

2021

Perceptions of Acculturative Stress and English Language Learning in Latino Immigrants

Jamilah L. Byrom
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Jamilah L. Byrom

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Tracey Phillips, Committee Chairperson, Human Services Faculty

Dr. Sandra Harris, Committee Member, Human Services Faculty

Dr. Garth den Heyer, University Reviewer, Human Services Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2021

Abstract

Perceptions of Acculturative Stress and English Language Learning in Latino Immigrants

by

Jamilah L. Byrom

MPhil, Walden University, 2019

MEd, Strayer University, 2012

BS, Bowie State University, 1999

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services

Walden University

February 2021

APA 6

Abstract

The process of English language learning (ELL) is a phenomenon, within the acculturation process, that poses challenges for first-generation Latino immigrants and potentially contributes to the susceptibility to acculturative stress. There has been little research on how second language acquisition influences acculturative stress. This study examined the perceptions of the experiences of young adult Latino immigrants who completed an English language learning program in the Washington, DC Metropolitan area. A generic qualitative study using face-to-face virtual interviews inquired about first-generation, young adult Latino immigrants' perceptions of acculturative stress relative to experiences in adult ELL programs. Berry's model of acculturation guided the study, due to the impact the four categories of acculturation are noted as having on the vulnerability to acculturative stress. The participants included ten Latino/a immigrants between the ages 18-25 years, who have lived in the United States for more than five years. The data analysis resulted in several themes that emerged under four categories: Motivation to learn English proficiently, obstacles to English language learning program completion, challenges as an English language learning immigrant, and experiences of integrating into the U.S. culture. The findings of the research will provide insights into the challenges young adult Latino immigrants encounter during the process of post-migration English language learning and can be beneficial for the development of systems and structures that improve access to programs and resources, as well as improve mental health support for immigrant students.

Perceptions of Acculturative Stress and English Language Learning in Latino Immigrants

by

Jamilah L. Byrom

MPhil, Walden University, 2019

MEd, Strayer University, 2012

BS, Bowie State University, 1999

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services

Walden University

February 2021

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and friends for giving me support and encouragement to finish this journey. I specifically want to thank Todd, Tamia, Taj, and Jasmine Byrom for patience and understanding when I had to step away from them in order to engage in research and writing. I want to give special thanks to my PGCPS colleagues who kept pushing me to take the time I needed and motivated me by cheering me on. There were times I wanted to stop, but my family, friends, and colleagues continuously cheering me on. They all pushed me to get pass the perceived obstacles by ensuring I had the time, space, and confidence to walk through the finish line.

I am dedicating this major accomplishment to my parents James and Johnetta Weldon as a way of thanking them for the love and support they have given me all of my life, to define my own success and achieve my goals. I am proud to have completed this journey for them.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge everyone who believed in me and supported my academic accomplishments. I am most appreciative of the guidance I received from my committee members, Dr. Tracey M. Phillips, Dr. Sandra Harris, and Dr. Garth den Heyer. I especially wish to acknowledge my academic partner and now dear friend, Idonia Barrett, for the love, support, and encouragement throughout our Ph.D journey. We started and ended this journey together. Lastly, I want to thank God for his divine power, strength, and comfort when needed, in order to achieve my first goal as a published author. It is with an abundance of gratitude that I thank them all.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| List of Tables | iii |
| Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study..... | 1 |
| Background..... | 2 |
| Problem Statement | 4 |
| Purpose of the Study | 5 |
| Research Question | 6 |
| Conceptual Framework..... | 6 |
| Nature of the Study | 7 |
| Definitions..... | 8 |
| Assumptions..... | 9 |
| Scope and Delimitations | 10 |
| Limitations | 11 |
| Significance..... | 11 |
| Summary | 12 |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review | 14 |
| Literature Search Strategy..... | 15 |
| Conceptual Framework..... | 16 |
| Literature Review..... | 18 |
| Acculturation..... | 18 |
| U.S. Latino Immigration Statistics..... | 21 |
| Background of English Language Learner Programs | 22 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Acculturative Stress and Mental Health | 23 |
| Acculturative Stressors | 25 |
| Impact of Acculturative Stress on Individuals | 26 |
| Acculturative Stress and Language | 28 |
| English Proficiency Among Latino Immigrants | 29 |
| Successes with Adult English as a Second Language Programs | 32 |
| Perceived Challenges with English Language Learning Adult Programs | 35 |
| Summary | 40 |
| Chapter 3: Research Method..... | 43 |
| Introduction..... | 43 |
| Research Design and Rationale | 43 |
| Role of the Researcher | 45 |
| Controlling Researcher Bias | 46 |
| Methodology | 48 |
| Participant Selection | 48 |
| Instrumentation | 52 |
| Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection | 53 |
| Data Management and Analysis | 56 |
| Trustworthiness..... | 58 |
| Credibility | 60 |
| Reflexivity..... | 60 |
| Validity | 61 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Transferability | 61 |
| Dependability | 62 |
| Confirmability | 63 |
| Ethical Procedures | 64 |
| Summary | 66 |
| Chapter 4: Results | 67 |
| Introduction | 67 |
| Research Setting..... | 67 |
| Demographics | 68 |
| Data Collection | 69 |
| H02..... | 69 |
| C06..... | 69 |
| A13..... | 70 |
| B23..... | 70 |
| S13..... | 70 |
| B08..... | 71 |
| M23..... | 71 |
| Z17..... | 72 |
| B45..... | 72 |
| Y03..... | 73 |
| Data Collection Procedures..... | 73 |
| Data Analysis | 77 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Evidence of Trustworthiness..... | 78 |
| Credibility | 79 |
| Transferability..... | 81 |
| Dependability..... | 82 |
| Confirmability..... | 82 |
| Results..... | 83 |
| Motivation to Learn English Proficiently | 84 |
| Obstacles to ELL Program Completion | 86 |
| Challenges as an English as a Second Language Immigrant | 89 |
| Depression..... | 91 |
| Academic Related Stressors..... | 92 |
| Non-Academic Related Stressors | 97 |
| Integrating: The Preferred Mode of Acculturating into the U.S. Culture | 100 |
| Summary | 104 |
| Chapter 5: Findings Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations | 107 |
| Introduction..... | 107 |
| Interpretation of the Findings..... | 108 |
| Obstacles to ELL Program Completion | 109 |
| Perceived Challenges as an English as a Second Language Immigrant | 111 |
| Depression and Acculturative Stress | 111 |
| Theory of Acculturation: Integrating into the U.S. Culture | 115 |
| Interpretation of the Findings and Conceptual Framework | 116 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Limitations of the Study..... | 118 |
| Recommendations for Future Research | 119 |
| Implications for Social Change..... | 120 |
| Conclusion | 122 |
| References..... | 123 |
| Appendix A: Interview Protocol..... | 141 |
| Appendix B: The Interview | 143 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1. Participant Demographics..... | 68 |
| Table 2. Theme Identification..... | 84 |

