

EXPLORING IMMIGRATION AND ACCULTURATION STRESSORS AMONG FIRST
GENERATION PERUVIAN ADULTS RESIDING IN UTAH – A PHENOMENOLOGY
STUDY

By

Mery Lipscomb

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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APPROVED BY:

Stacey Lilley, PhD, Committee Chair

June Tyson, Ph D, Committee Reader

Abstract

Among the literature, various stressors related to acculturation between immigrants. The goal of this study is to recognize factors that take place when immigrating to the United States.

Unfortunately, studies have found most Latinos experience high levels of stress regardless of age and gender. Recognizing those factors that increase stressors can help immigrants from Latin America to cope with stressors and avoid mental health problems during the acculturation process. As the Latino population continues to grow, it is critical for mental health professionals to learn about the Latino culture and the factors that create mental health problems to better diagnose and assist immigrants. Helping immigrants to smoothly adjust and cope with stressors and depression would benefit our society. Most of the stressors related to acculturation are as a result of adjusting to a new culture, learning a new language, lack of social support and friends; difficulty obtaining a job, and experiencing discrimination because of background, language, and religious practices.

Key Words: immigrants, acculturation, positive and negative factors related to migration.

Dedication

My work is dedicated to my wonderful family, my husband Gary and our two children Melany and Andrew. My family is my inspiration to do my best in life. Together we celebrate every accomplishment and defeat. They have fulfilled my heart with their support and millions of hugs when I felt discouraged and depleted. My family has also put up with my restless nights while completing an assignment and patiently waited for me to finish. I encourage my children to work hard for their dreams until they accomplish them. School is an ongoing process that entails dedication, determination, and responsibility.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Exploring immigration and acculturation stressors among the Latino population. Various literature reviews are explored to learn how a large population of Latinos adjust to a new culture while facing mental health issues as they adjust to a new country. This literature review helps understand the negative and positive factors when settling in the United States. It also discusses how Latinos cope with their transitional stressors which are linked to leaving their country of origin and losing their family and friend's support as they begin a new life.

Background

Most of the studies conducted among immigrants have found high levels of stressors related to acculturation, language barrier, having difficulties obtaining a job, financial problems, discrimination, and so forth (Hurwich-Reiss, & Gudino, 2016). Conflicts usually arise when linguistic understanding is limited because individuals become frustrated by other's lack of sensitivity to their emotional needs (Hwang & Wood, 2009), this may also be perceived as discrimination among Latinos. Studies conducted by Ng, Tsang, and Lian (2013) among immigrants have indicated sociocultural adaptation works as a mediator of the effects of integration, marginalization, and social support on psychological adaptation among Mainland Chinese. Incorporating what works with other immigrants can be helpful to apply those methods to help the Latino population cope with stressors related to acculturation, especially the first few years, which seems to be the most stressful.

Problem Statement

Research conducted on acculturation among immigrants has indicated stressors and mental health problems are linked to adapting into a new culture. When leaving one's family,

friends, and culture, immigrants experienced a variety of mental health problems that could potentially cause more serious illnesses. Some of the factors related to mental health problems when immigrating is not having family and friend's support, experiencing language barrier, financial difficulties, discrimination, etc. (Finlayson et al., 2013). Even though a large population of Latinos can find a support network, they still experience stressors during the acculturation process. The objective of this study is to learn how minority groups of immigrants like Peruvians cope and adjust with stressors during the immigrating process even though they may not find the social support needed.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to recognize factors that take place when immigrating to the United States. Recognizing those factors that increase stressors can help immigrants from Latin America to cope with stressors and avoid mental health problems during the acculturation process. Most of the studies conducted among the Latino population have been performed with large groups such as Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans (Joseph, 2011). According to studies, individuals cope better with adversities when having emotional support from friends and family; thus, small groups of immigrants like Peruvians may not have relatives or friends to rely on during the acculturation process. Learning how Latinos from large groups adjust and overcome difficulties can help other small groups to adjust during the acculturation process.

Significance of the Study

Studies conducted on first generation immigrant children and adolescents have found both, depression and anxiety linked to an increased rate of suicidal attempt and behavior (Potochnick, & Perreira, 2010). Studies have also found a correlation between acculturation, language barrier, anxiety, and depression among Latino children. Immigration stressors have

been linked to increased psychological problems among adolescent Latinos. Fortunately, adolescents and child immigrants are able to cope better and reduce stressors when having family and teacher support (Potochnick, & Perreira, 2010). First-generation adult immigrants may not have family or friend support due to being new in the area. New immigrants may not speak the language and have difficulties communicating or perceive discrimination. As a result, they may experience greater stress and anxiety which could lead to depression and health problems. This research study will focus on the stressors, acculturation, language barrier, discrimination, and general negative feelings of being in a new country and environment. The focus in this study will be on first-generation Peruvian adults residing in Utah.

Research Question(s)

In many studies conducted among Latin American immigrants, some difficulties have been addressed which Latinos experience during the transition of migration. Discrimination, poverty, language barrier, and acculturation are typically experienced by South American immigrants that can also be related to other immigrants (Finlayson, Gonzalez, & Gonzalez-Ramos, 2013). However, most of the studies conducted involve groups from large populations of Latinos, like Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans (Joseph, 2011). According to the literature reviewed in this study, there is no research conducted on acculturation among Peruvians who are a small population of immigrants in the United States. More studies are needed among this population who are also from Latin America. The study conducted will focus on first-generation Peruvians residing in Utah. The goal is to identify stressors and experiences related to the acculturation process, and how Peruvians cope with their experiences. According to studies, the longer immigrants are residing in the U.S. the more psychological problems they would experience (Wong, & Miles, 2014).

- How do Peruvians in Utah experience the acculturation process in the United States?
- Are there any stressors related to acculturation among first-generation Peruvians?
- What are the benefits or negative aspects from moving to the United States?
- How do first-generation Peruvians cope with stressors related to acculturation?

Definitions

1. *Immigrants* – Individuals who have settled in the United States where she or he was not originally born (Rinaldi et al., 2016).
2. *First-generation* – Foreign born individuals who become citizen in the United States (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010).
3. *Peruvian* – Latinos from the South American country of Peru who speak Spanish.

Summary

When language barriers exist, immigrants may not seek assistance when experiencing mental health problems. According to Falicov (2013) there is a great loss when immigrants leave their birth-country, and the first years can be the toughest time because acculturation is a long process that can cause high levels of stress. Some of the positive benefits among Latinos who reside in the United States, are increase of self-esteem and greater economic income as they become acculturated (Torres & Rollock, 2009). Future studies are suggested to identify how the acculturative process may increase risk for diagnosable disorders instead of just focusing only on psychological distress (Hwang & Wood, 2009). Understanding how large populations of immigrant's cope during the acculturation process can help other small groups of immigrants during the first years of immigration.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This literature review is intended to demonstrate the many stressors and psychological problems immigrants face during the acculturation process in the United States. Recognizing those factors that take place when adjusting with a new culture will help professionals working in the mental health field to better assist the Latino population. Helping Latino immigrants to adjust and cope with stress and anxiety related to acculturation in a healthy way would reduce mental health problems and cardiovascular disease (Castaneda et al., 2016). Research studies conducted in acculturation have found high levels of stress and depression as a result of residing into a new place and adjusting to a new culture. Most of the stress and negative emotions are related to language barrier, losing one's social network, separation from the family, and financial difficulties (Finlayson et al., 2013). This literature review will show various research findings which describes many negative factors that contribute to acculturation and mental health problems (Potochnick, & Perreira, 2010). Many studies have indicated that the Latino population will continue to grow over the years. Thus, mental health professionals must be culturally competent, respect the uniqueness of the client, and acknowledge that cultural difference has an impact on service delivery (Diller, 2015).

