualitative data to analyze and measure one of the dependent variables, increase customer satisfaction. In addition to extracting data from CMT database, interviewing with key respondents and comparing pre-implementation and post-implementation of Spanish caseload helped to demonstrate performance and validated the study's hypothesis.

Lastly, using secondary data provided relevant literature reviews with similar studies that supported the researchers study and helped to make a strong argument on the results of the study.

Population Sampling Strategy

Interviews with six key respondents within DCSS were conducted. These key respondents were the director of the department, two department managers, Spanish supervisor, and two Spanish-speaking Child Support Analyst (CSA) from the Spanish caseload. These key respondents represented subject matter expertise as the director, manager and supervisor collaborated in creating the Spanish caseload. The CSA's are also subject matter experts as they are the front-line workers who interact and manage the Spanish-speaking customer's child support cases on a daily-basis. Therefore, these key respondents were selected to be the best source for primary qualitative data as they provided relevant information, insights and understanding of the underlying problems within the Spanish-speaking customers that was unable to be captured quantitatively.

Additionally, the researcher sampled the Spanish-speaking population. The Spanish-speaking population with DCSS represents all participants who identify themselves Latino, whose primary native language is Spanish or feel most comfortable speaking in Spanish, participants who have an SSN, no SSN, or ITIN. The researcher was not authorized to interview Spanish-speaking case participants, so the researcher utilized the department's customer satisfaction survey to capture the Spanish-speaking customer's comments and feedback regarding their experience with DCSS. The comments, feedback and insights gathered from the survey helped to determine if there was an increase in customer satisfaction with the implementation of the Spanish-caseload.

Procedure

Relevant data was gathered for this study from the child support enforcement system (CSE), Case Management Tool database (CMT) and interviews with key respondents within DCSS. The CSE system is a statewide used system where child support cases are monitored for payments and case notes are made regarding the status of case. The CMT database, is an internal system that DCSS personnel utilizes to access child support reports and data information. Queries were done in the CMT tool to filter and extract the data needed to review and determine if the data collected aligned with the researcher's hypothesis. Next, the data collected was put into graphs to demonstrate the impact of pre-implementation and post-implementation of the Spanish caseload. Approximately, the County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services reviews and monitors 1600 Spanish-speaking child support cases. Those 1600 cases have been identified as Spanish as the primary language and either cases with SSN, no SSN or ITIN. Parents associated with the test population of these cases reside in San Mateo County with or without their child(ren).

Furthermore, interviews were conducted and customer satisfaction surveys were reviewed. By interviewing key respondents as well as reviewing customer satisfaction surveys it added additional insights to the primary data gathered and helped to determine if the data collected supported the researcher's hypothesis.

Controlling for Internal and External Validity

Internal Validity

Internal validity refers to the extent to which results obtained in a research study are a function of the variables that were systematically manipulated, measured and/or observed in the study (Bieger & Gerlack, 1996). A threat to the validity of this research study is selection

contamination of cases identified as Spanish-speaking. This means cases that were incorrectly identified as Spanish-speaking as their primary language when both NCP and CP speak and prefer English as their primary language. Additionally, threat to the validity of this research study is researcher bias. The researcher has a professional relationship with the Department of Child Support Services.

External Validity

External validity pertains to the extent to which the results of a research study can be generalized confidently to a group larger than the group that participated in the study (Bracht & Glass, 1968). This research study should have external validity with other Local Department of Child Support Services (LCSA) who are implementing a similar Spanish Caseload.

Scope and Limitations

Due to the primary focus of this research is in the County of San Mateo, the scope and limits of this research is restricted to the County of San Mateo. Also, the researcher has been limited from interviewing case participants directly. The researcher had to supplement this by utilizing customer satisfaction surveys created and provided by DCSS to all case participants to rate CSA's on their customer service and if the case participants needs, questions or concerns were answered during their drop in at the office. Lastly, the researcher was limited to review only six months' worth of data collection as the implementation of the Spanish caseload was implemented effective July of 2017. The researcher reviewed data from 2016 for time-period July 2016 to December 2016 and data reviewed from 2017 for time-period July 2017 to December 2017 to conduct a comparison analysis of the data. The comparison analysis was done to demonstrate if there was a difference since the implementation of the Spanish caseload.

However, some data for 2016 was limited to what the researcher could collect for the Spanish-speaking participants within DCSS.

Conclusion

The study's objective was to gather and analyze extracted data from DCSS' CMT database to determine if the data collected showed an impact in an increase in child support payments for the Spanish speaking customers. Additionally, interviews were conducted with key respondents and customer satisfaction surveys were reviewed to determine if the implementation of the Spanish caseload had a positive impact in increasing customer satisfaction. If the interviews conducted and data collected demonstrate a positive correlation with the researcher's hypothesis, the implementation of the Spanish caseload would be deemed successful in meeting its objective.

Chapter 4 – Results and Findings

This chapter provides the results and findings from this study on the implementation of the Spanish caseload at the County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services (DCSS). Data was collected from interviews with key respondents within DCSS, DCSS customer satisfaction surveys and quantitative data collected via the CMT database. Results and findings are presented below starting with a review and analysis of key informant information followed by a review and analysis of customer satisfaction survey data from Spanish-speaking customers within DCSS. Lastly, review and analysis of quantitative data collection gathered from the CMT database. Each set of data and analyses is then followed by a summary of the significant findings from the collected data.

Research Hypothesis

The study determined if the implementation of the Spanish caseload at the County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) would increase customer satisfaction and increase reliability of child support payments.

Results and Findings: Interview Data

Question 1: What do you consider to be the major benefits of implementing the Spanish caseload within DCSS for the Spanish-speaking customers?

Responder 1: K. Cagno. The major benefits are meeting the customers where they are at in their native language. By helping them really understand what they need to do in terms of next steps because child support is so complex. DCSS wants the Spanish-speaking customers to have a comfort level with building trust and interacting with the caseworker who can speak to them in Spanish. K. Cagno believes that is the greatest benefit and most of all there [Spanish-speaking customer] feeling of comfort and breaking down any barriers e.g. to communication or understanding of the process.

Responder 2: P. Arteaga. The biggest benefit is being able to communicate with the customer's in concepts they understand. When you have language as a barrier things that one might say to someone in English and are trying to translate them utilizing a third party such as, the language line services may give you a straight translation. However, it does not give the customers an understanding of what is being said and that can make a big difference. For example, telling someone they have "un archivo" can be three different things if not put in the proper context. Therefore, one of the best benefits that the Spanish caseload gives customer's an understanding of what one is really talking about. Also, the Spanish caseload gives customers the opportunity to feel connection because the Spanish-speaking customers are talking to someone that understands and possibly shares a background with them. This is especially important to the Spanish-speaking community because there is a lot of having to feel that one is part of it to understand it.