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2017), the Latino population in the United States will reach approximately 31% of the nation's population by 2060. A subgroup of this population, first-generation Latino immigrants, who predominantly speak Spanish, are among the fastest rising population of U.S. migrants (Lopez & Radford, 2017). First-generation Latino immigrants are persons born in a Latin country who have migrated to the United States. Individuals who migrate to a foreign country face many challenges, such as finding gainful employment, learning a new language, and perceived social injustices (Abraído-Lanzo, Echeverría, & Flórez, 2016), which is part of the acculturation process (Lorenzo-Blanco, Meca, Unger, & Szapocnik, 2018). Acculturation is the process of immigrants settling into a new land with the intent of maintaining their heritage while adapting to the culture of the new country (Verile, Ertl, Dillon, & De La Rosa, 2019). Acculturative stress refers to the stress that immigrants experience as they attempt to maintain their cultural heritage while adapting to the dominant culture in the new country (Verile et al., 2019)

Acculturative stress can contribute to the negative mental health of Latino immigrants (Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2018). English language learning (ELL) poses challenges for Latino immigrants and potentially contributes to acculturative stress. Though there is information on the growing population of limited English proficient (LEP) Latino immigrants who have settled in the United States as well as experiences and factors that influence the acculturative process and mental health outcomes, there is little empirical data on the vulnerability of post-immigration acculturative stress as influenced

by language barriers (Schwartz et al., 2015). I found less information on how second language acquisition influences acculturative stress. Based on my review of the current literature, a gap in the existing body of literature pertains to the vulnerability of acculturative stress in young adult immigrants learning English in a formal setting. This gap warranted additional research to understand the adaptation experiences and post-immigration perceptions of Latino immigrants. In this chapter, I introduce the topic of inquiry and background literature. Also discussed is the problem statement, the purpose of the study, my research question, the conceptual framework, and the nature of the study.

Background

The process of acculturation is not a negative experience; however, the conditions for different ethnic groups shape the perceptions of the acculturative experience. When the conditions are perceived to be negative and become overwhelming for immigrants, the process of acculturation can include acculturative stress (Bekteshi, Van Hook, Levin, Wan Kang, & Van Tran, 2017). Acculturative stress is the psychological effect of cultural adaptation as a result of the incongruence of beliefs, values, and other cultural norms between an immigrants' native country and the new host country, which can lead to a decline in the mental health and overall well-being of individuals (Caballera et al., 2016; Da Silva, Dillon, Verdejo, Sanchez, & De La Rosa, 2017). This stress is triggered by perceptions of inferiority, discrimination, poverty, citizenship status, and language barriers. Acculturative stress is also associated with levels of social support (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2017). Failure to acknowledge acculturative stress with the appropriate

coping skills and other social support can later manifest into psychological changes that result in depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders (Bekteshi et al., 2017; DaSilva et al., 2017).

Research has shown that acculturative stress can lead to depression and have significant impacts on the overall well-being of Latino immigrants (Bekteshi et al., 2017; DaSilva et al., 2017; Santos et al., 2017). Perceived challenges with acculturative stress are heightened when Latino immigrants are less proficient in English due to the many obstacles that accompany language barriers (DaSilva et al., 2017). The perceived pressures of choosing ways to adapt to the customs of the dominant culture might create greater vulnerability to acculturative stress in LEP immigrants (Shin & Kominski, 2017). English proficiency is thus a protector against acculturative stress, as limited English proficiency is perceived to trigger economic and discriminatory challenges related to lack of wealth and education (Bekteshi et al., 2017).

Further, the process of second language acquisition has been indicative of high levels of acculturative stress (Ai, Aisenberg, Weiss, & Salazar, 2014). Language acquisition significantly contributes to the decreased levels of acculturative stress due to enhanced social status and greater accessibility to resources and services (Zong & Batalova, 2015). But LEP Latino immigrants may have lower rates of employment and be more likely to live in poverty due to their lack of English proficiency, which leads to acculturative stress (Zong & Batalova, 2015). Therefore, ELL programs have a significant impact on Latino young adults' participation in communities and the labor force (Zong & Batalova, 2015)

The literature indicates that there is a lack of evidence to inform of the experiences, social, and cultural influences that lead to the development of acculturative stress. For instance, little is known about acculturative stress in Latino immigrants within their initial 5 years in the U.S. (DaSilva et al., 2017). There are gaps in the literature on the influence of English language proficiency and acculturative stress in Latino immigrants. To address a gap in the literature, this study will illuminate the perceptions of vulnerability to acculturative stress in Latino immigrants who learn English in a structured ELL program.

Problem Statement

Many Latino immigrants face social challenges and adjustment problems as a result of language barriers (Kim, Kim, Park, Jimenez, & Chiriboga, 2018). For some Latino immigrants, adjusting to the culture and language in the United States is a stressful transition that can have a long-term, negative impact on their physical and psychological well-being by contributing to acculturative stress (Al-Hoorie, 2017; Cabellera, 2016). Adult Latino immigrants address language barrier challenges by enrolling in ELL programs (Al-Hoorie, 2017). English language adult learning programs aim to provide students with the experiences, resources, and skills to prepare them for community engagement as well as enhance their eligibility for gainful employment opportunities (Zong & Batalova, 2015). But although ELL programs attempt to facilitate the transition process for immigrants settling into a new culture, adult ELL programs may present challenges that cause anxiety and stress for the participants (Abraído-Lanza, Echeverría, & Flórez, 2016).

There are linguistic, socioeconomic, and psychological post-immigration challenges for first-generation Latino immigrants in the United States. The linguistic challenges documented have a direct effect on the vulnerability to acculturative stress. But after an exhaustive review of the literature, I was unable to identify any research that explored the vulnerability to acculturative stress during the process of ELL for immigrants. More specifically, further research was needed on the vulnerability to acculturative stress in first-generation young adult Latino immigrants who participate in structured ELL programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore post-immigration acculturative stress relative to experiences with ELL. Acculturative stress is a broad phenomenon affecting many immigrants and develops as a result of a variety of contributing experiences. Therefore, the specific focus of this study was to examine the perceptions of the experiences of the ELL process and if it may contribute to the vulnerability of acculturative stress. The intent of the study was to explore the perceptions of young adult Latino immigrants who have participated in an ELL program in the Washington, DC Metropolitan area. The sought-after participant pool consisted of Latino immigrants, ages 18-25, who have lived in the United States for no less than 5 years. Participants reflected and shared their perceptions through recounts of their experiences in semi-structured interviews. The new information provided insights on the phenomenon. It will contribute to social change by informing human service and

educational providers on the design of specifically targeted interventions, resources, and support services that decrease the incidents of acculturative stress in Latino immigrants.

Research Question

What are first-generation young adult Latino immigrants' (ages 18-25) perceptions of acculturative stress relative to experiences in adult ELL programs?

