

Value of Emotional Connection between Educators and Immigrant Children in Early Childhood Academic Development: Insights for Canadian Preschools

Talita Primolan

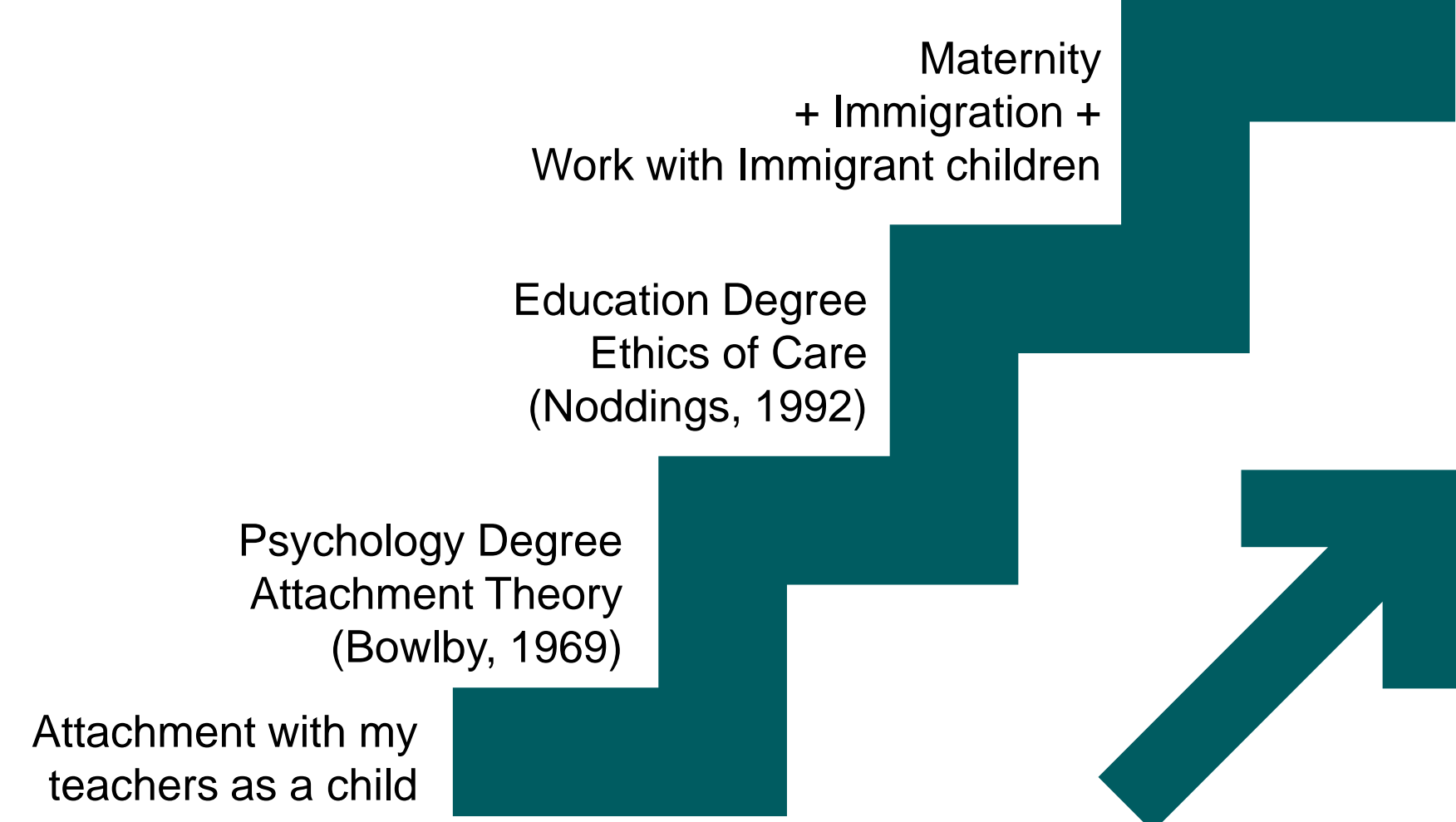
Abstract

This study examines the role of emotional connection between early childhood educators and immigrant children in promoting academic development and social-emotional well-being. The research suggests that secure and nurturing relationships in the classroom significantly improve immigrant children's adaptation and learning experiences. Educators can influence the lives of immigrant children by fostering welcoming and inclusive classrooms through strategies such as bilingual support and emotion-centered teaching.