Responder 3: D. Carlos. The major benefit is the customer service aspect of the implementation of the Spanish caseload. It is important for Spanish-speaking customers to have an interaction with a bilingual CSA. Additionally, D. Carlos felt it was needed to have a Spanish caseload as it would help the enforcement of the case to be able to have better chances and/or opportunities of enforcing the case or establishing a child support order because there are no communication barriers. Prior to the implementation of the Spanish caseload, there were communication barriers because of the lack of communication between the CSA and customer. Now, implementing the Spanish caseload that barrier has been removed and DCSS anticipates that the customer service will increase and the enforcement side of the case will increase in child support collections.

Responder 4: K. Bravo. One of the obvious benefits is that it is providing customers services in the language that they speak and that is an improvement in customer service for them [Spanish-speaking customers]. The Spanish-speaking customers as it is have a lot of different other barriers that they face and so anything that can help overcoming one of those barriers is helpful to them. K. Bravo also thinks that having native Spanish-speaking CSA's assigned to these cases are a little more effective. This is mostly because of some of the cultural similarities that the Spanish-speaking CSA's share with the Spanish-speaking population that helps them relate a little better than a straight translation would be using the language line services. Also, K. Bravo thinks that Spanish-speaking CSA's are able to get a lot more movement on cases that have been stagnant for a while due to Spanish-speaking CSA's are able to distinguish and identify the difference in names when doing multiple locate searches.

Responder 5: A. Figueroa. The major benefit is that customers are getting the information in their native language and this helps them [Spanish-speaking customers] understand the process. This also helps them make educated decisions of where they want their case to go into whether it is into an agreement, attending a court hearing to have a modification or whatever the case may be resolved in court. A. Figueroa also thinks that by talking to them about the process, timeframes, and procedures in their native language it helps everyone involved understand how it works and believes there is better compliance.

Responder 6: C. Montes. The biggest benefit is better communication with the Spanish-speaking customers. Prior to the implementation of the Spanish caseload a lot of the customers did not understand the complicated process child support is. The feedback received having the implementation of the Spanish caseload is that they are finally understanding the processes and how things work at DCSS.

Analysis: All respondents agreed that the Spanish caseloads greatest benefit was providing services in the customer's native language. Providing services in the customers native language increases their ability to understand the complex processes of child support. Additionally, all respondents also agreed that the implementation of the Spanish caseload helps to breakdown some of the barriers Spanish-speaking customers experience. For all the respondents involved in the interview process to have similar responses for question #1 was great because it demonstrated that from a management perspective to a CSA perspective they all agreed and understood that implementing the Spanish caseload was a good decision and anticipate it made a positive impact.

Question 2: What do you consider the major management barriers and/or challenges of implementing the Spanish caseload within DCSS for the Spanish-speaking customers?

Responder 1: K. Cagno. From a structural perspective, it was challenging to begin to dissect those cases and break them out. When Spanish-speaking customers apply for services, DCSS relies where they check the box on the application for primary language English or Spanish. There is research and analysis that is going into determining if those cases deemed to be Spanish-speaking really want Spanish speaking services. So, from a structural perspective there is time involved with the CSA in determining if the customer want services in Spanish. The customers may have checked the box that they're primary Spanish-speaking, but when the CSA contacts them they may say they prefer to speak English. Additionally, management is segregating a caseload with Spanish CSA's and the knowledge of possibly losing a Spanish-speaking CSA at any time would leave an uncovered caseload and not filling in that vacant position quickly can create a potential misstep in what DCSS is trying to accomplish in providing Spanish-speaking services.

Responder 2: P. Arteaga. Part of it is managing the caseload size and the expectations for both staff and customers. Second, is the CSE system utilized to monitor cases is not the most user-friendly when it comes to manually moving a case from one CSA to another. Following is caseload size changes and management tries to be equitable in terms of what they are covering on a caseload whether caseload size increasing or decreasing. Where is the balance between how many cases can one person have and still be equitable, as each case brings its own complexities and its own time challenges. Additionally, management must balance expectations for both the management and staff side. Unfortunately for management numbers become a roadblock to processes and initiatives because people focus on the number and not some much on looking at the number of cases that are actively being worked at. Also, management must assess the staff expectations of what they consider what is too much and if the resources needed are there. Furthermore, management is aware that historically implementing a Spanish caseload just requires more time on each case because people ask more questions and they want to be hand-held on processes. So, management needs to consider all these factors and determine if the Spanish-speaking customers' needs are being met by implementing a Spanish caseload.

Responder 3: D. Carlos. Some of the management barriers are caseloads and staffing. Prior to implementing the Spanish caseload management was assessing what kind of staffing was going to be needed for this pilot program. Management went from considering four Spanish CSA's to three CSA's due to staffing limitations, so that was one of the biggest barriers management encountered. Management acknowledged that the Spanish caseload was a very active caseload, lots of in-person interaction and hand holding on a regular basis. The Spanish caseload is not the type of caseload that can be put away because it is a very active caseload

where the Spanish CSA's are constantly on the phone, customers are constantly dropping into the office and they need more assistance than a regular non-Spanish speaking customer.

Responder 4: K. Bravo. One of the major management barriers of implementing the Spanish caseload was how management was going to identify the Spanish-speaking cases and manually reassign them among the CSA's. Additionally, one of the challenges in the beginning of the implementation of the Spanish caseload was the share volume of drop-ins the Spanish caseload was experiencing. Management understood these caseloads were going to be a drop-in and/or appointment heavy and that there was going to be additional calls, but in that first month of implementing the Spanish caseload management realized the Spanish caseload was seeing three times the number of customers than the regular enforcement CSA and that was a significant difference. Management saw the stress levels the Spanish CSA's were under and it was unfair and management wanted to figure out a way to make it more equitable knowing that the Spanish CSA's were seeing more customers.

Responder 5: A. Figueroa. A. Figueroa believes management has had to adapt to how Spanish cases are assessed and managed by CSA's in a different way. For example, some of the procedures written up may not always allow for certain steps to be taken in the Spanish caseload. The Spanish-speaking customers are individuals who are under employed and don't have an SSN. Spanish CSA's have had to get creative in the way the Spanish caseload is managed. A. Figueroa believes management understands that the Spanish caseload faces different challenges within this population and that management is open to redirect the way cases are being handled. Additionally, A. Figueroa stated that management supports the implementation of the Spanish caseload and it is crucial for the Spanish caseload to be successful. At the end of the day the objective is to have a paying case where the children of County of San Mateo are getting what

they need. Management has been open to minor changes the Spanish caseload has had to take in managing the caseload that are different from managing a non-Spanish speaking caseload.

Responder 6: C. Montes. C. Montes thinks one of the management barriers encountered in effectively implementing the Spanish caseload is removing the option of accepting in-cash payments in the office and replacing it with the kiosk. Replacing the option of accepting in-cash payments and replacing it with the kiosk makes it a challenge for the Spanish-speaking customers as many customers maybe literate or not technology savvy. Setting up the kiosk may appear more streamline for DCSS, but it is not easier for all Spanish-speaking customer's.