Conceptual Framework

Theories of acculturation conceptualize intercultural contact between immigrants and individuals in the new land (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). The theories also provide a rationale for the challenges and changes that take place during the acculturation process (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Berry (1980) constructed a theory on acculturation based on individual acculturative processes and how they adapted to the cultures of the population. Berry also designed a model of acculturation to describe the cultural and psychological factors that dictate the relationship between acculturation and the psychological state of transitioning immigrants. Berry noted that changes in psychological state depend on the individual's perceptions of their acculturation experiences and how well the cultural qualities of the dominant group can meet the specific needs of individual immigrants.

Berry (1980) defined the categories of the acculturation theory as integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Integration refers to the process in which an immigrant becomes part of the different mainstream culture while maintaining their original cultural identity. Through assimilation, immigrants dispose of their native culture and instead adopt the ways of the new culture. Separation occurs among people who may not have had a choice in leaving their native culture and prefer to remain among people

of their own culture when settling into a new society. These immigrants lack interest in blending in with the mainstream culture. Marginalization often takes place typically among second generation immigrants who want nothing to do with either of the cultures and believe that a rewarding life is based on luck, with usually a negative outlook on life. Berry's theory of acculturation was used to guide this study, with integration being the category used to explore the phenomenon of acculturative stress and the process of ELL. A more detailed explanation of Berry's theory of acculturation will be provided in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

Generic qualitative studies allow researchers to capture people's opinions, beliefs, or reflections of their personal experiences of things that occur in the external environment (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015). In this study, I used a generic qualitative approach to conduct in-depth, semi-structured, individual interviews in order to obtain the desired first-hand personal information about the perceptions of participants who participated in adult ELL programs and their vulnerability to acculturative stress during this time. This methodology provided an opportunity to examine the participants' perceptions of their adaptation experiences and reflections about second language adult learning (Percy et al., 2015). Through discussions with participants using a generic approach, I learned more about how young adult Latino immigrants view ELL in a broader context of their lives and how they perceive things to be.

As part of the generic qualitative approach, I used purposive sampling to recruit participants for the study. Recruitment of potential participants consisted of flyers being

posted online on the website of a campus of a post-secondary public charter school that provides English as a second language (ESL) instruction to adult immigrants. The participants eligible for data collection were immigrants from a Latin American country who migrated to the United States a minimum of 5 years ago and were within the 18-25 years age range. I decided to maintain a small sample size that allowed for the collection of rich information from 10-15 participant perspectives. A sample of 10-12 young adult Latino immigrants is perceived to be enough participants according to the concept of saturation (Wahlstrom, 2017). Saturation is at the discretion of the researcher, and there are no rules for the size of the participation pool in qualitative inquiries (van Rijnsouwer, 2017). With these thoughts in mind, the sample size should be large enough to obtain a variety of rich data yet small enough to avoid repetition in the data (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016).

Definition of Terms

The following terms give definitions of discipline-specific vocabulary.

Acculturation: How individuals apply changes as a result of contact and interactions with others who are dissimilar ethnically, politically, and socially (Verile et al., 2019).

Acculturative stress: The psychological impact that stems from the process of cultural adaptation, potentially causing adjustment related challenges, adverse reactions, and tensions between cultures (Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2018).

Biculturalism: When immigrants integrate the cultural beliefs of their heritage culture and the dominant culture in a new society (Berry & Hou, 2016).

English language learners (ELL): Refers to students who are unable to effectively communicate in English because they fluently speak another native language but are enrolled in a structured English learning program requiring specialized instruction to learn English fluently (Zong & Batalova, 2015).

First-generation immigrants: Foreign-born individuals who have immigrated to the United States (Lopez & Radford, 2017).

First-generation Latino immigrants: Refers to individuals who were born in a Latin American country and recently migrated to the United States to establish a new life (Lopez & Radford, 2017).

Latino: A broad term used to refer to a group of people derived from a Spanish speaking country in Latin America (Pew Research Center, 2013).

Latino young adults: Latino young adults will refer to a group of people derived from a Spanish speaking country in Latin America, within the 18-25 age group (Pew Research Center, 2013).

Limited English proficient (LEP): Refers to a person who is not fluent in English, typically because it is not their native language (Kim et al., 2019).

Assumptions

In qualitative research, assumptions are defined as the researcher trusting an authentic voice and complete participation from those selected to respond accordingly in the inquiry (Oye, Sorensen, & Gladsdam, 2016). It is important to note the assumptions and address them to enhance the validity of the study (Oye et al., 2016). Qualitative research comes with a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that accompany an inquiry (Oye

et al., 2016). For example, it is an assumption that all participants will have a sincere interest in participating in the study. It is also an assumption that participants will be forthcoming and will respond to interview questions with complete honesty in a manner that answers the interview questions. In the current study, there was an assumption that all participants would be able to comprehend the questions to answer them fully. To address this, only those who have achieved a Level 3 or 4 in English proficiency were chosen to participate. English proficiency levels were self-reported from participants' most recent academic transcripts. There was also an assumption that participants would accurately reflect on their experiences. Lastly, as the researcher, I assumed that voluntary participants would be completely willing to share their experiences upon request.

Scope and Delimitations

The focus of the study was on young adult Latino immigrants, ages 18-25 years, who have migrated to the United States within the past 5 years. The participants came from a pool of people who are participating in a structured ELL program, who have achieved an English proficiency Level 3 or 4, and reside in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area. This area includes Maryland and Virginia areas, identified as the DMV region. Expanding the area beyond Washington, DC allowed for a broader yet controlled range of the recruitment of study participants. The results of the study will not be applicable to all Latino immigrants, nor to Latino immigrants outside of the selected geographic area. The study was designed for the results to provide insight into the perceptions of the Latino immigrants that meet the specified criteria. To answer the

research question, no other ethnic groups were eligible for sampling using this study's research design.

Limitations

The sample size was a limitation to the study because there is no way to pinpoint the number of participants needed, and data may repeat what is already known (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). However, in qualitative research, smaller sample sizes allow for depth versus breadth (Malterud et al., 2016). The study also relied on participants to self-report their levels of English proficiency, creating another limitation. Self-reporting can be a threat to validity as it may weaken the data analysis due to the inferences drawn from the data collected (van der Werff & Buckley, 2017). Lastly, with interviews, participants may not share truthful information or potentially falsify their reflections and experiences. As with self-reporting, falsified information is a threat to the validity of the study because it affects the overall accuracy of the data analysis (van der Werff & Buckley, 2017).

Significance

Latino immigrants experience social adjustment challenges often as a result of limited English proficiency after migrating to the United States (Kim et al., 2018). The challenges faced have been noted to increase levels of acculturative stress (Al-Hoorie, 2017). Little is known about ELL and how it may contribute to the vulnerability to acculturative stress. Therefore, this research was designed to explore whether participating in ELL programs contribute to acculturative stress in first-generation young adult Latino immigrants after settling in the United States. The significance of this study

is to provide insights into the post-immigration adaptation experiences of achieving English proficiency. The perceptions of the participants were for themes that can be useful in identifying any specific needs of the sampled population. Overall, the findings of the research elucidate cultural and educational challenges present during the process of second language acquisition as a part of the acculturation process.