Stress Related to Acculturation

Latinos and immigrants in general who decide to move out of their country may adapt differently depending on the welcoming experience of the new place, the language, religious practices, cultural expectation, etc. (Finlayson, Gonzalez, & Gonzalez-Ramos, 2013). A study conducted by Finlayson et al. (2013) among Latin American immigrants have found and addressed some difficulties that Latinos experience during the transition of migration. Finlayson

et al. found discrimination, poverty, language barrier, and acculturation are typically experienced by South American immigrants that can also be related to other immigrants (Finlayson et al., 2013). Learning a new language, experiencing discrimination, lack of social support, poor working and living conditions, feeling of being an outsider, and other stressors are all related to acculturation (Arbona et a., 2010).

Acculturation is defined by a psychosocial and complex phenomenon which involves person and group-level changes in cultural forms for racial minorities as a result of contact with the racial majority (Walker, Obasi, Wingate, & Joiner, 2008). Because of all the many changes when adapting to a new culture, individuals may experience high levels of stress. Many of the studies conducted on immigrants have stated that stressful life circumstances are common among Latino immigrants. Caplan (2007) conducted a study among Latino immigrants and found that most Latino immigrants experience familial, social, and environmental stressors. The results of Caplan study indicate that acculturative stress can affect many Latino immigrant's lives.

Furthermore, the magnitude of the acculturative stress is consistent and dependent on the unique experience of the person, but there are some common threads that most immigrants experience (Caplan, 2007). Cervantes, Gattamort, and Berger-Cardoso (2018) examined the difference in immigration among Latinos from different countries and found Mexican immigrants as one of the Latino immigrants who experience the highest levels of acculturation stress comparing to other Latino groups. This study suggest that the highest level of acculturation stress can be related to Mexican parents being separated from their children by immigration, changes in immigration policy, and cultural and social factors.

There are many changes that occur when arriving new to the United States. Latino immigrants residing for the first year in Florida for example experienced high levels of stress due

to lack of friend's support during the acculturation process while settling in a new place (Concha, Sanchez, Rosa, & Villar, 2013). Concha et al. (2013) study also found high levels of stress among Latinos residing in the United States as a result of not having friends like in their own country who served as a support group. Latinos usually lose their social network who served as the support system to help them accomplish their goals and not having that support available creates stress (Concha et al. 2013). Despite learning the new culture and adapting to the United States, immigrants are dealing with not having a friend's support and adjusting to a more individualistic culture. Hamamura (2012) describes an individualistic culture as a place where individuals view themselves as more independent and are motivated by their own personal goals, needs, rights, and preferences. An individualistic person gives priority to their own goals and does not need to see themselves as part of one or more groups. Latinos on the other hand tend to rely on their family and friends to overcome difficulties or reach their goals. Concha et al (2013) states that the increase in levels of a high elevation of acculturation related stress is part of being far away from home (Concha et al. 2013). Social networks and familism serve as support to moderate acculturative stress in the Latino values, and its lack of it can create major stress as previous studies have indicated (Caplan, 2007).

Bekteshi and Hook (2015) studies found that no matter the age, any individual leaving their birth-country will experience stressors during the acculturation process. In a study conducted among U.S. residing immigrant Latinas, it was found that acculturative stress itself is not always linked to psychological distress among immigrant Latinas. The association between acculturative stress and psychological distress is linked to environmental factors like having difficulties visiting the family abroad, financial problems, and family-cultural problems (Bekteshi & Hook, 2015). Difficulty visiting the family abroad and English skills were

associated with high acculturative stress; thus, studies also indicated that the longer Latinas are living in the United States, the lower acculturative stress associated with them (Bekteshi & Hook, 2015). Perhaps the focus should be on new immigrants who are coming to stay and are trying to acculturate in their new home. Helping them to cope with stressors related to acculturation could help them increase happiness and focus on the positive aspects of their new place. Bekteshi and Hook (2015) argued that the longer the individual stays in the United States, the lower stress they may experience.

In most cases, youth maladjustment can result from having family conflicts. Not surprisingly youth maladjustment has been found to be related to compromised family functioning due to intergenerational differences in cultural values, and beliefs (Nair, Roche & White, 2018). Youths with higher levels of acculturative family distancing have reported less happiness in family relations, which is linked to lower academic performance during the first year of school (Nair et al., 2018). The family is a primary influence in a child's life, to have a successful and happy child, the family must be supported and aware of the child's emotions when moving into a new place.

Lack of Family and Friends Support

The studies mentioned above have stated that lack of family and friend's support is linked to stress (Concha et al., 2013). Studies conducted among undocumented adolescent Latino immigrants have indicated that the most important way of coping with stress is by spiritual/religious and support from the family (Cobb, Xie, & Sanders, 2016). In the Latino culture the family is the primary social support and maintaining close ties helps when needing social support to cope with stressors (Cobb, Xie, & Sanders, 2016). It is understandable that immigrants will experience high levels of stress and anxiety if they are leaving their families and

friends behind to begin a new life in a new country. Having less family support may make immigrants more vulnerable to acculturative stress, because family cohesion generally declines over time as Latinos transitioned from a pre-immigration to a post-immigration setting (Dillon, De la Rosa, & Albanez, 2013). Declines of family cohesion have been found to be correlated to acculturative stress during the first two years of residing in the United States (Dillon et al. 2013).

Therefore, most Latino immigrants experience loss, grief, and sadness at one point or another during the immigration experience (Falicov, 2013). Unfortunately, high levels of stressors can increase the risk of suffering from depression and anxiety but having family and social support in the United States can alleviate the effects of stressors related to acculturation.

Individuals from Latin America who immigrate to the United States without social support or family may be more vulnerable to the strain linked with acculturation stressors like discrimination (Finch & Vega, 2003). In the long term, when losing the native culture, adopting poor health habits, and experiencing a stress, the individual may suffer from health problems. Understanding what takes place when residing into a new place without having family or friends would help mental health professionals to be more sensitive and better to assist immigrants. In some cases, the immigrant may experience guilt or negative emotions for leaving his/her family. Li's (2016) study on pre-migration trauma and post-migration stressors for Asian and Latino American immigrants found that most of the participants reported feeling guilty for leaving their family, social isolation, status stress over legality, and language -based discrimination. The study also investigated how pre-migration trauma exposure contributes to various post-migration acculturative stressors for the Asian and Latino immigrants. Having family involvement has been found a great source to reduce psychological distress (Perez, Araujo Dawson, & Suarez-Orozco, 2011). Lack of family and social support can increase stressors. Immigrants and social support

networks are very important in immigrant's relocation and integration process, especially among females because they usually experience higher depression rates comparing to male immigrants (Williams et al., 2017).

Perceived Racism

Psychological distress was found to be increased by perceived daily discrimination. For example, the older Latina immigrants are more likely to experience health problems due to lack of adequate health services, poverty, discrimination, family – cultural problems, age, and financial issues (Bekteshi & Hook, 2015). This is not only true for Latina immigrants, but also youth immigrants. Early experiences of discrimination as well as bicultural stress right after migration can predict maladjustment and risky behavior among immigrant adolescents. Experiencing discrimination and bicultural stress is correlated with mental health problems, substance abuse, and externalizing behavior (Schwartz et al, 2015). Perceived racism can be experienced by all Latinos no matter age, gender, or status. Perceived racism and minority status stressors significantly and positively predicted psychological symptomatology among Latinos. Studies conducted by Alamilla (2010) have found a significant and positive psychological symptomatology in perceived racism among minority status stressors in Latinos.

Kulis, Marsiglia and Nieri, (2009) conducted a study among preadolescent Latino immigrants where they found perceived discrimination and acculturation stress were prevalent by the children regardless of their age. More than half of the participants reported having experienced stressors related to acculturation, which was also related to substance use behavior and attitudes. Perceived discrimination can create many psychological problems, including feeling like an outsider. Therefore, this topic should be explored to find ways to help children and adults to cope with negative emotions. Daily discrimination has been found to influence in

chronic health problems; discrimination is cross-sectionally linked with higher counts of chronic conditions (Kulis, Marsiglia and Nieri, 2009).