Analysis: Four of the six respondents thought that the major management barrier implementing the Spanish caseload was staffing limitations, what were to occur if there was an uncovered caseload due to a vacant position. In addition, another management barrier was how to be more equitable with staff as the Spanish caseload does require a lot more hand holding and more time spent on each case. While, the two other respondents thought that the major management barrier was the removal of the option to make a payment in cash at the office and replacing it with the payment kiosk as the Spanish speaking customers are not so tech savvy. Another major management barrier mentioned by the two respondents was how management was going to address the current processes and procedures at DCSS as they don't always apply with the Spanish caseload. The primary reason for this division of opinions seemed to be based that the first four respondents that shared similar responses were speaking from the perspective of management as they are part of management while the other two were CSA's and are the front-line caseworkers that speak and interact with the customers.

Question 3: What are the current barriers and/or challenges Child Support Analysts (CSA) encounter that prevent effective implementation of the Spanish caseload within DCSS for the Spanish-speaking customers?

Responder 1: K. Cagno. The current barriers and/or challenges CSA's encounter are minimal in terms of the actual implementation of the Spanish caseload. What is unknown is because of the volume of cases assigned to each Spanish CSA and the pilot timeline we [management] may say because they require so much more time that it could be that we haven't determined the correct amount of CSA's for that caseload. So, it could be that DCSS may need to add additional Spanish CSA and give them a smaller caseload to effectively provide customer service to this population because we [management] recognize that there is more time spent explaining the process and helping deliver what DCSS envisions providing excellent customer service across the agency.

Responder 2: P. Arteaga. The current barriers that CSA's encounter that prevent effective implementation of the Spanish caseload is balancing the perceptions CSA's may have in doing things differently to enforce a case. Additionally, addressing the challenges that come with a Spanish caseload such as, legal status to gain employment. Spanish CSA's needs to assess the case and think of the appropriate approach to take to enforce the case as not all procedures, legal actions or data base systems may work to locate the NCP due to many of the data bases rely on an SSN. Thus, making it that much more difficult for Spanish CSA's to effectively manage a case as they have to be more creative in the enforcement aspect and be more proactive in their approach.

Responder 3: D. Carlos. The current barriers that CSA's encounter that prevent effective implementation of the Spanish caseload is the volume of cases each Spanish CSA is managing. D. Carlos suggests that having a fourth Spanish CSA would benefit the Spanish caseload.

Responder 4: K. Bravo. The biggest barrier that the Spanish CSA's tend to have are things that are outside of our control. For example, earlier this year the state mandated for the stop of receiving cash payments in the office and replace it with a payment kiosk and for the Spanish-speaking customers this presents a challenge as they are not as tech savvy. Although the payment kiosk is in Spanish, the translation appears to be too sophisticated and not all the Spanish-speaking population can understand, as they can be illiterate. Additionally, another barrier that CSA's experience is the difficulty their Spanish-speaking customers encounter in navigating the call center in order to speak with a CSA. Along with the state forbidding the use of social media networks to locate NCP's or CP's. These things are out of the CSA's control which make it just that much harder for a Spanish CSA to effectively enforce a child support case.

Responder 5: A. Figueroa. According to A. Figueroa some of the current barriers that CSA's encounter that prevent effective implementation of the Spanish caseload is the large caseload size about 500 cases per CSA. Each CSA wants to devote the same amount of time to every case and it is a little hard when some customers require a lot more time and hand-holding. There is a lot more follow up. A. Figueroa reports that it has been a challenge as A. Figueroa wants to give every customer the same amount of time and attention, but A. Figueroa realizes that she is unable to meet her own expectations.

Responder 6: C. Montes. Some of the current barriers is not being able to take cash payments in the office. The drop-in sheets can be difficult to complete as some of the customers

are illiterate and need help with that. Additionally, the fear that customer feels possibly due to the political climate is a barrier and the CSA needs to make them comfortable. Furthermore, the volume of drop-ins Spanish CSA see can create a challenge to effectively manage a Spanish caseload. Therefore, it is important for CSA's to have good time management as the Spanish caseload is a very active caseload. Some other barrier's CSA's encounter within the Spanish caseload is breaking the stereotype (DCSS anti-father) and put the customer at ease to have the ability to establish a rapport.

Analysis: All respondents agreed that the current barriers CSA's encounter is the high volume of cases per CSA, how each case requires more time devoted to them and how CSA's are limited to the resources currently available to locate NCP's and/or CP's. This was surprising that all respondents all shared similar responses because it demonstrates that all respondents which consist of management and front-line workers are aware of the barriers and hopefully will come up with solutions on how to address these barriers.

Question 4: What information and resources are needed now and in the future for effective implementation of the Spanish caseload within DCSS for the Spanish-speaking customers?

Responder 1: K. Cagno. Primarily it is needed to continue to hire Spanish speaking CSA's. Resources in relation to CSA that really want to serve on a Spanish-speaking only caseload. Currently, the Spanish caseload is voluntary where CSA's had to put in a letter of interest, so the hope is to be able to continue to do that as oppose of not having a say. DCSS wants CSA's to have passion to have this type of caseload for now and in the future, but it is important to be cognizant of not just focusing on Spanish only, but what is the dynamics of the caseloads within DCSS and what other languages can we offer, like Tagalog. DCSS will always

be looking at the demographics of the caseloads to effectively provide services to the customers whether they are Spanish speaking or seeing a pattern of other languages that are coming in.

Responder 2: P. Arteaga. The biggest resource needed is time with the Spanish caseload. In terms of technology P. Arteaga is unsure that it will be able to do more than what is available today as technology relies for one to put information in to provide results. To get the most out of a case is the ability of just being able to sit down and have a conversation with people and explain to them what their options and outcomes of each options are. So, this just goes back to the time factor which is always a challenge. Furthermore, P. Arteaga would like to create a process where CSA's don't have to worry about taking drop-ins and really focus their time on working their case. However, this is a challenge within itself as the Spanish caseload experiences a high volume of drop-ins.

Responder 3: D. Carlos. D. Carlos personally thinks that there needs to be a direct line between the Spanish-speaking customer and Spanish CSA. It would be a good resource for the customers to have a direct line in hopes of reducing the number of Spanish-speaking customers dropping into office and answer their questions over the phone. Additionally, more resources in enforcing the cases and addressing those limitations Spanish-speaking customers experience such as, employment since many of these individuals lack legal status to gain full-time employment.

Responder 4: K. Bravo. Per K. Bravo, additional resources needed for effective implementation of the Spanish caseload is investing in an additional Spanish CSA to be added to the Spanish caseload. It would be beneficial as it can reduce the number of cases per CSA. Reducing the number of cases per CSA would allow for Spanish CSA's to devote the time needed to each case without feeling overwhelmed. Additionally, another resource needed now

and in the future, is more outreach to the Spanish speaking population. There is a large Latino representation in San Mateo County that is not being represented nor served by DCSS and that would benefit from our services, such as the Coastal side and Northern part of San Mateo County. The possibility of having a satellite location in either one of these areas would greatly benefit the Spanish-speaking population.