The findings will also be useful in developing services that can specifically target decreasing acculturative stress among the young adult Latino immigrant population. The purpose of such services will be to help the specified population to cope as they make strides to improve optimum functionality by achieving English proficiency. The services will also minimize the psychological changes known as acculturative stress.

The findings may also yield multiple implications for positive social change. The study will contribute to the existing literature on acculturative stress and ELL while increasing awareness of the phenomenon. New information may also be beneficial for providing human services professionals with insights that help to expand the current network of social support resources for individuals and families. Such support programs can aim to provide Latino immigrants with coping skills strategies through prevention and intervention resources. The support resources should be designed to reduce perceived challenges that may be identified as contributing to increased levels of acculturative stress in Latino immigrants participating in adult ELL programs.

Summary

Chapter 1 provided background information and the rationale for conducting an inquiry about the perceptions and experiences of adult Latino immigrants participating in

ELL programs. Although there have been previous studies that document the prevalence of acculturative stress among the Latino immigrant population, this study took a closer look at the perceptions and reflections of those enrolled in ELL programs within their first 5 years of migrating to the United States. Chapter 2 will synthesize the literature that provides a base of knowledge on acculturation, acculturative stress and ELL programs that have been established for U.S. immigrants.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In 2015, 13.9% of the 43.2 million immigrants living in the United States were first-generation immigrants who predominantly spoke Spanish (Lopez & Radford, 2017). The U.S. Census Bureau (2017) estimated that by 2060, the U.S. Latino population would reach approximately 31% of the nation's population. The consistent growth of the U.S. Latino population requires research that addresses the lived experiences of acculturative transitions such as learning a second language. Research that examines adult ELL as a component of acculturation is essential to exploring the experiences on English language acquisition of first-generation Latino immigrants during their first 5 years of settling into the United States (Rastogi, Massey-Hastings, & Wieling, 2012).

Acculturative stress is a documented problem that contributes to adverse mental health conditions faced by Latino immigrants (Torres, Crowther, & Brodsky, 2017). U.S. born Latinos have higher rates of mental illness than foreign-born Latinos due to the stress of acculturating to a new country (Bridges, Andrews, & Deen, 2012). Latino immigrants face depression, anxiety, and mood disorders (Bridges et al., 2012; Torres et al., 2017; Whitehead, Parra-Cardona, Wampler, Bowles, & Klein, 2020). There is an existing body of literature that provides a base of knowledge about acculturative stress and ELL as two separate phenomena for Latino immigrants (Brooker & Lawrence, 2012). However, there is a lack of research that has conducted inquiries about Latino immigrants' lived experiences of learning English in a structured program. The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to determine whether the perceptions of the lived

experiences of first-generation young adult Latino immigrants who participated in a structured ELL program contribute to acculturative stress. In this chapter, there will be discussions about the literature that provides a base of knowledge about ELL structures and trends.

Literature Review Strategies

Several databases were used to search for scholarly articles and statistical data related to the topic of this study. The Walden University Library was used to access literature using Academic Search Complete, ProQuest Central, PsycArticles, PsycInfo, SAGE Journals, Thoreau, and Science Direct. Google Scholar was also used to locate peer-reviewed articles. Statistical data of Latino migration to the United States and rates of English language proficiency were collected using the Pew Hispanic Research Center (2013) and the U.S. Census Bureau (2017) reports. To maximize the output from the databases, the initial research strategy I used was to input keywords relative to perceived challenges for Latino immigrants. Next, I reviewed the articles carefully to examine the sections outlining the implications for future research. The literature review was in search of areas in which additional research would be useful content. Using this strategy helped to identify the gap in the literature. I reviewed the reference sections of multiple journal articles that I considered as another helpful strategy for finding relevant literature was. I also used specific keywords, phrases, and Boolean identifiers were used to conduct an extensive search on the topic. The most useful keywords in the search were *United States adult learning programs, Latino, Hispanic, acculturation, acculturative stress, psychological distress, adult learning, adult education, English Language Learners, ELL,*

Latino ELLs, Limited English Proficient, Latino depression, first-generation Latino immigrants, Latino educational challenges, immigrant stressors, biculturalism, and barriers for Latinos.

Conceptual Framework

Theories of acculturation help explain intercultural contact between immigrants and individuals in the new country as well as the challenges and changes during the acculturation process (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). This study used Berry's (1980) model of acculturation, which explains how immigrants psychologically process and regard cross-cultural contact and the interactions between the dominant society and the individual. Berry designed a model of acculturation to describe the cultural and psychological factors that govern the relationship between acculturation and mental health for transitioning immigrants. Berry noted that during the process of acculturation, one culture dominates the other. Because immigration brings about population expansion, greater cultural diversification, prejudice and discrimination, and policy development, both cultural groups are influenced by one another; however, the acculturating group receives the most significant influence of functioning among the dominant culture (Berry, 1980). As immigrants move through the acculturative process, psychological changes are impacted by how well the cultural qualities of the dominant group can meet the specific needs or improve the functionality of individual immigrants (Berry, 1980).

In Berry's initial model of acculturation, the analysis of changes in individual behavioral patterns concerning cultural beliefs and values examined how immigrants moved through various phases from pre-contact, through initial contact, through periods

of rising conflict between groups (Berry, 1980). Separation occurs among immigrants who may not have had a choice in leaving their native culture. Therefore, they prefer to remain among people of their own culture when settling into a new society. Berry (1994) suggested that when immigrants acculturate using the separation category, immigrants may lack interest in blending in with the mainstream culture and, therefore, may not attempt to merge or adapt to the dominant culture's way of life. The last category of the acculturation model is marginalization. In this model, the immigrant rejects the receiving culture and discards the heritage culture. Marginalization has been identified as typically taking place among second generation immigrants.

Berry's models of acculturation have been tested in several studies that examined individuals' attitudes toward acculturation, the host society, and immigrants' cultural groups after making the migration transition (Doná & Berry, 1994). Doná and Berry (1994) first used the revised acculturation model to examine the relationship among acculturation attitudes, acculturative experience with the Canadian society, Latin cultural maintenance, individual values, and acculturative stress among Central American refugees who settled in Canada. Doná and Berry found that immigrants who exhibited lower stress levels acculturated using the integration model as opposed to assimilation, separation, or marginalization. Additionally, the respondents who integrated into the Canadian culture also expressed having intermediate cultural maintenance, which is the preservation of the native culture's stories and traditions while adapting to those of a dominant culture (Doná & Berry, 1994). Doná and Berry concluded that refugees and immigrants highly favored the integration model of acculturation because they valued

their cultural identity. The participants expressed the importance of merging their cultural community with the dominant culture's belief systems. Their responses indicated positive acculturative experiences with lower acculturative stress rates (Doná & Berry, 1994). In addition, integration was highlighted as a predictor of good mental health in other studies (Doná & Berry, 1994).