Latinos with higher socioeconomic status presented less health problems as opposed to Latinos of medium levels of income. Despite socioeconomic status, many Latinos reported feelings of frustration, unfair treatment, barriers, and decreasing their desires of achieving their goals (Molina & Simon, 2014). Finding ways to cope with feelings related to discrimination can help reduce stressors and health problems. Not every Latino experiences discrimination, Terrazas (2018) study did not find a significant link among racism and depression. Many of the participants did not experience racism and the participant who experienced racism, experienced it during work hours by their supervisor. In another study it was shown that when Latino immigrants obtain higher social status and get more adapted, they become more sensitive to discrimination comparing to those immigrants less acculturated (Perez, Fortuna, & Alegria, 2008).

Mental Health Related Problems Among Immigrants

Kaushal (2009) found that immigrants with Hispanic backgrounds have an increase in obesity during the first five years of residence rather than later, thus, immigrants who arrive young are more likely to become obese with an extended stay comparing to those who arrive at a moderately older age. Immigrants with low socioeconomic resources are less likely to obtain quality health care (Kaushal, 2009). However, illnesses such as obesity needs further research because this problem does not just happen among immigrants, obesity is a worldwide problem. Health problems may be related to new immigrants due to financial limitation and buying low quality foods. Perez-Escamilla (2009) has conducted important studies where a possible association was found among acculturation, household food insecurity, dietary quality, and chronic illnesses like type 2 diabetes which affect Latino immigrants and other minority groups.

The problem is not only economic resources but also low levels of acculturation. Females with lower acculturation had lower diet quality when comparing to females with higher acculturation, which may indicate a threshold effect of acculturation on diet. (Ward, Jilcott, & Bethel, 2011). Females who are foreign born and immigrated to the United States when they were older have less access to nutrition education comparing to foreign-born females who immigrated earlier in life. This means that females who immigrated to the United States when they were older have lower diet quality (Ward et al., 2011).

Saechao et al. (2012) conducted a study to identify stressors and barriers to using mental health services among diverse groups of first-generation immigrants to the United States. This study identified economic problems, discrimination, acculturation due to language differences, enculturation, parenting differences, and finding employment. They also found several barriers to the use of mental health services; shame, perceived lack of mental health services in birth country, and lack of information about local mental health services (Saechao et al., 2012).

Research studies have also found the longer time residing in the United States has been positively related with mental health problems among immigrants (Wong, & Miles, 2014). Even newly admitted immigrants who resided a short time in the United States, the time spent living in the United States was positively linked with probable depression. Negative mental health outcomes were found among immigrants who reported to experience family/cultural stressors, and exposure to stressors has been consistently associated to increase mental illness (Saint-Onge, Cepeda, Lee King, & Valdez, 2013).

Depression and Anxiety

When experiencing high levels of stress, depression and anxiety may occur. Not only does this occur among adult immigrants but also among youths. Recent studies have found

acculturation stress related to behavioral problems among both foreign and U.S. born youths (Hurwich-Reiss, & Gudino, 2016). Studies on depression and anxiety among first-generation immigrant Latino youths have found high levels of stress and anxiety among children who were not involved during the decision to relocate, who were exposed to traumatic events while migrating, and perceived discrimination (Potochnick, & Perreira, 2010). Furthermore, this study suggests that parent monitoring is very important in the outcomes as levels of acculturation and stress among youths. If parents are experiencing high levels of stress, it would not be surprising that the children would also become affected.

Experiencing high levels of stress can also result in anxiety and depression. Around 40% of Mexicans experience high levels of anxiety and depression that could impair functioning and have clinical significance (Hiott, Grzywacz, Arcury, & Quandt, 2006). The effects of those psychological symptoms vary by gender. In the case of men, social marginalization and feelings of being excluded because of one's origin background is linked to higher anxiety and depression symptoms. Women on the other hand experience higher levels of anxiety and depression as a result of being separated from their family. Women's anxiety and depression are related to family-related factors, while men's anxiety and depression are related to employment and earning-related experiences (Hiott et al., 2006). Hiott et al. (2006) study indicates that both, men and woman are vulnerable to suffer from high levels of stress when residing in a new place; therefore, they both would need assistance during the process of acculturation.

A study conducted on mental health among immigrant men living in new settlements has found elevated levels of depressive symptoms in nearly half of the participants (46%) (Leticq, Grywacz, Gray, & Eudave, 2014). Men who were far away from their family, regardless of marital status experienced greater depressive symptomatology as compared to married men who

were accompanied by their spouse. The study suggested that single men reported high levels of depression when residing in rural frontier places alone at almost twice the rate of married men. This means, single or married, the chances of experiencing high levels of depression from being far away from the family is likely.

Studies on immigrants have found female immigrants are more likely to experience depression than men regardless of ethnicity, but Latinos in general are more likely to experience persisting distress or ongoing forms of mood disorders, repeated depression, and psychiatric disorders more than non-Latinos or Caucasians (Mendelson, Rehkopf, & Kubzansky, 2008). Some factors found that influence in depression or anxiety were related to a lack of social and family support, but in other cases financial difficulty can also create stress. Living in poverty and experiencing major life events before migration was linked to depressive symptoms; a stressful move, not having legal documents, and experiencing traumatic events are all linked to the increase of depressive symptoms (Ornelas, & Perreira, 2011). Financial problems and not being able to find a job were reported as main stressors by participant immigrants (Patino, & Kirchner, 2010). Immigrants showed higher levels of stress and psychological symptoms as a result of some type of stressors. Having financial difficulties can increase stress, not only among Latinos but in the general population. Future studies should consider financial difficulties and acculturation stressors.

According to researchers of depression, it can be treated fairly easily but avoiding relapse and repetition of symptoms after acute treatment can be difficult; this is particularly the case among Latinos (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2008). The problem can be when individuals do not have an understanding or think mental health problems must be treated. In some cases, Latinos do not seek medical assistance or therapy because of their faith or lower levels of education. Lower

levels of education among Latino immigrants indicates less knowledge on mental health and psychological problems like depression. Therefore, depression is believed to be a weakness or weak character that the person must overcome on his/her own (Caplan et al. 2011;2010).

Religiosity is an important belief among Latinos. In some Latino cultures, depression is associated with evil-minded and spirituality disobedience; rather than a psychosocial factor among Latino immigrants (Caplan et al. 2011;2010). This study indicates that because of their spiritual beliefs, some Latinos who are depressed look to a higher level (spirituality) compared to individuals who may seek help through counseling. Because of the belief of supernatural forces and religious beliefs, Latino immigrants may not seek medical intervention when needed (Caplan et al. 2011;2010). To help Latino immigrant's professionals must consider and respect the Latino culture; acknowledging that culture is a predominant force in shaping behaviors and values will be helpful during the treatment (Diller, 2015). Perhaps by educating Latinos who do not know the benefits of therapy, applying Christian theory and prayers may help them reduce stress. Potochnick and Perreira (2010) study have found anxiety disorders prevalent among young Latinos. One of the reason young Latinos are likely to experience anxiety and depression is due to being forced to migrate the United States

Drug Use to Cope with Acculturative Stress

Latino youths are at risk of alcohol consumption due to problems related to constrained economic condition, lower educational achievement, and mostly higher degree of drug availability, and possible impact of racism and self-esteem (Grey & Hall-Clark, 2015).

Cultural and familial risk factors like ethnic discrimination, acculturative stress, and family problems can also influence in a Latino youth's overall perceived stress. According to Littrell (2001), individuals who are facing stressful conditions and are exposed to Ritalin and alcohol are

at higher risk of initiating drug use. Owusu's (2015) research study found that adolescents who had used illicit drugs like marijuana are those who were more likely to experience major depressive episodes during the last year.

New youth immigrants from Latin America experience school problems due to family conflicts. In a study conducted, Latin American youth experience greater risk for school problems comparing to other immigrants from Asia and the Caribbean (Patel et al., 2016). School problems can happen when experiencing family problems and this can happen among all races, not just among new immigrants. Thus, youth immigrants may experience daily stressors which can be caused by family conflicts. Experiencing family conflicts has been linked to acculturation and psychological problems (Patel et al., 2016).