Responder 5: A. Figueroa. Per A. Figueroa resources needed now and in the future, is the creation of a program that can be dedicated to help the unemployed NCP's. A. Figueroa believes as a community it is owed to them and to the children as they are part of the community too. This program would require that DCSS give them some type of work experience that would essentially give them a job, like the Vocation Rehabilitation Service (VRS) so that they can comply with their child support order. Resources need to be provided to this community like job center, job train or resource center especially to individuals with no SSN and/or legal status. Also, inviting NCP's into DCSS on a quarterly basis and explain to them their role and hopefully be more involved in the process of child support.

Responder 6: C. Montes. Outreach in the right place would make a big difference. Reaching out into the community where there is a large representation of the Latino community is important to let the community know of child support services.

Analysis: Surprisingly all respondents shared different responses to what information and resources were needed now and in the future for effective implementation of the Spanish caseload. Responses varied from hiring more bilingual CSA's, creating a direct line between CSA and customer to make it easier to contact CSA, more outreach within the Latino community, reduce the number of cases per CSA's by adding another CSA to the Spanish caseload, allowing more time to be devoted to case, and lastly creating a program devoted to

under-employed NCP's where they are given the opportunity to gain job experience and where DCSS invites NCPs and helps them understand what their role as NCP or CP means beyond just providing financially. The division of opinions among all the respondents was interesting to see because all responses were valid as they highlighted resources that would be beneficial to have at DCSS.

Question 5: How, if at all, can implementation of the Spanish caseload mitigate some of the barriers the Spanish-speaking customers' experience?

Responder 1: K. Cagno. The implementation of the Spanish caseload can mitigate some of the barriers the Spanish-speaking customers' experience by creating trust, relationship building and the ability for customers to feel that they are being heard. Also, that we [DCSS] have to meet the need of the population in the County of San Mateo and deliver services in a culturally sensitive way is really important.

Responder 2: P. Arteaga. One of the issues that the Spanish caseload was able to mitigate was breaking the language barrier. Giving customers the ability to speak in the native language they grew up in and understand really eliminates all the barriers that people have. It eliminates the "I don't understand, I don't feel heard or no one is being responsive to me" with the implementation of the Spanish caseload.

Responder 3: D. Carlos. One of the issues that the Spanish caseload was able to mitigate was enable the Spanish-speaking customers' ability to understand the CSA. Additionally, eliminating the use of the language line translation as it was not the best option. The language line translated, but did not ensure if the customer understood what was being said. D. Carlos believes there is more trust now because of the implementation of the Spanish caseload between the Spanish-speaking customers and the agency. D. Carlos has personally witnessed this where

customers are more open and willing to provide information because the trust and rapport has been established.

Responder 4: K. Bravo. Some of the barriers mitigated because of the implementation of the Spanish caseload is definitely the customer service piece of having someone that speaks the customer's native language. However, K. Bravo thinks it is beyond that too because being able to explain processes to the Spanish-speaking customers that is not just a direct translation where they are able to comprehend versus just understanding the language can make a greater impact.

Responder 5: A. Figueroa. A. Figueroa thinks since the implementation of the Spanish caseload there has been more compliance in paying their court ordered child support. Getting the information in the customer's native language helps them understand the process and has allowed for less legal court actions. It has also been seen that NCP's are more willing to callback or drop-in into office and complete paperwork needed. Additionally, more willing to cooperate with DCSS and processes. Also think since the implementation of the Spanish caseload trust has been able to be created and customers don't feel DCSS is no longer bias with one party over another.

Responder 6: C. Montes. The ability to not understanding the process of DCSS is mitigated with the implementation of the Spanish caseload. Therefore, the Spanish caseload is essential in opening the door to people and giving them the confidence to come in and giving them other resources on how to communicate. The language line was necessary, but the Spanish-speaking customers hated it because it was difficult to say what they wanted to say and have it understood and translated accurately. Implementing the Spanish caseload has also allowed to set up a rapport, build trust with customers, get movement on cases where they were in "locate

status” and has made a difference in collections and changing the perceptions of how customers view the agency.

Analysis: All respondents agreed that the implementation of the Spanish caseload was able to mitigate some of the barriers the Spanish-speaking customer’s experienced. Some of the shared responses were that the Spanish caseload allowed for establishing rapport, trust building, breaking not only the communication barriers, but educating the customers on the processes of child support. For all participating respondents to share similar responses was great feedback because it demonstrates that all respondents had similar expectations of the Spanish caseload.

Question 6: Overall, in what ways is the Spanish caseload achieving intended outcomes?

Responder 1: K. Cagno. Although there hasn’t been a significant increase in Spanish customer satisfaction surveys, K. Cagno is hoping that through this process [Spanish caseload] she will be able to go back and proactively reach out to these customers and survey them if they feel that the services are better now that Spanish-speaking customers have a Spanish-speaking CSA. If the results are positive, then it can be said that DCSS is achieving intended outcomes. It is not necessarily going to result in an increase in collections as it can go in a myriad of ways. It could possibly mean more case closures, it could mean that we have more Compromise of Arrears Program applications (COAP). Per K. Cagno, she wouldn’t look at an outcome to say what means success. For K. Cagno, success is ensuring these customers are getting the prompt service they need. That may not come in the form of a payment, we may still be working on locate, we may still be trying to get compliance or it can even result in case closure. So, the ability to say that what are our intended outcomes is really being able to say we know that there is this opportunity for DCSS to serve our customers in a way that is really going to make them feel comfortable.

Responder 2: P. Arteaga. Although the intended outcomes may not present themselves in collections, but it may be reflected in more interactions with customers. The outcome of increasing interactions with the NCP's and CP's is a significant step as it means more contacts are hopefully being achieved which results in the customer satisfaction outcome is being achieved. Even if the Spanish-speaking customer may never respond to a customer satisfaction survey it is seen in the reduction in customer complaints. The biggest achievement is that Spanish-speaking customers are finally being heard and understood. Although this may not result in what the customer wants to hear, but they are given their options based on the information they are providing. Overall, the intended outcome is to make the customer feel like they are part of the process and their opinion is considered and heard.

Responder 3: D. Carlos. D. Carlos stated there has been an increase in child support collections. D. Carlos reports that in the last four months since the Spanish caseload has been implemented Spanish cases where there are current child support cases are paying about 70% of the court ordered child support. D. Carlos believes this increase in collections is due to the increased interactions with customers, Spanish CSA's devoting more time on these cases on educating the NCP's which encouraged cooperation and compliance in paying their child support.

Responder 4: K. Bravo. The Spanish caseload is achieving intended outcomes as DCSS has been able to match Spanish-speaking customers with Spanish CSA's. About 87% of the Spanish-speaking customers coming in to the office are being matched with a Spanish-speaking CSA since the implementation of the Spanish caseload. Although part of this pilot program is improving the customer service piece, it is also performance management. The pilot program is

fairly new only has only been implemented six months, so the data to determine its effectiveness has not been reviewed yet.

Responder 5: A. Figueroa. Per A. Figueroa, she thinks that since the implementation of the Spanish caseload it has been successful so far in terms of collections. A. Figueroa personally keeps track of her own collections within her caseload and she has noticed an increase in the last six months. This increase in collections may possibly be due to customers understanding the process a little better and the parties have been advised that they can negotiate or do whatever they feel is appropriate to their case. A. Figueroa feels that in the past because of the language barrier the customers felt like they had no choice or an opinion on their case.