Later, Berry and Hou (2016) examined acculturation and the well-being of immigrants in Canada to study the relationship engagement and well-being of immigrants who migrated to Canada between 1980 and 2012 while taking into consideration socioeconomic and demographic factors. Findings from the Berry and Hou study revealed that the integration strategy was the most preferred strategy of acculturation. However, patterns of demographic and social factors were associated with the other three strategies (assimilation, separation, and marginalization). The trends that illuminated showed that when immigrants remain attached to their heritage culture and engaged within the new society, a greater sense of well-being was achieved. The results provided evidence that integration was associated with higher levels of well-being (Berry & Hou, 2016).

Literature Review

Acculturation

Acculturation refers to the process by which people attempt to merge their native cultural beliefs, behaviors, and values with a dominant culture after immigrating to a new country (Behara, Khan, & Hasan, 2018; Schwartz et al., 2013; Whitehead et al., 2020).

Acculturation also includes the changes within a group or individual as a result of

interactions with individuals of another cultural group (Behara et al., 2018). The dynamics surrounding the acculturative process encompass the experiences of immigrants and refugees as they adapt to or cope with the transition of moving from their native land to a new land (Bakhshaie et al., 2017). The construct of acculturation has been studied by researchers in many fields. For example, there have been psychological studies conducted to examine acculturation and its relevance to a variety of cultures (Fox, Merz, Solórzano, & Roesch, 2013). The key focus in studies on acculturation is examining how individuals navigate through the process of migrating to new societies (Fox et al., 2013; Sun, Hoyt, Brockenberg, Lam, & Tiwari, 2016; Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

Researchers have also focused on the process of acculturation in relation to one of Berry's (1994) four categories of acculturation: integration. Integration refers to biculturalism, a concept built on the premise of immigrants having integrated the cultural values, practices, and beliefs of the new culture with those of their heritage culture (Nguyen & Martinez, 2013; Schwartz et al., 2013). According to Schwartz et al. (2013), the integration dimension is often associated with the most favorable psychological outcomes for immigrants. However, integration depends on individual immigrant perceptions of the similarities and differences between the native culture and the cultural community in the dominant society (Nguyen & Martinez, 2013). Intercultural contact, when two or more people from different cultural backgrounds engage, can add to stress when immigrants have exposure to a new culture (Revollo, Quereshi, Collazos, Valero, & Casas, 2011). Integration encompasses the perceived pressures associated with acquiring

a new language and changes in gender roles and family values associated with merging two cultures (Revollo et al., 2011). But the integration acculturation dimension is still associated with higher levels of well-being in immigrants compared to the other three categories in the acculturation model, as it allows for immigrants to be more engaged in identifying with many social groups (Berry & Hou, 2016). The premise of the integration strategy is for immigrants to maintain their native culture while adapting to or merging with the dominant culture of the new land (Berry, 1980).

Further research has suggested how acculturation plays an intricate role in immigrants' perceptions of life satisfaction and thus dictates the risks of acculturative stress (Diaz & Bui, 2016). Cultural changes can have both positive and negative effects on individuals, which could determine happiness and levels of stress. The changes in education level, employment, new language development, and urbanization affect immigrants' perceived well-being (Diaz & Bui, 2016). Though happiness is subjective, when individuals lack a healthy balance between the effects of acculturation and happiness, they are at a greater risk for the development of acculturative stress (Diaz & Bui, 2016). Stress associated with the acculturative process can derive from learning the new culture and new language, reconstructing social networks, feelings of hopelessness, and overall anxiety about the transition (Behara et al., 2018). As a result of higher levels of stress during the acculturative process, coping may become difficult and lead to acculturative stress (Behara et al., 2018; Diaz & Bui, 2016).

Many studies of acculturation have addressed the physical and/or psychological health outcomes associated with acculturation, and the majority of studies have focused

on negative outcomes of acculturating into a new society such as low self-esteem, psychological disorders, chronic disease, or substance abuse (Sun et al., 2016). But there have been few studies of acculturation focused on factors associated with the susceptibility to acculturative stress (Schartz et al., 2013), and there are even fewer studies with second language learning at the center of the research inquiry. This research study addressed the lived experiences of immigrants learning ESL, with Berry's acculturation model as the lens to guide interpretation and explanation of the findings.

U.S. Latino Immigration Statistics

The Latino population is the fastest-growing population in the United States (Duncan & Trejo, 2015; U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). From 1970 to 2010, approximately 11.7 million Latino immigrants settled in the United States (Duncan & Trejo, 2015; Massey, Durrand, & Pren, 2016). Initially, most Latino immigrants originated from Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico (Massey et al., 2016). In later years, settlers from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Peru, and Nicaragua entered the United States (Massey et al., 2016). As of the second quarter of 2015, Latinos comprised 13.3% of the entire U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). As of 2016, the Latino population reached 57.5 million, which constituted 17.8% of the U.S. total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). By 2060, the Latino population is expected to grow to about 30% of the total U.S. population (Bekhshaie et al., 2017). This growth anticipates higher Latino representation in the professional workforce and political forums (Bekhshaie et al., 2017). With the Latino immigrant population steadily growing, there is a need for research to examine the processes and experiences that shape

the manner in which they settle into the new land (Abraido-Lanza, Echeverria, & Flores, 2016), such as how acculturative processes like participating in structured English learning programs impact this group (Bekhshaie et al., 2017). This will be beneficial for the development of resources and services for immigrant populations in an ever-changing society. The findings from this research can help people to understand better the cultural factors that impact optimal functionality and the mental health well-being of immigrants. Without further research on how immigrants adapt in the United States, service providers lack opportunities to help improve accessibility and overall life satisfaction.

Background of English Language Learner Programs

ELL adult learning program development and best practices have evolved over the course of the 20th century (Vanek, 2016). The first ELL resources for immigrants were established in the early 1900s, with support for adult education being very limited and had uncoordinated federal, state, and local government funding (Vanek, 2016). The U.S. Department of Education then supported the Adult Basic Education Act of 1966 in which more efforts were made to provide support for adult ELL. The programs had a primary focus on vocational training and lifelong learning. It was not until the 1990s that a shift was made to focus on meeting the literacy needs of ELLs as a result of the increase in immigration. The shift to focus more on the adult ELLs' needs was acknowledged by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998, which was developed under the umbrella of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Section 202 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 required adult basic education service providers to develop programs designed to assist immigrant adults with becoming literate, which was defined

as an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, mathematically compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family, and as an individual in society. In addition, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998 was an enhancement to adult basic education in which the law required the programs to include ELL instruction, with coordinated funding at the federal and state levels. The implementation was now a requirement for programs to include instruction that helped adult immigrants to become literate, inclusive of digital literacy instruction. Digital literacy instruction was deemed a viable component of ELL instruction due to the increasing developments of technology and its use in the workforce and everyday life (Vanek, 2016).

To date, in the United States, most language learners continue to receive English language and literacy instruction through federally and state-funded adult basic education programs (Alvear, 2018; Vanek, 2016). The U.S. Department of Education measures the success of adult basic education with ELL and digital literacy components by reports of program completion submitted to The Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (Vanek, 2016). ELL program success in the United States continues to be measured using research study data that reports on the academic performance of ELLs in comparison to the competencies of native English speakers (Alvear, 2018; Lindholm-Leary, 2012).