Van Wieren et al. (2011) found an increased acculturation is linked with higher smoking rates among all Latinos. The abstinence rates in treatment seeking varies according to acculturation among Latino smokers when attempting to quit. For example, acculturation was found to be positively correlated to smoking and abstinence among Latino men, but unrelated to Latina women (Castro et al., 2009). Language preference was one of the factors that predicted abstinence among Latino smokers. Language preference may better reflect identification with the culture, which can be the reason for its association with abstinence (Castro et al. 2009).

To learn the process of depression and how this influence in the use of cigarettes, Lorenzo-Blanco and Unger (2015) conducted a study where they found perceived stress qualified as a mediator in the association of discrimination with depressive symptoms and smoking. Further studies would need to consider other factors like the environment, peer pressure and parenting support to claim that youth immigrants are more likely to rely on drugs to cope with acculturation.

Acculturative Immigrants

A few studies have indicated life improvement when migrating to the United States. In a study conducted among immigrants from non-eastern cultures, it was found two important themes linked to acculturation and its effects on health, psychological well-being, and social benefits. Once immigrants were adapted to a new culture and society, they experienced life enrichment, personal growth, and reduced stress (Kim, Heo, & Park, 2014). Western immigrants were found to benefit from positive psychological advantage, improved self-esteem, and quality of life. It may take time and immigrants may experience stressors but there is the possibility that their lives can improve over time. Torres and Rollock (2009) compared long-time immigrants with new immigrants residing in the United States and concluded that long time immigrants who were more likely to be first generation were found to have greater annual income and higher levels of self-esteem (Torres & Rollock, 2009).

Biculturalism may affect more contacts with diverse individuals, which may influence in a person's learning to meet environmental demands. Factors linked to decreased acculturative stress was associated with contentment of moving to the U.S., higher education, and higher income among Latinas. Over time, Latina immigrants find ways to cope with discrimination as they continue to reside in the United States (Bekteshi & Hook, 2015). Latinos who reside a longer time in the United States were associated with higher levels of acculturation. However, Central American women living a longer time in the United States were less expected of greater acculturation when living in a neighborhood of a high concentration of Latino immigrants. Latina women living in neighborhoods of lower concentrations of Latino immigrants with a longer time in the United States very strongly predicted a level of acculturation (Hochhausen, Perry, & Le 2010). The cases where individuals are living in constant fear of being reported due

to not having legal documentation, not being able to visit their families freely, finding a job, etc. are factors that can increase stressors among immigrants. Therefore, they may experience high levels of stress and health problems. The more acculturated an immigrant is, the more psychologically healthy he or she is the less acculturated an immigrant is, the more likely the immigrant is to experience anxiety (Madianos et al., 2008). The problem among undocumented immigrants is that they would constantly live in fear of being reported and many may not adapt as other immigrants who have legal status (Joseph, 2011). Experiencing depressive symptoms may depend on the circumstance regardless of gender. Finally, documented, or undocumented immigrants, they all have something in common regardless their ethnicity, separation from the home country, language barrier, discrimination because of ethnicity, and language or religion

Studies among Latinos are usually mixed population or conducted among large population of Latinos like Mexicans and only a few are among Peruvians. Francesco (2014) conducted a study among Peruvians residing in New Jersey. According to his studies, Peruvians have established themselves a community in the northeast of the United States, Paterson, New Jersey. The Peruvian culture is so strong that they continue to maintain themselves as a distinct culture where they celebrate Peruvian festivals, music, and food. Peruvians in New Jersey try to preserve their culture and continue to practice many traditional cultural practices (Francesco, 2014). In cases like this, Peruvians may adjust without having to experience too many stressors. Having social and family support have been related to less acculturative stress according to previous studies (Madianos et al., 2008). Though, more studies are needed among the Peruvian population residing in other parts of the United States where there are smaller populations comparing to a large population like in New Jersey. Perhaps Latino immigrants who reside in the United States better adapt when maintaining their culture and traditions. Immigrants in general

may adapt better and reduce stress when celebrating both cultures, the United States, and their birth country.

Summary

High levels of stress and psychological problems can be developed as a result of immigrating to a new culture. Even though mental health practitioners and counselors are encouraged to educate themselves about diversity, Vazquez (2009) suggests understanding how culture differs in the basic premise that shapes how a person sees the world according to their culture to better assist immigrants. Undocumented Latinos are more likely to experience adverse psychosocial experiences compared to documented Latinos due to their legal status (Meca et al., 2017). This is a more sensitive topic that should be explored to prevent mental health problems among children whose parents are undocumented.

In the case of Peruvian immigrants, maintaining cultural traditions and preserving their culture may help them to cope with stressors and celebrate being in America as well as maintain patriotism for their birth-country. Future studies are needed among Peruvians residing in other parts of the United States to learn about the small population and how they adapt, seek social support, and cope with acculturative stressors.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Overview

A phenomenology study was conducted to explore how do first generation adult Peruvians acculturate in the United States. Research studies conducted among Latino immigrants have found stressors and mental health problems related to acculturation (Potochnick, & Perreira, 2010). Most of the studies conducted involve groups from large populations of Latinos, like Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans (Joseph, 2011). To the researcher's knowledge there are few or no studies conducted among Peruvians who are a small population of Latino immigrants in the United States. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenology study is to explore, learn, and understand how acculturation can affect an immigrants' life. Professionals working in this field can find this study helpful when counseling individuals from small groups, like Peruvians. Understanding the many factors that take place when an immigrant leaves their birth-country will help to make necessary recommendations and treatments to help overcome stressors related to acculturation.

Design

A phenomenology qualitative research design was used in this study because it is the most appropriate design study to collect nonnumerical data to answer phenomenology questions that include statements, words, pictures, writing records, documents, description of events and behaviors, which all are needed for this study (Christensen et al., 2011). The data consists of the statement made by the participants during the interview as well as their personal experience, life story, and interview with the individual. Various studies conducted among Latin American immigrants have found difficulties among Latinos during their transition of immigration such as discrimination, poverty, language barrier, and acculturation (Finlayson, Gonzalez, & Gonzalez-

Ramos, 2013). Learning a new language, experiencing discrimination, lack of social support, poor working and living conditions, feeling of being an outsider, and other stressors are all related to acculturation (Arbona et al., 2010). Most of the studies among Latino immigrants has been conducted with large populations of Latinos like Mexicans; the goal on this study is to examine the Peruvian population by using statements and a participants' history in the United States.

Phenomenology

This study is intended to collect information by gathering statements from participants to learn their life experiences in the United States. Phenomenology study means to begin with lived experience, like with how things appear or gives itself to us, and tries to describe the pre-reflective meaning of living now (Van-Manen, 2014). Phenomenology qualitative research method attempts to understand and illustrate how an individual experience a phenomenon, in this case, immigrants residing in a new culture far away from their families and friends and the feelings associated with their experience. This phenomenology study will help to understand how Peruvians are experiencing life in a new environment and how they are coping with stressors (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2011). The researcher will attempt to enter in the participant's life world to understand their inner world of experiences and feelings. Learning about the participant's lived experiences and recognizing how they experience events is the goal of this study (Christensen et al., 2011).

Research Questions

- a. How do Peruvians residing in Utah experience the acculturation process?
- b. Are there any stressors related to acculturation among first-generation Peruvians?
- c. What are the benefits and struggles from moving to the United States?

- d. How do first-generation Peruvians cope with stressors related to acculturation?

Participants and Setting

The participants for this study will consist of only first-generation adult Peruvians residing in the state of Utah. Because this research study entails individuals, the researcher will protect the identity of the participants by obtaining detailed guidance for the IRB and the appropriate consent forms to show that participants are volunteering to participate in the study (Citro, Ilgen, & Marrett, 2003). The informed consent will provide detailed information about the study so that participants are aware and can decide whether or not to participate in the study. The participants' names will be pseudonyms to protect their identities; each participant will be given a number and that is how the researcher will refer to them throughout the study to avoid a mix-up.