Responder 6: C. Montes. The intended outcome was to get more remittances/collections and more contact with customers. C. Montes thinks so far, the Spanish caseload has done a good job of locating people that had gone under the radar because the Spanish caseload has been able to reach out to family member's, CP's that were previously uncooperative, but that now can give us the necessary information. Also, not to discredit other CSA's, but non-Spanish speaking CSA's may not feel as comfortable picking up the phone and making that call to one of NCP's possible family members because of the hassle of using the language line. Also, utilizing the language line the non-Spanish speaking CSA did not always get the cooperation needed to enforce and manage a case effectively. Overall, the Spanish caseload is achieving the intended outcomes in addressing the need and ultimately getting more remittances to distribute to families.

Analysis: Four of the six respondents shared similar responses of the ways the Spanish caseload is achieving intended outcomes. Their similar responses were increase in performance management in terms of child support collections, locating of NCP's, and matching Spanish-speaking customers with Spanish-speaking CSA's. While the other two respondents thought that

the intended outcome for the Spanish caseload cannot be measured solely on collections as measuring success for the Spanish caseload encompasses so many other factors like, increase contact with Spanish-speaking population, lower Spanish complaints, and ensuring customers feel comfortable etc. The division of opinions does not mean either response is correct or wrong, but demonstrates how each respondent has a different perspective of how they perceive how the Spanish caseload is achieving intended outcomes.

Results and Findings: Customer Satisfaction Survey Findings

Customer satisfaction surveys are internally tracked at DCSS via the use of an excel sheet. The time-period the researcher reviewed was pre-implementation of the Spanish caseload July 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016 and post-implementation of the Spanish caseload July 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017.

For the pre-implementation time-period of the Spanish caseload July 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016 the researcher reviewed a total of five Spanish customer satisfaction surveys (See Figure 1). Three surveys were completed by the non-custodial parents (60%), and 2 surveys were completed by the custodial parents (40%). Customer satisfaction surveys were collected from case participants who completed the survey either during a drop-in or online.

Question 1 provided respondents the opportunity to rate the response time / availability of staff: “I was seen within 20 minutes. My email was responded to in an appropriate time”. Answers: 80% of the respondents rated the response time/availability of staff as “excellent”, and 20% of the respondents rated the response time/availability of staff as “good”.

Question 2 provided respondents the opportunity to rate the courtesy of staff: staff was courteous and professional. Follow up was handled appropriately. Answers: 80% of the respondents rated the response time/availability of staff as “excellent”, and 20% of the respondents rated the response time/availability of staff as “good”.

Question 3 provided respondents the opportunity to rate the knowledge of staff: the worker was knowledgeable regarding the process and provided correct written/verbal information. Answers: 80% of the respondents rated the response time/availability of staff as “excellent”, and 20% of the respondents rated the response time/availability of staff as “good”.

Question 4 provided respondents the opportunity to rate the overall experience during the contact with DCSS. Answers: 80% of the respondents rated the response time/availability of staff as “excellent”, and 20% of the respondents rated the response time/availability of staff as “good”.

Analysis: The researcher was surprised that there was very little data collected for the pre-implementation time-period. The researcher was aware that with the data gathered it was not going to capture the results accurately due to the lack of data collected. The lack of data collected could be due for several reasons like, the Spanish-speaking customers not being reminded to complete the surveys or not being distributed surveys. The lack of data highlights the need for the implementation of the Spanish caseload to have Spanish-speaking CSA’s help the Spanish-speaking customers understand and navigate the child support process.

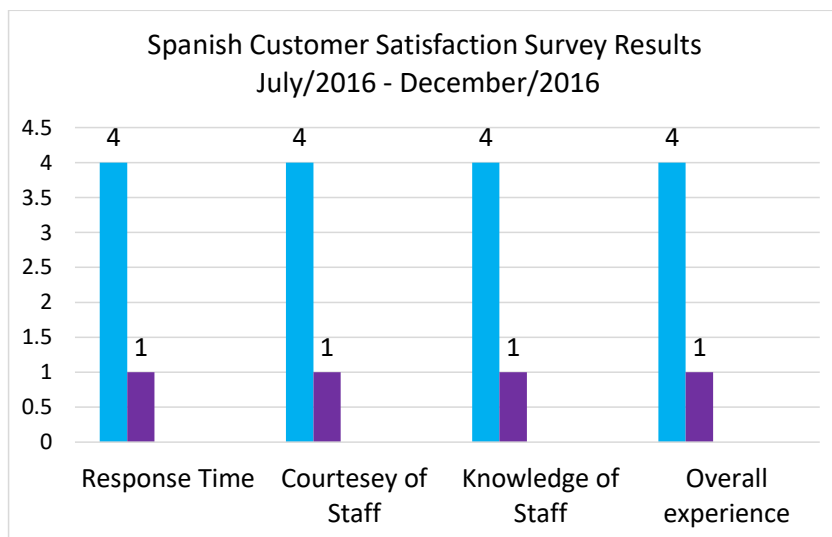


Figure 1 (N=5)

For the post-implementation time-period of the Spanish caseload July 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017 the researcher reviewed a total 18 Spanish customer satisfaction surveys (See Figure 2). Nine surveys were completed by the non-custodial parents (50%), eight surveys were completed by the custodial parents (44.44%) and one survey was completed by one respondent who did not state their role on the case (5.56%). Customer satisfaction surveys were collected from case participants who completed the survey either during a drop-in or online.

Question 1 provided respondents the opportunity to rate the response time / availability of staff: “I was seen within 20 minutes. My email was responded to in an appropriate time”.

Answers: 61.11% of the respondents rated the response time/availability of staff as “excellent”, 16.67% of the respondents rated the response time/availability of staff as “good”, 11.11% of the respondents rated the response time/availability of staff as “N/A”, and lastly 11.11% of the respondents rated the response time/availability of staff as “poor and/or bad”.

Question 2 provided respondents the opportunity to rate the courtesy of staff: staff was courteous and professional. Follow up was handled appropriately. Answers: 77.78% of the respondents rated the courtesy of staff as “excellent”, 5.55% of the respondents of the respondents rated the courtesy of staff as “good”, 5.56% of the respondents rated the courtesy of staff as “N/A”, and lastly 11.11% of the respondents rated the courtesy of staff as “poor and/or bad”.

Question 3 provided respondents the opportunity to rate the knowledge of staff: the worker was knowledgeable regarding the process and provided correct written/verbal information. Answers: 61.11% of the respondents rated the knowledge of staff as “excellent”, 16.67% of the respondents rated the knowledge of staff as “good”, 11.11% of the respondents

rated the knowledge of staff as “N/A” and lastly, 11.11% of the respondents rated the knowledge of staff as “poor and/or bad”.