Introduction

My journey

MEd: Provide insights for Canadian preschools on the importance of emotional connection in educating immigrant children.



Significance of the Topic

Immigrant children face language barriers and emotional distress during cultural adaptation. Educators are often the first societal contact, addressing cultural gaps and promoting inclusion (Tardif-Grenier et al., 2023). However, although early childhood educators aim to support immigrant children, they often lack the sensitivity needed for effective integration and development compared to their native peers (McDevitt, 2020).

Thesis Statement

This literature review argues that emotional connections between educators and immigrant preschoolers are essential for their adaptation, fostering socio-emotional well-being and academic success in early childhood education.

Argument

Building attachment changes body chemistry, boosting brain function and learning (TEDx Talks, 2024). My academic journey, my immigrant mother's experience, and my work with diverse preschool children highlight how vital this connection is for immigrant children. I will explore how the bond between educators and immigrant children affects their academic development and offer insights for Canadian preschools that welcome thousands from various backgrounds each year.

Literature Review

The Impact of Social-Emotional Development on Learning Success

- Immigrant children face specific challenges, such as language barriers and emotional distress caused by cultural adaptation.
- Emotion-focused teaching improves children's academic and social development (Jackson et al., 2023).
 - Warm and respectful interactions created a balanced learning environment and developed essential life skills (Khalifaoui et al., 2020).
 - Children were motivated by the need to establish connections and a sense of belonging (Guo & Dalli, 2016).
 - Social inclusion in preschool fosters safety, encourages peer relationships and supports wellbeing (Keles et al., 2021).

More than Literacy: The Strength of Educators and their Interactions

- Serving as the first contact with a new society, bridging cultural gaps, and fostering inclusion (Vesely et al., 2013; Tardif-Grenier, 2023).
- Recognizing immigrant children's native language to strengthen identity and belonging (deSouza et al., 2022).
- Encouraging intergroup exchanges to reduce discrimination and create a safe space for social integration (Keles et al., 2021).
- Supporting children's social trust, emotional regulation, and sense of belonging (Khalifaoui et al., 2020).

Supporting Cultural Adaptation: The Role of Affectionate and Appropriate Interaction