Acculturative Stress and Mental Health

Many immigrants have difficulty coping with the acculturative stress that potentially develops due to incongruences that occur when merging the customs, values, and beliefs of the two cultures (Cervantes et al., 2013; Da Silva et al., 2017; Schwartz et

al., 2013). The coping difficulties often result in psychological changes, or an altered mental or emotional state of being, known as acculturative stress (Cervantes, et al., 2013; Da Silva et al., 2017; Schwartz et al., 2013). In some countries, where there is a degree of cultural congruity between the immigrants and the mainstream culture, risks of acculturative stress are lower, but in diverse countries where there are vast cultural differences, such as in the United States, the risks of acculturative stress increases (Salas-Wright, Robles, Vaughn, Cordova, & Perez-Figueroa, 2015).

Acculturative stress has been defined as the psychological effect of cultural adaptation, which can potentially lead to a decline in the mental health and overall well-being of individuals (Cabellera et al., 2016; Schwartz et al., 2013; Whitehead, Parra-Cardona, Wampler, Bowles, & Klein, 2020). When immigrants experience negative changes in behavior and thinking while getting acclimated to new cultural patterns, they experience acculturative stress (Bakhshaie et al., 2017). Several researchers have documented that acculturative stress is associated with adverse mental health issues as anxiety and depression among individuals in the Latino immigrant population (Bakhshaie et al., 2017; Duncan & Trejo, 2015; Salas-Wright, Robles, Vaughn, Cordova, & Perez-Figueroa, 2015).). Horevitz and Organista (2012) noted that migrating to the United States has been linked to declines in mental health outcomes among many Latino immigrants. Bakhshaie et al. (2017) noted that acculturative stress had been directly linked to mental health disorders and suicidal ideation among Latino immigrants. The rates of elevated depression and anxiety disorders among Latino immigrants have been

reported to be associated with language and cultural differences experienced during intercultural contact (Bakhshaie et al., 2017).

Other researchers have suggested that rates of depression, anxiety, and symptoms of psychosocial disorders among Latinos are twice as high as the rates among other ethnic groups (Cabellera et al., 2016; Da Silva et al., 2017; Schwartz et al., 2013; Torres, Crowther, & Brodsky, 2017). Bakhshaie et al. (2017) quantitatively examined the relationships between anxiety sensitivity, acculturative stress, mood disorders, and anxiety symptoms among Latinos seeking health services at a primary healthcare facility. The participants were recruited from a healthcare facility in an urban southwestern community. The inclusion criteria consisted of the ability to read, write, and communicate in Spanish, and being between 18 and 64 years old, and participants were excluded if they exhibited limited mental competency. The measurement tool used to collect data was a 20-item self-report measure, in which responses were recorded using a Likert scale, asking participants to rate the extent to which they experienced various feelings and emotions over the previous two weeks. The researchers also used the self-report Inventory of Depression and Anxiety Symptoms to collect data. The findings revealed, there were significant correlations between acculturative stress and anxiety (Bakhshaie et al., 2017).

Acculturative Stressors

The concept of acculturative stress is predicated on the premise that during the acculturation process, individuals develop a set of stress behaviors that include anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptoms,

and identity confusion (Bekteshi & Kang, 2018). These stress behaviors may manifest in various settings, such as the academic setting for immigrant English language learners (Bekteshi & Kang, 2018). Previous research has documented that certain aspects of living in the United States put Latino immigrants at risk for the developing psychological problems prompted by acculturative stress (Bekteshi & Kang, 2018; Torres, Crowther, & Brodsky, 2017; Whitehead et al., 2020). Acculturative stressors include things such as legal status, language barriers, and unequal access to the social community, as well as other social and structural inequities that immigrants experience upon arriving and settling in the United States (Chavez-Korell & Torres, 2014; Torres et al., 2017).

Impact of Acculturative Stress on Individuals

Acculturative stress can develop from discrimination, a change in family responsibilities, economic hardship, or lack of understanding of the system of values and beliefs presented by a new culture (Concha, Sanchez, de la Rosa, & Villar, 2013). Overall, the interactions immigrants make in a new society often represent external stressors for Latino immigrants as a result of racial discrimination, limited language proficiency, and fear of the unknown relative to cultural values as well as the social, economic, educational, and political norms associated with the new culture. (Concha et al., 2013). Acculturative stress encompasses multiple psychosocial difficulties and stressors that can be summarized by four factors: (a) perceived discrimination, (b) familiar acculturative gaps, (c) English learner-related stress, and (d) decreased sense of school and community belonging, due to challenges within the structured school environment (Abraído-Lanza et al., 2016; Castro-Olivo et al., 2014). Abraído-Lanza et

al., (2016) pointed out that acculturative stress manifests differently in individuals across various cultural groups (Castro-Olivo, Palardy, Albeg, & Williamson, 2014).

As with any other form of psychological distress, not all individuals handle acculturative pressures in the same way, which leads to highly variable acculturative stress outcomes (Akhtar, 2012). Driscoll and Torres (2013) conducted a study with the purpose of investigating the role of behavioral and cognitive resources (i.e., active coping and self-efficacy), as mediators of the relationship between acculturative stress and depression among adult Latino men and women. Generally, acculturative stress manifests through the process of adapting to mainstream American values, customs, and cultural patterns (Driscoll & Torres, 2013). Driscoll and Torres (2013) noted specific ways that Latino immigrants indicated being impacted by acculturative stress. Respondents self-reported having challenges with maintaining physical health, while others reported experiencing anxiety and depression symptoms (Driscoll & Torres, 2013). Other participants shared moments of suicidal ideation and deficits with psychological adjustment to the new way of life in the United States. Driscoll and Torres (2013) highlighted that the majority of the participants shared that from their perception, acculturative stress often manifests in individuals in the process of acquiring English for the sake of speaking and understanding the dominant language of the new society.

Concha et al. (2013) suggest that limited English proficiency was negatively associated with higher levels of acculturative stress according to the reported role language plays in social support (Concha et al., 2013). Limited English proficiency was noted due to its connection with immigrants trying to fully understand the information

they receive about how the new social, economic, and political systems operate in the United States (Concha et al., 2013). The limitations of the study were relative to generalizability due to the age group and varying educational levels of the participant pool. The recommendations from Concha et al. (2013) for future research were to narrow the age group and select a group of participants who share the same educational background. The recommendation was helpful in narrowing the targeted population for the study.

Acculturative Stress and Language

In first-generation Latino adults, separation from the family, language barriers, and lack of social networks to support them are variables that have been linked to higher levels of acculturative stress (Abraído-Lanza, Echeverría, & Flórez, 2016). Past researchers have noted that Latino immigrants face social and adjustment challenges as a result of language barriers, which contributes to the rates of acculturative stress (Abraído-Lanza et al., 2016; Akhtar, 2012; Al-Hoorie; 2017; Driscoll & Torres, 2013). Researchers have made recommendations for conducting future studies to fill the gaps in existing literature related to immigrants and acculturative stress (Abraído-Lanza et al., 2016; Yeh & Mayuko, 2016).