Question 4 provided respondents the opportunity to rate the overall experience during the contact with DCSS. Answers: 61.11% of the respondents rated the overall experience during the contact with DCSS as “excellent”, 16.67% of the respondents rated the overall experience during the contact with DCSS as “good”, 5.55% of the respondents rated the overall experience during the contact with DCSS as “fair”, 5.56% of the respondents rated the overall experience during the contact with DCSS as “N/A”, and lastly 11.11% of the respondents rated the overall experience during the contact with DCSS as “poor and/or bad”.

Analysis: The biggest surprise the researcher noticed reviewing the data collected for the post-implementation of the Spanish caseload was the increase in the amount of surveys collected for the time-period. For the post-implementation review a total of 18 Spanish customer satisfaction surveys were collected. Having a larger data collection allowed for the researcher to review and highlight any patterns, trends, similarities and differences showcased from the collected data. Reviewing the data, the researcher saw a significant increase in Spanish-speaking customer’s rating each question as “excellent”.

The primary reason for this increase in ratings could be that since implementing the Spanish caseload the Spanish-speaking customers are being more responsive in having a Spanish-speaking CSA manage their case. Thus, reflecting on the comments and feedback provided on the surveys. For example, one respondent, a non-custodial parent (NCP) commented in Spanish “yo no esperaba tanta atencion. Estoy muy agradecido”/ “I did not expect so much attention. I am very grateful for the treatment”. The non-custodial parent went on to say, “son muy claros y muy amables gracias”/ “they [Spanish CSA] are very clear and friendly thank you”. These

comments and feedback demonstrate that providing services in the customer's primary native language is beneficial and appreciated as the customers feel better informed and they are able to understand the process. Although the researcher was limited to the data collected for 2016, the researcher can confirm that the implementation of the Spanish caseload has increased customer satisfaction among the Spanish-speaking customers within DCSS.

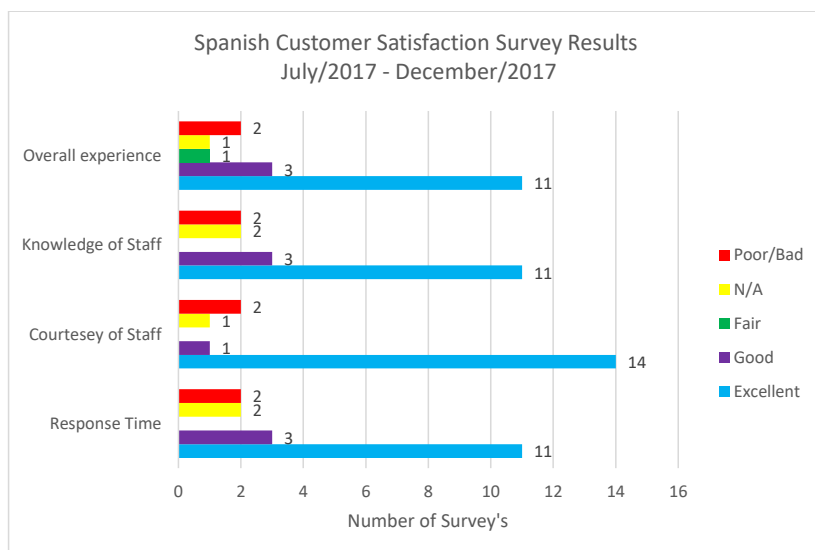


Figure 2 (N = 18)

Results and Findings: Quantitative Data Collection

In addition to conducting surveys with key respondents and reviewing customer satisfaction surveys the researcher also wanted to review the quantitative data. Data the researcher was interested in reviewing was the percentage bands of paying cases pre-and post-implementation of the Spanish caseload, the volume of drop-ins pre-and post-implementation of the Spanish caseload, and the number of enforcement legal actions done pre-and post-implementation of the Spanish caseload. All data was gathered via the use of the CMT database.