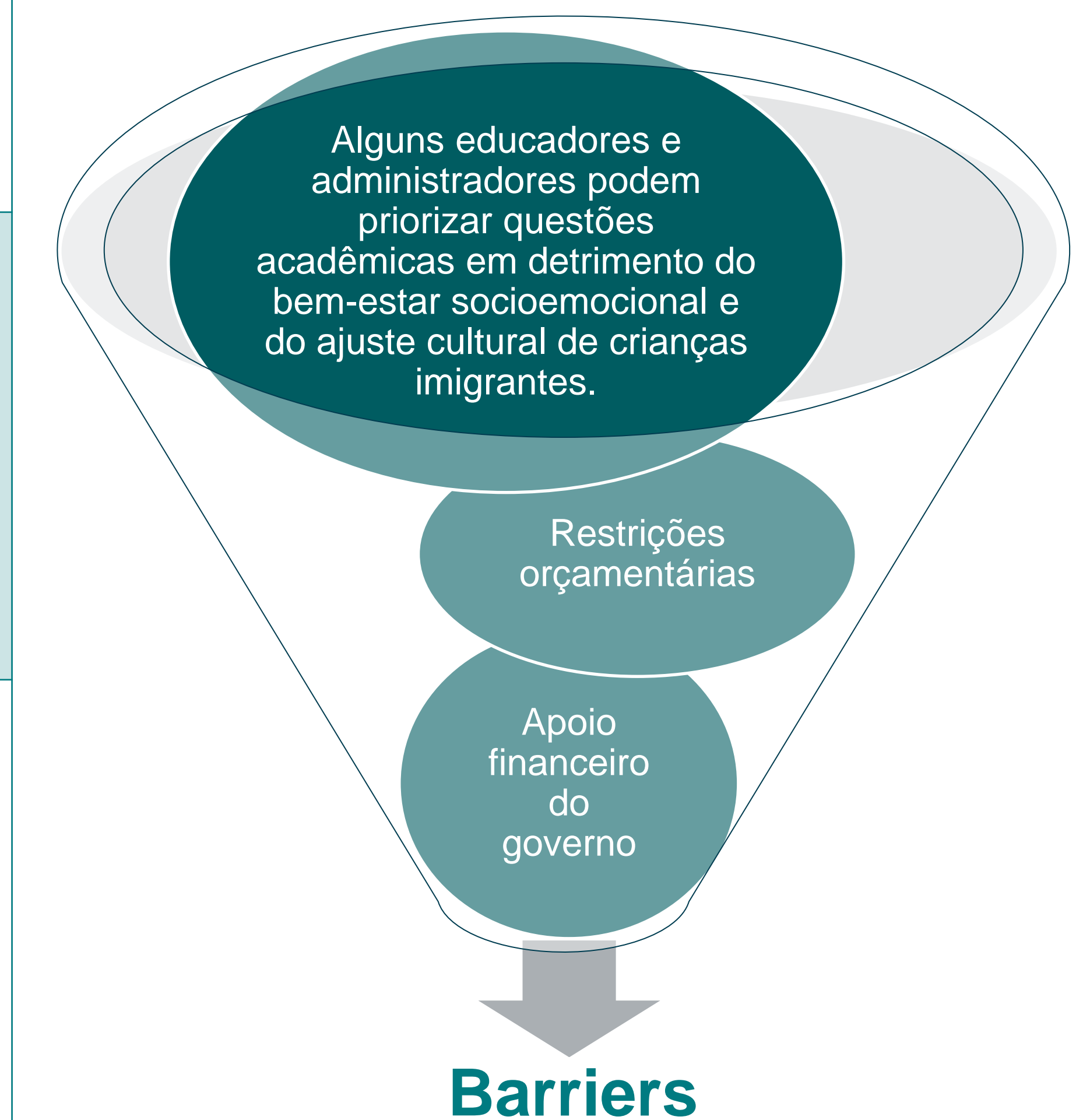
- Caring teacher-student interactions foster emotional safety and a supportive learning environment for immigrant children.
- Educators' immigrant experiences influenced their teaching, using multiple languages to include immigrant children facing language barriers. (McDevitt, 2020).
 - Educators with immigrant experience develop greater empathy, fostering unique relationships with their students (Brezicha & Miranda, 2022).
 - Early childhood education can influence children's emotional development as a protective or risk factor, depending on educator support (Vasseleu et al., 2021).
 - Educators using resources to help children identify emotions will promote better social and emotional adaptation (McInnes et al., 2024).

Recommendations

Implication	Application
Fostering emotional safety by creating a space for students to share feelings confidently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating calmly • Maintaining Eye contact • Engaging students' interests • Establishing a routine • Using nonverbal cues (Khalifaoui et al., 2020)
Validating children's identities and fostering a sense of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a child's native language, at least some words (Khalifaoui et al., 2020) • Incorporating children's home experiences (McDevitt, 2020) • Positive peer interactions (Keles et al., 2021)
Implementing emotional awareness activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathing exercises (Khalifaoui et al., 2020) • Giving hugs for emotional regulation (Johansson et al., 2020) • Identifying face expressions (Jackson et al., 2023)
Training programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediating cultural understanding • Acquiring empathy for migration challenges • Learning from immigrant educators • Acquiring culturally relevant teaching materials. <p>(Fakhari et al., 2023; Keles et al., 2021; McDevitt, 2020)</p>

Future Research

- Investigating family return rates due to children's adjustment challenges.
- Examining emotional distress linked to migration.
- Exploring strategies for setting safe and healthy physical interaction boundaries between educators and children, balancing emotional benefits and safety.
- Assessing the impact of emotional bonds between educators and immigrant children on well-being and academic success.
- Conducting targeted research to develop solutions suited to the Canadian preschool context and diverse cultural backgrounds of immigrant children.



Conclusion

The establishment of emotional connections and the cultivation of cultural sensitivity within Canadian preschools significantly enhance the academic engagement of immigrant children. Furthermore, this approach fosters resilience, nurtures a sense of belonging, and contributes to long-term confidence, thereby directly addressing the initial inquiry regarding the impact of emotional connections on their academic progress.

References