The sample size for this study consists of five participants, three males and two females. Polkinghorne (1989) recommends a minimum of five participants to create the possibilities of experiences when conducting a phenomenology study (Polkinghorne 1989; Creswell, Hanson, Clark-Plano, & Morales, 2007). To make sure participants feel more comfortable to tell their story; they will be encouraged to speak in their native language of Spanish. The questionnaires will be provided in Spanish and translated into English by the researcher. Participants will be selected according to their age (older than 18), country of birth (since this study is about Peruvians only), and by confirming if they are first generation in the United States. Recruitment of participants will be by recommendation of some Latino friends who know of Peruvians in the area of Eagle Mountain and West Valley City, Utah. Participants will be contacted by phone to ask some screening questions for eligibility and schedule a date and time for the interview. The researcher will mail a recruitment letter explaining the purpose and procedure of the study, and a copy of a consent form that will be signed by participants before the study begins on the day of

the meeting. This study will be conducted at a local public library located in Saratoga Springs, Utah. A conference room or office will be reserved in advance to make sure there is adequate privacy during the interview. The researcher will provide a written letter to the public library stating the purpose of the study and a request for a conference room or office. The letter will express the importance of having a room which will be away from public access for the purpose of privacy. The interviews will be conducted within a week. The groups will be scheduled in those days according to the participant's availability.

Data Collection

Data will be collected by following phenomenology data collection and data analysis. The data collection will be through one on one in depth-interviews and open-ended questions, which is the primary qualitative method used by phenomenologists (Christensen et al., 2011). Through in-depth interviews, current feelings, and experiences related to immigration and acculturation will be explored. Here is where participants will express "significant statements" (Christensen et al., 2011) to explore feelings or stressors and experiences as a result of residing in a new environment. During the data collection, the participant will be encouraged to give the experience their full attention (Christensen et al., 2011). The researcher will clarify questions when necessary and be actively listening during the interview. The research approach is to be attentive, actively listening, avoiding criticism, and encouraging critical dialogue with one's self (Bevan, 2014).

The interviews will be an hour long and it will be digital recorded and transcribed right after the interviews. Participants will be asked a week after the interview to view their transcribed answers to make the study more accurate. Because this study is a qualitative research study, the type of data collected will be nonnumerical to answer the research question

(Christensen et al., 2011). The final report will be written in narrative form and will provide a detailed description of the participants in the study, and the strategy of data analysis. Participants will review their data collected to increased validity. The data will be done when all the audio recordings are collected from all of the participants.

The manner of data collection will be the qualitative method and involves in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires where participants will be encouraged to tell their story and events. As Christensen et al. (2011) described, “the phenomenological research method involves getting each participant to focus on his or her phenomenal space and to describe that experience in its own terms” (p. 368). I will be using a digital recording device to record the interviews and provide notebooks and pens to use to answer demography questions only. The data will be stored in a secured Black-box where the researcher will be the only one to have access to it. After a three-year period, the data will be destroyed by erasing all the interview recordings. The written paperwork with the demographic answers will be shredded.

There will be seven questions asked, some phenomenology questions may arise depending on the experience that may make participants pause and reflect (Van-Manen, 2014). Asking good qualitative questions must invite a process of exploration and discovery. The questions usually seek to reveal the perspectives of a person, a group, or different groups. Questions help to move the researcher forward to discover what is happening in a particular situation with a particular person or group (Agee, 2009).

- **Demography questionnaire:** Participants name, age, gender, marital status, occupation, education, average size of family members living together, and religion.
- **Phenomenology in-depth interview questions:**

1. Can you describe your feelings when you just arrived in the United States?

2. How would you compare your lifestyle in Peru and your lifestyle in the United States?
3. What are the most significant experiences you have had since you moved to the United States that was shocking to you? Can you describe these experiences?
4. Have you experienced any difficulty with communication due to a language barrier? If so, how are you coping with the language barrier?
5. Have you experienced moments when you wish to return to Peru? Have you found anything that helps you through the acculturation process?
6. Have you experienced any event where you feel you did not belong in the U.S. because of the way you were treated? If so, how did you feel at that particular moment?
7. Can you describe how you maintain your traditions and culture and how doing that makes you feel?

Data Analysis

The data analysis will be conducted after getting all the transcribed data and important phrases and statements from the participants. The researcher will construct a list of the meaning of the statements by listening and reflecting on all the statements provided by the participants. Finally, the researcher will summarize and describe the phenomenological structure of the phenomenon by incorporating the statements, their significance, and the collection they formed (Christensen et al., 2011). The researcher will also provide short narratives to describe the participant's experience.

Validity

The final report of this phenomenological study will be written in narrative form. The validity would be by member checking; by asking participants if the significant statements, meanings, and phenomenological summary correctly expresses their view. After the statements are validated, the results will include a well described characteristic of the participants experiences in residing in Utah. The researcher will make sure to reflect on the writing, because writing in a phenomenological text requires intensive reflection to recover and express the way the participants express their lives with greater thoughtfulness and tact (Van-Manen, 2014).

Ethical Considerations

In this study, participants will have minimal to no harm during the research. Participants will obtain and review a consent form where they can freely decide whether or not to participate in the study. Participants can withdraw from the study at any time during the interview if they do not feel comfortable continuing. The researcher is responsible for protecting and maintaining the confidentiality of the collected data and ensuring the safety and privacy of the participants (Korean, 2012). The research study will be conducted according to the research design and by complying with the IRB protocol. The researcher will ensure that participants are protected, and their personal dignity and autonomy are respected (Korean, 2012).

Summary

A phenomenology qualitative research study will be conducted to learn how do Peruvians experience stressors while settling in the United States. This study will only focus on first-generation Peruvians because more studies are needed on this small population as compared to other large population of Latinos residing in the United States. Previous studies have found many stressors and psychological problems like depression among first generation children and

adolescent Latino immigrants. Those symptoms of stressors and depression are linked to an increased rate of suicidal attempt behavior (Potochnick, & Perreira, 2010). This qualitative research study will attempt to focus to recognize stressors, acculturation, language barrier, discrimination, and general negative feelings of being in a new environment by interviewing five participants one-on-one and by asking seven open-ended phenomenology questions. The data will be collected through in-depth interviews, summarized, and described, and by incorporating the statements, their significance, and the collection they formed. The result should indicate if Peruvians do feel stressed, if they have or had experienced discrimination, depression, difficulty in communication as previous studies have found among other large groups of Latino immigrants. Identifying those factors that increase stressors can help Peruvians and other immigrants from Latin America to cope with stressors and avoid mental health problems during the acculturation process.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter discusses the findings of the study conducted among first-generation Peruvians residing in Utah. A brief description of the participants is described as well as their interview statements of their experiences after moving to the United States and answering the seven phenomenology interview questions. Finally, this chapter ends with a brief summary of the study. The objective of this study is to find out how small populations of immigrants like Peruvians cope with stressors related to acculturation. Previous studies conducted have argued that many immigrant's stressors are related to acculturation as a result of adjusting to a new culture, learning a new language, lack of social support and experiencing discrimination (Fynlayson et al., 2013).

Participants

This study consisted of five participants who are living in the state of Utah. All the participants are adults and first-generation Peruvians.

Male one. Participant one was born and raised in Peru, he is 44 years old and has been living in the United States for 13 years. He has a bachelor's degree in business administration which was completed in Peru. Participant one is currently married and living with his wife and stepson. He is catholic and works as a construction contractor. He moved to the United States by himself, leaving his entire family in Peru.

Female two. Participant two is 44 years old. She is currently married and living with her husband and two kids. She studied English in Peru and was the owner of a restaurant and a hotel. She came to Utah to visit her son in 2018 without knowing that she would have to stay because her son was experiencing maltreatment. She decided to stay and bring her husband and second

son to resolve those issues and be reunited with her family. After resolving her son's problems, she decided to become a small business owner and is currently running a Peruvian restaurant.