Percentage of paying child support cases: Pre-implementation of Spanish caseload

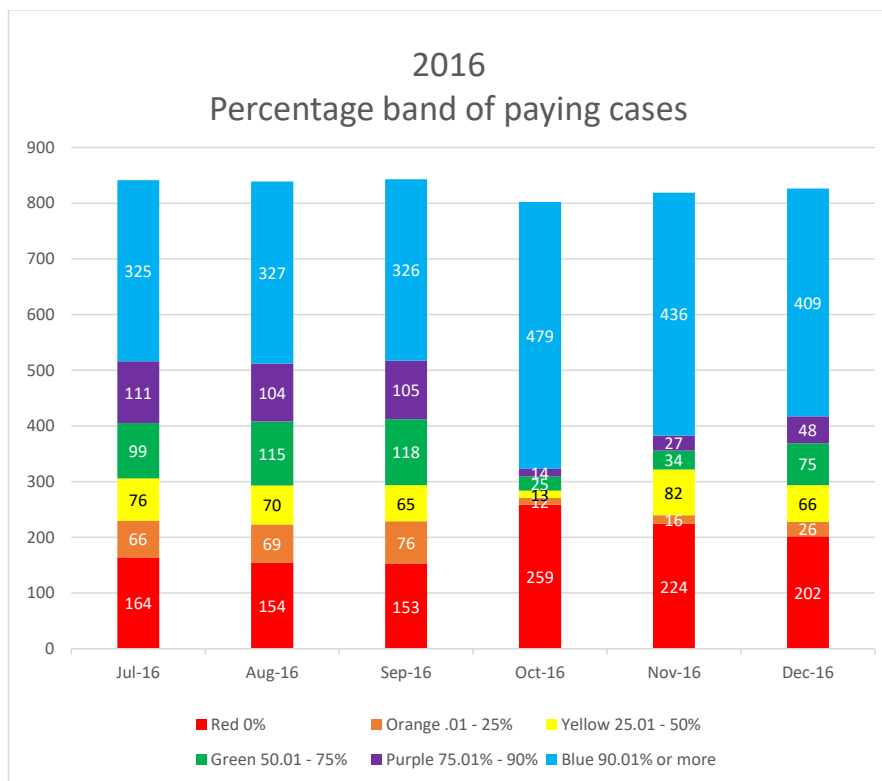


Figure 3

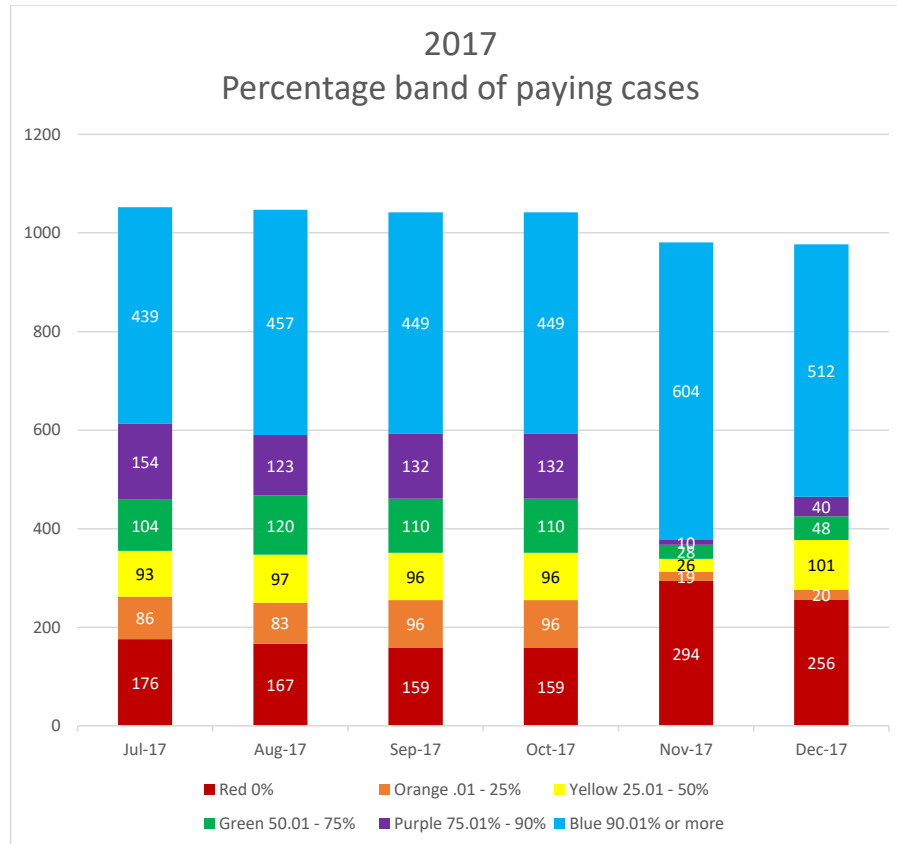
Percentage of paying child support cases: Post-implementation of Spanish caseload

Figure 4

Analysis:

The graphs for pre-implementation of Spanish caseload and post-implementation of Spanish caseload illustrate that there was a 26.41% increase for cases paying in the 90.01% or higher percentage band, 44.5% increase for cases paying in the 75.01% - 90% percentage band, 11.58% increase for cases paying in the 50.01% - 75% percentage band, 36.83% increase for cases paying in the 25.01 – 50% percentage band, 51.52% increase for cases paying in the .01-

25% percentage band, and lastly 4.76% increase for cases in the 0% percentage band. Based on this information the researcher noticed the fluctuation in the percentages per month and this can be due for several reasons e.g. cases opening, cases closing cases being transferred to and from the Spanish caseload, success in locating the NCP and/or earnings to send out an income withholding order to deduct from wages, etc. The researcher also noticed that since the implementation of the Spanish caseload all percentage bands had increased. The increase in the percentage bands means that more child support payments are being received and dispersed out to children and families. Although the 0% percentage also increased, the percent increase was not large. The 4.76% increase in the 0% percentage band could be due because of cases being transferred into the Spanish caseload that had not been identified previously as Spanish speaking.

Overall, based on the findings the researcher can validate that since the implementation of the Spanish caseload, the Spanish caseload has had a positive impact in increasing child support payments. Prior to the implementation of the Spanish caseload (July 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016), Spanish-speaking cases were collecting an average of 63.66% of current child support per month. Since the implementation of and the Spanish caseload (July 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017), Spanish-speaking cases are collecting an average 65.15% of current child support per month. This is an overall increase of 1.49% in just six-months of implementing the Spanish caseload. The researcher is optimistic that the impact of the Spanish caseload will continue to increase collections long term for the Spanish-speaking customers.

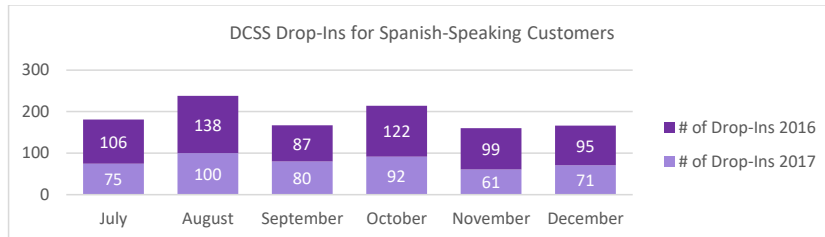
Graph of Pre-and Post-Implementation of Spanish Caseload: Drop-Ins

Figure 5

Analysis:

The graph illustrates the number of Spanish-speaking customers dropping into DCSS during the pre-implementation and post-implementation of the Spanish caseload. The graph illustrates a 24.6% (31) decrease in drop-ins from the Spanish-speaking customers for the month of July 2017, a 27.5% (38) decrease in drop-ins from the Spanish-speaking customers for the month of August 2017, 8.05% (7) decrease in drop-ins from the Spanish-speaking customers for the month of September 2017, 24.6% (30) decrease in drop-ins from the Spanish-speaking customers for the month of October 2017, 38.4% (38) decrease in drop-ins from the Spanish-speaking customers for the month of November 2017 and lastly 25.3% (24) decrease in drop-ins from the Spanish-speaking customers for the month of December 2017. There was an overall percentage decrease in drop-ins of 26%.

The decrease in drop-ins within the Spanish-speaking customers demonstrates that the implementation of the Spanish caseload has had a positive impact. Overall, the implementation of the Spanish caseload has had a positive impact in contributing to the increase in customer satisfaction. The number of Spanish-speaking customers dropping in less into the office could mean all their questions are being answered correctly and thoroughly, customers are

understanding the process, or customers are establishing rapport with their CSA and utilizing other forms of communication such as email, or phone-calls.

Graph of Pre-and Post-Implementation of Spanish Caseload: Enforcement Legal Actions

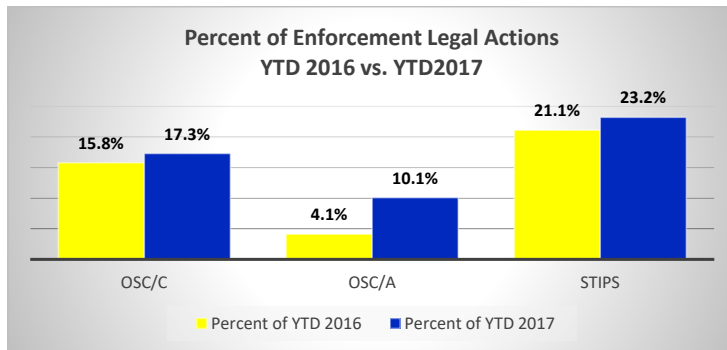


Figure 6

Analysis:

The researcher anticipated when extracting the data to measure if the implementation of the Spanish caseload had an impact on the number of legal actions taken that the researcher was going to be able to filter out the teams and Spanish-speaking customers among DCSS. However, during the process of the data collection the researcher was only allowed to extract cumulative data collection for the entire Enforcement Unit and not filter out the Spanish-speaking customers. The expectation to measure the number of enforcement legal actions taken pre-and post-implementation of the Spanish caseload did not meet the intended outcome. Nonetheless, the researcher did want to highlight the cumulative findings for the enforcement legal actions taken for Year-to-Date (YTD) 2016 vs. YTD 2017. From the graph above the illustration demonstrate that there was been an increase in the number of enforcement actions taken from YTD 2016 to YTD 2017. These findings are significant as they demonstrate that DCSS is taking the necessary actions to increase child support collections either through a court legal action (OSC/C – Contempt or OSC/A – Setting payment on arrears owed) or through the process of Stipulation

where both parties come to an agreement to either modify the court ordered child support or waive/negotiate past due balance owed.