Whitehead et al.(2020) discussed examining the role of native language proficiency in predicting levels of acculturative stress in order to grasp a full understanding of the predictors of acculturative stress in Latino immigrant populations. Torres, Crowther, and Brodsky (2017) added that language competency and the pressure to be fluent in English, as a second language, creates stress during the acculturative

process. Torres et. al (2017) further highlighted that acquiring ESL does not present high-stress levels; instead, the pressure from the mainstream culture to speak English fluently in order to be active members of society creates high levels of stress. In a related study, Yeh and Mayuko (2016) quantitatively investigated whether English language fluency, social support satisfaction, and social connectedness predicted acculturative stress in international students attending colleges and universities in the United States from around the world. The researchers concluded that challenges related to language were related to low academic performance, poor psychosocial adjustment among international students (Yeh and Mayuko, 2016). Yeh and Mayuko (2016) further recommended future studies to use more accurate language proficiency scales, a qualitative study to get in-depth reports instead of the self-reported questionnaires, and variables containing other factors that have been perceived to contribute to challenges with adjustment to living in the United States. Using the discussions and recommendations from previous studies, I designed a qualitative study that will analyze the lived experiences of adult ESL immigrants, capturing their perceptions of ELL programs in seek of themes that illuminate what potentially makes Latino immigrants vulnerable to acculturative stress.

English Proficiency Among Latino Immigrants

English language proficiency refers to the level in which one can speak and understand English with a high level of formality and familiarity (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Approximately one-third of the Latino population is classified as having limited English proficiency (LEP) (Krogstad, Stepler, & Lopez, 2015). The Pew Hispanic Research Center (2013) noted that as of 2013, approximately 61.6 million people

reported speaking a language other than English at home. The same report indicated that 41% of the Latino population was classified as having LEP (Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2013). The Pew Hispanic Research Center (2013) also noted from the 2013 American Community Survey, 12.5 million Latinos reported that they do not speak English proficiently. An additional 3.2 million reported not speaking English at all (Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2013).

In the United States, the Latino LEP population faces challenges with educational attainment, language acquisition, as well as gaining access to resources and services (Madriral-Hopes, Villavicencio, Foote, & Green, 2014; Zong & Batalova, 2015). Across the nation, Latino adult LEP immigrants represent one of the fastest-growing segments of the workforce population (Madriral-Hopes et al., 2014). Latino LEP immigrants come to the United States less educated than other immigrant groups, and they are more likely to live in poverty (Zong & Batalova, 2015). With the changing economy, U.S. jobs rely heavily on workers with post-secondary education and skills to join the workforce (Madriral-Hopes et al., 2014; Zong & Batalova, 2015).

Taylor, Lopez, Martinez, and Velasco (2012), conducted the 2011 National Survey of Latinos to collect data on their perception of Latinos' identities, behaviors, and views on social issues and language use since migrating to the United States. According to Taylor et al. (2012), about 55% of the Latino immigrants surveyed reported that their group is about as successful as other racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States after becoming English proficient. Some respondents reported gainful employment with opportunities to earn higher wages post-program completion. Other respondents

shared that they have had improved integration into society. Zong and Batalova (2015) noted that LEP Latino immigrants face challenges with accessing employment and training services to advance within the U.S. labor market. Adult immigrants seek to earn wages that take care of the family's needs and keep them out of poverty (Madrigal-Hopes et al., 2014; Zong & Batalova, 2015). Therefore, acquiring English proficiency has been deemed imperative in order to compete with educated English speakers in the labor force and feel a higher sense of self-sufficiency in their communities (Zong & Batalova, 2017; Madrigal-Hopes et al., 2014; Zong & Batalova, 2015; Taylor et al., 2012).

Immigration to a foreign country includes many stressors as immigration involves separation from family and friends while simultaneously learning a new language and cultural system (Madrigal-Hopes et al., 2014). In some cases, immigrants form individual perceptions of the perceived pressure to conform to the dominant culture to minimize instances of discrimination while also trying to maintain their own cultural identity (Madrigal-Hopes et al., 2014). The perceived pressures may create greater vulnerability to acculturative stress in immigrants classified as LEP (Zhang et al., 2012). Such vulnerability to acculturative stress has been noted as being higher among Latino immigrants due to a lack of accessibility or desire to engage in culturally responsive interventions designed to lower stress levels. ELL classes have been noted to decrease susceptibility to acculturative stress because participation in such classes can enhance individual daily functionality among the dominant culture (Zhang et al., 2012)

English proficiency directly influences patterns of psychological distress in Latino immigrants because limited English proficiency could result in the cultural distance

(Zhang et al., 2012). Potochnik and Perreira (2011) found that achieving English language proficiency predicted lower levels of acculturative stress and decreased the occurrence of acculturative stress-related mental health challenges. Reportedly, as immigrants become more fluent in English, adapting to social norms and navigating the U.S. social systems becomes less stressful (Potochnik & Perreira, 2011). Zhang, Hong, Takeuchi, and Mossakowski (2012) examined how limited English proficiency affected psychological distress in Latino and Asian immigrants who migrated to the United States as adults. Zhang et al. (2012) used data obtained from the National Latino and Asian American Study. Findings revealed that levels of LEP potentially influenced other factors that impact psychological distress in immigrants as they may perceive that they are being victimized or stigmatized as a result of the language barriers. Participants reported feelings of embarrassment and interpersonal discomfort that often led to undermining their self-worth and social isolation. Zhang et al. indicated that Latino and Asian students reported feelings of being stereotyped, discriminatory experiences, and depression as a result of limited English proficiency (Zhang et al., 2012). The findings of the investigation suggested that limited English proficiency was an independent factor that greatly contributed to psychological distress and acculturative stress among the students. The study involved interviewing participants that acquired English proficiency through a structured ELL program.

Successes with Adult English as a Second Language Programs

Statistics show the number of adults entering the United States in academic programs to learn ESL has increased significantly since 2008 (Ananyeva, 2014). In 2008,

859,169 nonimmigrants entered in an ESL program in the United States. (Ananyeva, 2014). In 2010, the number of enrollments in ESL programs increased to 1,514,783 students (Ananyeva, 2014). Recent research has revealed that there are a number of successful ESL programs that meet the needs of adult immigrant learners (Ananyeva, 2014). There have been many success stories of those who have participated in ELL programs after migrating to the United States.

I was unable to locate literature specific to Latino adult ELL and program effectiveness. However, there was literature analyzed that discussed ELL program effectiveness for refugees and immigrants not specific to Latino ELL students. For instance, The Lippitt House Museum in Providence, Rhode Island, developed an adult ELL program to benefit the literacy learning goals of adult immigrants, as a community resource and initiative to support public education and civic engagement (Saunders & Hunter, 2018). The aim of the program was to use methods such as scaffolding information, inquiry, and object exploration as learning techniques (Saunders & Hunter, 2018). The program also provided students with opportunities to practice speaking, reading, and writing English using museum artifacts and exhibits to make connections to the past and present (Saunders & Hunter, 2018). The Lippitt House Museum's program proved to be mutually beneficial by uniquely engaging ELL students in museum artifacts while achieving language learning goals.