Male Three. Participant three is 57 years old, retired from the police department in Peru. He moved to Utah together with his wife and two sons in 2019. He has a bachelor's degree in psychology and is currently working with his spouse who just opened a restaurant business. Participant is catholic and practices his faith by going to church on Sundays.

Female Four. Participant four is 60 years old and has been living in Utah for a year. She moved together with her mother, siblings and husband leaving her adult son in Peru. Participant has obtained various certificates in Peru and is now working as an employee at Walmart. She is a believer and practices her faith by going to a Mormon church every Sunday.

Male Five. Participant five is 58 years old and has been living in Utah for a year. He has a certificate in business obtained in Peru. He was also an owner of a small business in Peru. Nevertheless, he decided to move with his wife to Utah leaving his son in Peru. He is currently working at Walmart with his wife and preparing to open a business in Utah in the near future.

Results

Seven phenomenology in-depth interview questions were asked to participants.

Participant one was feeling afraid of facing a new culture, and a new language. After all, he described his lifestyle in Peru as completely different and the fact that he had to sacrifice being far away from his family and culture made him uneasy. Being new was tough at the beginning, especially to get around. He remembered getting lost one time, "I didn't know how to get around well and it was raining a lot during the winter, as a result, I got lost and had to spend hours in my car until it was daylight." At the beginning like everyone else, as he stated, "learning a new language was tough," but the motivation to obtain things pushed him to try to learn English.

Participant one thought of going back to Peru but leaving was not an option as he came for a goal and did not want to go back until he obtained that goal. Sometimes while he was alone, he found himself remembering and missing his friends and family as well as his lifestyle in Peru. Being in a new country, learning new things, and meeting all kinds of people made him feel stronger and helped him focus on working; eventually, he overcame his feelings of fear; as he mentioned, “I got stronger over time.” After adjusting into a new culture, the participant did not really care much about discrimination or feeling like an outsider, “I came with a goal in mind, that was my motivation to work every day.” Despite residing in Utah for many years, he is aware that he does not belong in the United States, “I know this is not my country, once I achieved my goal, I may go back to Peru, to my culture, and to my people.” Participant was asked about how he maintained his traditions from Peru, he mentioned celebrating Peruvian traditions and holidays by going out to eat and getting together with Peruvian friends. Tradition is something that he mentioned he will never lose because the Peruvian culture is unique in every way.

Participant two was not happy that she had to stay in Utah. She was just visiting her son in Utah when she discovered an unfortunate event that had taken place, as a result she had to stay unexpectedly. She was worried because she had to start from zero, to get a new house, new job, adjust to a new environment, and learn the culture and traditions. Even though she knew basic English, she still had difficulties communicating, she stated, “people talk very fast and it is tough to understand.” Participant two wished to go back to Peru many times, she missed her home and family in Peru, but she thought being in the U.S. will be better for her two sons.

Working was never a problem as participant two described, the problem was that from being the owner of a business in Peru, she had to become an employee that has to be told what to do. She was devastated that she had to do work for people and was no longer her own boss.

According to her experience, things were more difficult here compared to Peru. She had a difficult time finding a place to live even though she had money to pay for an apartment; because she was new and did not have a job or credit history, she was denied renting an apartment. She said that “she was not being treated right and that affected her.” Unfortunately, along the way she met disrespectful people who did not appreciate her work and underestimated her. Despite all her negative experiences, she feels positive about her future and continues moving forward. She maintains her Peruvian tradition by preparing Peruvian dishes and now that she owns her restaurant, she feels more enthusiastic. The way she socialized in Peru was very different, she believes because she was in a different social position and was the owner of a business. In Peru she was able to surround herself with people who also owned businesses and losing her friendship network made her feel more stressed. As she stated, “I was treated differently in Peru, and it was very nice to be around people who shared similar experiences. I felt comfortable around my friends in Peru, everything was perfect, I felt fulfilled with the people around me.” Her financial situation was not an issue, in fact, she was able to travel and visit great places, and paid for a good education for her kids. Even though she had one of the worst experiences in Utah, she was able to resolve her son’s problems and was pleased that there is justice in this country. In some occasions, she felt like an outsider and that she did not belong here. “I felt scared and insecure, but mostly so lonely and empty; I was wondering how my life was going to change.” Participant two does not celebrate Peruvian holidays because she does not feel she has the same freedoms as she had in Peru when making parties. However, she cooks Peruvian meals and once in a while gets together with other Peruvians she has met. She understands that she is in a different country and has to abide the laws. She is also happy to continue going to church like she did in Peru and that makes her feel good.

Participant three never liked the idea of staying in the United States, being a retired man who is older and used to the Peruvian lifestyle found it very tough to adjust to the new culture, but he thought of the well-being of his family and decided to stay. At the beginning he missed Peru and did wish to go back, but over time he started to enjoy the peace and the order as he described of Utah, he stated “everyone follows the rules and respects the laws, something you don’t see in my country.” It is definitely peaceful and a great place to meet and learn new cultures. Since he moved to Utah, he has met many people from all over the world. Every immigrant who he has encountered shared the same mentality of working hard to have a better life. When it comes to working, everyone has to work but the difference is there is more freedom in Peru, you can do things whenever you want. In Peru you do not worry about your neighbors or have to worry about loud music when you are having a party. Peruvians are very emotional people; the people here are more individualistic. Participant three has had a great experience finding a job despite his language barrier. He has felt appreciated when doing his job and encouraged to learn more about his job. He is thankful to the citizens who believe in him and his abilities to do better every day. He believes there are great opportunities to succeed and learn new things. Participant three stated that his self-esteem increased as a result of his new work experience. He has never experienced any discrimination; he actually met great people who were helpful during his acculturation process. He believes if you are nice to people, they are also “nice” to you. Participant three maintains his traditions by listening to Peruvian music, socializing with other Peruvians and Latinos, as well as cooking Peruvian dishes.

Participant four did not have a good experience the first time she arrived in Utah, but things changed when she met people who were very supportive and understanding. She stated, “I was amazed by how great I was treated by people who barely knew me.” While living in Peru, she

was dedicated to her house and personal business she had with her husband. She did not make time to socialize or make friends. Now that she is in Utah and has a job, she finds it tough to socialize and get along with other Latinos. She has met wonderful people who have been supportive during her acculturation process, she is grateful to know good people. However, she is having problems adjusting to the new culture and socializing with the Latino population who also speak her language. Although, she has problems with the language barrier, she does not communicate well with Latinos who speak her language. She believes Latinos immigrants are not very nice for the reason that they had bad experiences adjusting. Participant four had mixed feelings about wanting to go back to Peru and she is aware that those feelings can be due to spending a whole life living in Peru. She believes being in Utah will be good for her son who is planning to move soon to Utah. She believes being in the United States is a great place for younger people and has faith her son will do well. Despite meeting some good people, participant four has felt mistreated and discriminated by her employer and some co-workers. Feeling mistreated makes her feel a little angry, but she has managed the situation wisely. Participant four misses the Peruvian food because she cannot find all the ingredients to make meals. To maintain her traditions, participant four sometimes get together with Peruvians to celebrate holidays and prepare Peruvian meals.