Significant Findings

The most significant findings from the interviews were that all respondents interviewed shared similar ideas and responses. These findings are significant because it demonstrates that despite the difference in titles and positions of the respondents they all shared the same goal – to provide services in the customer’s native language, so that the customer understands the concepts and processes of child support.

Deleted: positons

The most significant findings from the survey data were the increase in the number of surveys collected between the time-periods analyzed. The significant increase in surveys illustrate that the Spanish-speaking customers are being more responsive in having a Spanish-speaking CSA manage their case and it is reflecting on the comments and feedback provided on the surveys.

The most significant findings from the CMT database were that it demonstrated the impact the implementation of the Spanish caseload had on the percentage of paying cases, drop-ins and enforcement actions. All areas reviewed illustrated an increase in the percentage of paying cases, increase in enforcement actions and decrease in the number of drop-ins. These findings are significant as they support the hypothesis that the researcher has proposed.

Overall, all data collected revealed a trend for the time-periods the data was reviewed. Data collected for the pre-implementation demonstrated that the Spanish-speaking customers were dropping into DCSS more often, there was not enough enforcement actions being taken, the percentage band of paying cases was stagnant and there was a low number of surveys collected. However, since the implementation of the Spanish caseload the data demonstrated an increase in

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the percentage of paying cases, increase in the number of enforcement actions taken, increase in the number of surveys collected and decrease in the number of drop-ins. This revealed that implementing the Spanish caseload made a significant positive impact in all areas reviewed.

Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions:

The County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services piloted a Spanish caseload July of 2017 in efforts to provide services in a culturally sensitive manner. Specifically, the pilot program sought to address the evolving and diverse needs of its Spanish-speaking customers. The end goal was to increase customer satisfaction and increase the reliability of child support payments within the Spanish-speaking cases.

This chapter provides the conclusions and recommendation for this study. These conclusions and recommendations are entirely based on the researcher's reflections of the relevant literature review utilized and data collected from interviews with DCSS personnel, review of customer satisfaction surveys collected from the CMT database, and relevant quantitative data gathered also from the CMT database. The empirical data was collected in the County of San Mateo and reflects a limited scope of study. The researcher formulated conclusions based upon the results and findings of the study.

The data collected revealed that the implementation of the Spanish caseload has had a positive impact in increasing customer satisfaction and increasing reliability of child support payments since its implementation in July of 2017. By DCSS addressing the evolving diverse needs of its customers with the implementation of the Spanish caseload it benefitted not just DCSS but its Spanish-speaking customers overall. Also, respondents interviewed support the Spanish caseload and agree there have been major benefits since its implementation e.g. increase customer satisfaction, no more language barriers, and increase in child support payments. Furthermore, the quantitative data collected revealed that there has been an increase in positive ratings from the customer satisfaction surveys, increase in the percentage of paying cases,

increase in the number of enforcement actions prepared and a decrease in the number of Spanish-speaking customers dropping into the office. Overall, the Spanish caseload accomplished to align with DCSS performance management plan (PMP) goals to increase payments and provide services in a culturally sensitive manner.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

By July 31, 2018, the end of the one year pilot program, County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services should approve to make the Spanish caseload permanent. The findings from the study support the recommendation. The implementation of the Spanish caseload has been successful in achieving its objective of increasing customer satisfaction and increasing child support payments. Making the Spanish caseload permanent will continue to benefit DCSS and its Spanish-speaking customers by providing services in the customer's native language thus increasing their ability to understand the concepts that are being explained and preventing the loss in translation.

Recommendation 2:

By August 1, 2018 County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services should hire an additional Spanish CSA to the Spanish caseload. All interview respondents confirmed the need to hire and/or add an additional Spanish CSA to the Spanish caseload. Additionally, all respondents interviewed agreed that the Spanish caseload requires additional time spent on each case and a lot of hand-holding. Therefore, by adding an additional Spanish CSA to the Spanish caseload it will reduce the number of cases per CSA and be more equitable across the board.

Eliminating the possibility of the Spanish CSA's feeling stressed and overwhelmed with the high volume of cases per CSA.

Recommendation 3:

The researcher recommends an increase in outreach within the Latino community. This can be achieved by collaborating with Community Based-Organizations (CBOs) and conducting presentations to discuss about the services at Department of Child Support Services. Additionally, partnering with other agencies to gain exposure to increase child support awareness to different ethnic communities including the Latino community. The researcher anticipates that increasing outreach within the Latino community will educate Spanish-speaking customers about child support services and increase the number of child support cases being opened.

Recommendation 4:

By July 1, 2019, County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services begins assessing demographic needs and analyzing what other populations may benefit from a similar pilot program. By DCSS assessing other demographic needs it demonstrates that they are aware that the Spanish-speaking customers are not the only customers that benefit from this pilot program. Per K. Cagno, Director of DCSS, "DCSS will always be looking at the demographics of the caseloads to effectively provide services to the customers whether they are Spanish speaking or seeing a pattern of other languages that are coming in".

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Recommendation 5:

By October 1, 2019, County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services replicates pilot program to other Local Child Support Agencies (LCSA) throughout California. Other LCSA's that may be encountering similar challenges in providing services in a culturally sensitive manner to a specific population can benefit from using the Spanish caseload pilot program as a model to replicate and implement in their agency as they deemed necessary.

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Appendix A*Interviewee Names, Titles, and Department*

	Name	Title	Department
Respondent 1	K. Cagno	Director	County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services (DCSS)
Respondent 2	P. Arteaga	Manager	County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services (DCSS)
Respondent 3	D. Carlos	Manager	County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services (DCSS)
Respondent 4	K. Bravo	Spanish Team Supervisor	County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services (DCSS)
Respondent 5	A. Figueroa	Spanish Child Support Analyst (CSA)	County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services (DCSS)
Respondent 6	C. Montes	Spanish Child Support Analyst (CSA)	County of San Mateo Department of Child Support Services (DCSS)

Appendix B

1. What do you consider to be the major benefits of implementing the Spanish caseload within DCSS for the Spanish-speaking customers?
2. What do you consider the major management barriers and/or challenges of implementing the Spanish caseload within DCSS for the Spanish-speaking customers?
3. What are the current barriers and/or challenges Child Support Analysts (CSA) encounter that prevent effective implementation of the Spanish caseload within DCSS for the Spanish-speaking customers?
4. What information and resources are needed now and in the future for effective implementation of the Spanish caseload within DCSS for the Spanish-speaking customers?
5. How, if at all, can implementation of the Spanish caseload mitigate some of the barriers the Spanish-speaking customers' experience?
6. Overall, in what ways is the Spanish caseload achieving intended outcomes?