Participant five has experienced good things since he moved to Utah. He describes being in Utah as very peaceful, he has observed things that he has never seen living in Peru. For instance, being able to leave the garage door open or bicycles outside without being concerned that someone will take it. Participant five has had a great experience with his neighbors and people around the town. He says, “everyone greets you well,” despite all the good things that happened he is having a tough time communicating. Even though his job does not require speaking

English, he still feels lost when having meetings at work because he does not understand the language. He feels that he cannot express his thoughts and opinions. On many occasions, he felt he was being untreated and could not defend himself. He believes he is limited because of the language barrier. He states that there is a great “disadvantage” when not knowing the language, he wishes to learn English to be able to communicate better and learn the culture. Thus, he recognizes that learning a new language at his age is a challenge. Despite the language barrier, participant five is happy to stay in Utah and does not wish to go back to Peru. He says that he misses his family and the food, but he is happy to stay in Utah. Although participant five has never felt discriminated, he does feel that in his job people do not appreciate his effort and hard work. When something bad happens at work, his co-workers usually blame him because they know that he cannot defend himself due to the language barrier. Despite having some bad experiences at work, he feels positive about his future and hopes to open his own business eventually. To maintain his Peruvian culture, he keeps in touch with other Peruvians around the area and celebrate by going to Peruvian events conducted by his church.

Research questions responses

<p>1. Can you describe your feelings when you arrived in the United States?</p>	<p>Participant one: Fear of facing a new culture and new language, dealing with emotions due to separation from his family.</p> <p>Participant two: Concerned with starting from zero, getting a new house, job, adjust to the culture, learn the language, and make new friends at the same time while missing her family and home in Peru. Thus, she thought of her children and that being here will give them more opportunities.</p>
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	<p>Participant three: Never liked the idea of staying in the U.S. after spending his whole life in Peru, but he thought his kids will have a better future.</p> <p>Participant four: Bad experience when she first arrived but things changed when she found supportive people.</p> <p>Participant five: Good feeling since he arrived, enjoy the peace and the new culture.</p>
<p>2. How would you compare your lifestyle in Peru and your lifestyle in the United states?</p>	<p>Participant one: There are more opportunities but also more sacrifices, separation from the family.</p> <p>Participant two: Things are more difficult comparing to Peru. Lack of social support and difficulty communicating; feeling out of place and unappreciated in the workforce.</p> <p>Participant four: Have a tough time socializing and getting along with other people.</p> <p>Participant five: Feels good, welcomed, and more secure; he also feels people are kind and helpful.</p>
<p>3. What are the most significant experiences you have had since you moved to the united states that was shocking to you? Can you describe these experiences?</p>	<p>Participant one: It was tough to get around and get help; participant one got lost during the winter while driving and had to spend many hours in his car until daylight feeling hopeless.</p> <p>Participant two: had difficulties finding a place to live even though she had money to pay for an apartment because no one wanted to rent a place. She did not know she had to have</p>

a credit history and a secured job to obtain a place to live.

She found it difficult to settle in a place and was concerned.

Participant tree: I was amazed by the way people treated me at work. I was appreciated for the things I did, and it motivated me to work harder. People would give me complements and made feel appreciated.

Participants four: What was shocking is not being able to get along with other Peruvians or Latinos who also speak Spanish. She stated, “we speak the same language, but we don’t understand each other.” Participant four is having a tough time getting along at work.

Participant five: Is amazed by knowing how friendly people are in his neighborhood. He likes to feel secure and peaceful; he loves the culture and how people greet him.

4. Have you experienced any difficulty with communication due to the language barrier? If so, how are you coping with the language barrier?

Participant one: Absolutely, not knowing the language is very difficult, but that motivated participant one to try to learn English.

Participant two: Even though participant two studied English before she moved to Utah; she found it very difficult to communicate. She stated, “everyone speaks so fast that I couldn’t understand what they were saying.”

Participant four: Not knowing the language is difficult but even though she knows people who speak Spanish, she still feels out of place.

Participant five: Language barrier is definitely a problem. He believes that language barrier limits him and his spouse from learning many things. He was recently blamed at work for something he did not do because his co-workers knew he could not defend himself due to not knowing the language.

5. Have you experienced moments when you wish to return to Peru? Have you found anything that helps you during the acculturation process?

Participant one: Yes, in the beginning participant one thought of going back to Peru, he missed his family and friends and his lifestyle in Peru. However, leaving was not an option to him because he came with a goal in mind. He was able to make friends and his feelings of loneliness diminished.

Participant two: Yes, participant two wished to go back to Peru because she missed her house and family. Although, she is feeling better because her job keeps her busy, she still misses her family and being home.

Participant three: He wished to go back to Peru because he loves his country, but he stayed thinking about his kid's future. He said he avoided thinking with his emotions and tried to think what is more important than his emotions.

6. Have you experienced any events where you feel you did not belong in the U.S. because of the way you were treated. If so, how did you feel at that particular moment?

Participant four: Participant four had mixed feelings about wanting to go back to Peru. She said that it may be because she spent her whole life in Peru. Having social support from the church helps her to cope with her feelings.

Participant five: Participant five did not wish to go back to Peru, even though he has faced many challenges due to the language barrier; he is happy living in Utah.

Participant one: Participant one did not care or paid attention to those who did not make him feel welcomed. He said that he came with a goal and is aware that he is not in his birth-country and one day he may return to Peru.

Participant two: Participant two did feel like she did not belong in the U.S. because of the way she treated.

Unfortunately, along the way she met rude people who did not appreciate her work, gossiped about her and mistreated her, as a result she felt insecure.

Participant three: Participant three has never felt he did not belong in the U.S. and he is grateful for meeting great people who made him feel good; he stated, “my self-esteem increased because of at the complements I had at work.”

Participant four: Participant four has felt mistreated and discriminated by her employer and some co-workers, she

said that made her feel a little angry, but she has managed the situation wisely.

Participant five: When something bad happened at work, participants five was being blamed because his co-workers know that he would not defend himself due to the language barrier.

7. Can you describe how you maintain your traditions and culture and how doing that makes you feel?

Participant one: Participant one celebrates Peruvian holidays by going out to eat and getting together with other Peruvian friends, he feels good maintaining his traditions and culture.

Participant two: Participant two maintains her culture and traditions by cooking Peruvian meals but does not celebrate Peruvian holidays. She does not think it is important because she is not surrounded by Peruvians.

Participant three: Participant three maintains his traditions and culture by listening to Peruvian music, eating Peruvian food, socializing with other Peruvians and exchanging stories about Peru. Sometimes he gets together with other Peruvians and dances and talks about their experiences in Utah. He feels like he is in Peru sometimes when he is surrounded by other Peruvians.

Participant four: Participant four maintains her traditions and culture by celebrating with other Peruvians and cooking

meals. Once in a while they make parties and cook a variety of Peruvians meals.

Participant five: To maintain Peruvian culture, participant five keeps in touch with other Peruvians around the area and celebrates by going to Peruvian events conducted by his church.

Summary

Seven phenomenology questions were asked to five adult first-generation Peruvians residing in the state of Utah. Participants have described their good and bad experiences, as well as their emotions when first arriving at the U.S. They described how they are adjusting to the new culture and the things they do to maintain their traditions and culture. All the participants have experienced communication problems due to the language barrier and feel that language barrier is one of the reasons why they are limited from obtaining a better job, experiencing discrimination, and learning the new culture. Participants also described their job experiences and how they feel around other individuals. Surprisingly, some participants have experienced discrimination among other Latinos who speak their own language stating that even though they speak the same language they do not understand each other. They also talked about the feelings they had during the beginning of their transition and how they were affected by moving into a new country.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of conducting this study was to learn and understand how small groups of immigrants like Peruvians adjust to a new culture. There are many things that take place when moving into a new country that can affect a person's psychological well-being. For instance, not being able to speak the language and being far away from one's family and culture can create stressors. This chapter consists of five sections: (a) an overview of the chapter, (b) a summary of the findings, (c) a discussion of the findings and implications in light of the relevant literature and theory, (d) an implication section (methodological and practical), (e) an outline of the study delimitations and limitations, and (f) recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

Most of the participants experienced similar feelings when they first arrived in the United States, fear, and concern about learning a new language, adjusting to the culture, and beginning a new life. Participants described that there is more sacrifice, experienced lack of social support, difficulty communicating and getting along with others. When describing the most significant experience since they moved to Utah, participant one and two described that it was tough to get help and experienced difficulties as a result. Participant three and five have great experiences getting along with people while participant four described not getting along with other Latinos or Peruvians. When asking participants if in any moment during their acculturation process, they wished to go back to Peru, three participants answered yes, one had mixed feelings, and only one was sure that he did not wish to go back. Most participants wished to go back to Peru, especially right after they arrived because they missed their families, friends, culture, and food. When asking participants if they have experienced any events where they feel that they did not belong

in the U.S. because of the way they were treated, the female participants responded that they were mistreated and unappreciated at work. One male participant did not care much about feeling like he did not belong in the U.S. One described to feel better and his self-esteem has increased, and the other described as being blamed by co-workers when something bad happens at work because of his language barrier. When it comes to maintaining Peruvian traditions and culture, most participants share similar experiences. Participants get together with friends from Peru, cook Peruvian meals, and celebrate Peruvian holidays. Participants stated that socializing with other Peruvians and sharing things in common make them feel good and proud.

Finally, Peruvians residing in Utah experience more stress during the acculturation process as a result of not knowing the language and adjusting to a new culture. Peruvians cope with their stressors related to acculturation by socializing with other Peruvians and maintaining their culture and traditions. Finding social support and relating to other Peruvians living abroad help them cope with their own acculturation stressors. The benefit of living in Utah is having a more peaceful life and believing that being in the United States will bring more opportunities for their own children and families. The struggles from moving to the U.S. are losing one's long-time friendships and being separated from the family and struggling learning a new language.

Discussion

This study corroborates with previous research conducted among immigrant Latinos. My study has found that language barrier causes stress and negative feelings among immigrant Peruvians. All the participants in this study have stated to have communication problems due to the language barrier. Not being able to understand the language limits immigrants from learning and advancing in their occupations. Five of the Peruvian participants have experienced difficulty communicating which confirmed Fynlayson et al. (2013) research study that describes most of

the stress and negative emotions are related to language barrier. Losing one's social network and separation from the family is also confirmed; thus, participants have stated feeling like wishing to go back during the beginning of the process of settling; over time those feelings seem to fade. My study also confirms that separation from the family creates negative emotions like feeling lonely and insecure, but those feelings were not among all participants. Males seemed to adjust better, and experience fewer negative emotions compared to Peruvian females.

Some participants did confirm to experience that they felt they did not belong in the U.S. as a result of being mistreated by their co-workers, but those feelings did not change their mind about leaving. Some participants have experienced discrimination and feeling unvalued by other Latinos who also speak Spanish. When it comes to culture and traditions, most Peruvian participants celebrate and maintain their traditions by socializing with other Peruvians who also celebrate Peruvian holidays. Listening to Peruvian music, news, and cooking meals helps participants maintain their traditions which seems to make them feel prouder of their culture. This research also confirms that social support is very important among small groups of immigrants to cope with stressors related to acculturation, the support does not necessarily mean from other Peruvians but from different cultures and backgrounds. Finally, even though it was asked about participants religion, they did not talk about their faith and only mentioned to continue going to church on Sundays and some of them found church to be very important to connect with others.

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implications of my study confirmed that immigrants from Peru experienced stressors during their acculturation process as well as immigrants from other countries. Most of the problems are related to the language barrier and being separated from

friends and families. It is important to recognize that even though immigrants experience difficulty when communicating, language barrier does not stop them from obtaining a job. Most of the participants stated to be limited in advancing their careers and learning due to not knowing English.

This study also confirms that there is a lot of sacrifice when moving into a new country because of family separation and missing one's friends' and social network. Feeling like an outsider did not seem to bother male individuals as much as the female participants. During the beginning of adaptation, immigrants confirmed wishing to go back to Peru, but their feelings of wishing to go back faded over time when they began to be settled down and adjust to the new culture. Some of the participants are actually enjoying the peacefulness and appreciated the American culture. My study also corroborates with immigrants maintaining their traditions and culture. All of the participants in my study have described to maintain their Peruvian traditions and cultures by socializing with other Peruvians and celebrating holidays.

Delimitations and Limitations

One of the limitations of my study is that one of the female participants has already experienced some issues during the beginning, when she just moved to Utah. She was already affected emotionally by those family issues and this could have made her experience in Utah more difficult; therefore, it is uncertain to say whether her experiences adjusting to a new culture is due to her bad experiences or from being new in the U.S.

Another limitation is that two of the participants that were experiencing discrimination at work were owners of a business in Peru; from being an independent worker to becoming an employee could also have affected their work experience in Utah. The change in status and money could have influenced the way they are experiencing work in the U.S.

Participants age could have influenced in their experiences in the United States.

Participants age ranges were from 40s to 60s, which can create more stress when moving into a new culture because of living a lifetime in their country. A younger Peruvian immigrant may have settled and learned the language quicker than an older adult. Finally, having a small sample size is another limitation because there were only two female participants who were the most affected by the way they were treated at work. Therefore, it is uncertain that all female Peruvians may feel like an outsider in the workforce.

Recommendations for Future Research

My recommendations and directions for future research is to conduct studies with a bigger sample population to learn how moving into the United States with family members plays a role during the acculturation process. My study indicates that some Peruvian immigrants still feel stressors due to being far away from Peru even though they have family support in the United States. Some participants moved to Utah together with their family members, but they still wished to go back at some point during their acculturation process because they miss Peru. Another suggestion for future study is to learn how a Peruvian's professional life is experienced in Peru, because some members are having a difficult time adjusting in the US workforce. Some participants have stated they feel "unvalued" and "unappreciated" and also are having a tough time getting along with other Latinos. Perhaps, participant experiences in the workforce is influenced by the type of job they had before they moved to Utah. Some participants in this study had to sacrifice their own business in Peru to move to the U.S and obtain a lower job position, this can also cause stressors and struggles in the workforce.

Future studies should also focus on female immigrants because they seem to be more affected emotionally during the acculturation process than men. Peruvian female immigrants

have stated to feel unappreciated at work and are having a difficult time getting along with other Latinas in the workforce. One of the female participants stated she felt insecure and devalued as a result of not being treated well at work. The second female participant feels frustrated and angry for the way she was being treated by other Latinos. Learning what takes place in the workforce and how Peruvians are being treated by other Latinos can also help understand why some Peruvians are feeling discouraged and unappreciated at work.

Finally, another recommendation for future studies is to conduct research on first-generation young adult Peruvians to learn whether or not age matters when it comes to adjusting to a new culture, because some of the biggest causes of stress among first-generation older adult Peruvians was the language barrier, having trouble communicating, and not having social support. This may be a different case in relation to younger adults; they may be able to adjust and learn the language quicker than older adults and experience less acculturation stressors as compared to older adults.

Summary

What I found that was very important from the result of my research is that language barrier is one of the most stressful experiences among immigrants. All the participants from my research study have stated that language barrier is stressful and not knowing the language limited them from having more opportunities. Helping them by providing English courses as a second language will be very helpful to increase their confidence and commitment to learn. Even though participants in this research were older adults, they still showed enthusiasm to learn English and expressed how things would be better for them if they knew the language. Sadly, some participants in this research have experienced discrimination among co-workers as a result of not understating English and not being able to defend themselves.

Another essential topic that was not mentioned a lot in this study, but I found was critical is helping immigrants to rent apartments. This is relevant because finding shelter is critical for a person to begin settling and belonging to a community. Immigrants that do not have credit history or a secured job still need a place to live and having too many barriers along the way will only increase stressors. One of the participants stated to have money to pay for rent but was denied an apartment because she was new in the area and did not have a credit history. When it comes to discrimination, it is an ongoing event that has been happening for many years. Immigrants dealing with discrimination can be encouraged to find support and find ways to cope with those negative feelings. Finally, this research was a great opportunity to learn more about small groups of immigrants living in the United States and to understand all the dynamics they face during the acculturation process. Understanding the dynamics that take place when immigrating can help counselors or mental health professionals to focus on certain topics that causes more stress. Distress from separation from friends and family is found among immigrants, helping them to find social support from other groups or the church will help them reduce their emotional distress that can cause psychological problems in the future.

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