The overarching aim for ELL programs is to move new immigrants from a public assistance status to self-sufficiency and self-reliance (Vanek, 2016; Warriner, 2016). Warriner (2016) investigated ESL adult learning programs for adult refugees and

immigrants that were seeking to find employment or to obtain a general equivalency diploma (GED) in a short period of time. The purpose of the investigation was to uncover the focal points of ELL programs implemented in the Western United States. The examination of the programs included discussions from some of the teachers and the students enrolled in programs in the Western region, due to the influx of Latino immigrants in the Western United States. Warriner (2016) discussed that the ESL programs encompass a curriculum that provides learners with English language skills, cultural awareness, and upon completion of the program, credentials that serve as evidence that participants are ready to enter the labor force. The investigation of adult ESL program effectiveness for refugees was done collecting data from the perspectives of the instructors and students. The study used three research questions to guide the program evaluation: (1) In what ways do the program policies and procedures position adult ELLs as future participants in the job market, (2) What are the skills, competencies, and expected outcomes of the program, and (3) How do ELLs view the role of the learning process in relation to their personal goals and family priorities? The findings showed that adult refugee learners achieved their academic goals and prepared them for a minimal wage, entry-level employment in various sectors of the workforce upon completion of the program. Warriner (2016) noted that social factors were reported as having an influence on what adult ESL programs and teachers' value and prioritize in the structured learning environment. These social factors were said to impact goal setting for self-improvement and either create or eliminate discourse relative to the ELL process. For Latino immigrants who have completed an ELL program, they are better equipped and confident

about helping their school-aged children with their academic studies (Taylor et al. (2012).

While there are success stories about the experiences of learning ESL, there are also many complexities that accompany the experiences (Taylor et al., 2012; Warriner, 2016).

Perceived Challenges with English Language Learning Adult programs

Adults continue to develop cognitively, emotionally, and interpersonally throughout adulthood even with increasingly complex ways of constructing meaning from various experiences (Hulstijn, Young, Ortega, Bigelow, DeKeyser, Ellis, Lantolf, Mackey, & Talmy, 2014; Ouellette-Schramm, 2016). Adult learners have expressed challenges with constructing meaning from the learning experiences associated with acquiring English proficiency in an often unfamiliar and structured setting (Hulstijn et al., 2014). These learning experiences include having to commit to the routine or schedule of classes, peer collaboration and public speaking inside the classroom, goal setting and achieving, and the pressures of grasping the language concepts that in various cases significantly differ from those found in the Spanish language (Hulstijn et al., 2014). The challenges occur because while adult learning is taking place, other aspects of the acculturation process are still happening, which brings about additional complexities for ELL immigrants (Hulstijn et al., 2014). For immigrants, these complex experiences encompass the challenges presented by adult learning and often result in academic stress. For adult learners enrolled in ELL programs, the academic stress from the emotional pressure and tension that results from the specific demands of life as a student while still adapting to a new cultural system can manifest into acculturative stress (Akhtar, 2012; Khan et al. 2013; Mishkind, 2016). There are reportedly a host of course demands that

may lead to acculturative stress in immigrants participating in ELL programs (Akhtar, 2012; Hulstijn et al., 2014; Ouellette-Schramm, 2016). These demands include meeting deadlines, fulfilling program requirements, challenges with time management, issues with interacting with teaching staff, meeting personal goals, finding comfortable social activities, adjustment to the structure of the learning environment, perceived lack of support networks, and perceived limited career options (Akhtar, 2012; Hulstijn et al., 2014; Ouellette-Schramm, 2016).

For Latino immigrant adults, academic stress stems from being exposed to new educational concepts, structured learning environments, adjusting to new social settings, and acquiring more responsibilities than prepared for (Akhtar, 2012; Khan et al. 2013; Mishkind, 2016). In research, adult Latino immigrants have expressed a common desire to achieve English proficiency at a fast pace for social and political adaptation (Mishkind, 2016). However, during the time learning is taking place, academic stress results from the ELL's perception of the extensive knowledge base required and the perception of having inadequate time to achieve language learning goals. (Khan et al. 2013; Mishkind, 2016).

Gardner (2017) developed a study using multiple methods of data collection to examine the ELL learning process for young adults. Gardner (2017) discussed some of the challenges with adult ELL in structured programs, from the perception of a student and instructors of adult ELL programs. Data were collected over a 5-year period, observing a male student incarcerated two years after arriving in the United States from Guatemala as an LEP first-generation immigrant (Gardner, 2017). Additional data were collected through interviews with ELL teachers in adult secondary classrooms outside of

the correctional institution (Gardner, 2017). In the discussions, Gardner (2017) highlighted themes associated with challenges that manifest during Latino immigrants' participation in an ELL program and the perceived stressors that impacted student stress levels. One of the themes noted in the findings was the impact of ELL adult immigrants lacking a formal education in their native country, which made participants feel ill-prepared and uncertain of successful outcomes (Gardner, 2017). A second theme was related to the challenges presented by the language barrier between the instructors of the ELL programs and the students, as expressed in the interviews with teachers (Gardner, 2017).

In many cases, there was no access to an interpreter, which created stress for adult learners and teachers. As a result, teachers shared that they noticed some students lost motivation to complete the ELL program (Gardner, 2017). According to the data collected from ELL instructors, students that lost motivation shared that they continued in the program to try to achieve their English proficiency goals, but often faced burnout (Gardner, 2017).

Janis (2013) discussed various factors related to the low level of success that adult ESL students have and how they perceive these experiences to impact mental health well-being. Adjusting to an institution and a new environment was shocking to the immigrant students. Participants viewed the experience as a struggle to redefine their lives with the language being at the forefront of the conflicts. Students also reported being stressed by the fact that the instructors viewed each of the ESL students as being alike in their English deficiencies, neglecting a range of personal experiences, backgrounds, and needs

of the ELL community. Another theme illuminated in the study was that students did not feel that they fit in the academic and social environments at the institution, which made them reluctant to complete their studies. Students further described challenges with personal-emotional adjustment, forming meaningful relationships in the new land, and balancing life's demands outside of the academic setting while being tasked to learn ESL. Janis (2013) also noted that the impact of ESL classes on emotional well-being is unknown and suggested additional research to understand how the process of learning English impacts acculturative transitions while maintaining positive psycho-social well-being.

Ouellette-Schramm (2016) indicated there are other complexities that accompany learning ESL as the learning process involves cognitive and linguistic skills. The complexities for adults learning English often stem from their previous educational backgrounds, situational barriers, and language-specific cultural traditions of speaking and writing (Ouellette-Schramm, 2016). Second language acquisition involves the application of linguistic concepts to summarize, organize primary and subsequent ideas, and construct logical relationships between abstract ideas (Vanek, 2016). These skills are significant for ELLs who are entering the 21st-century workforce (Vanek, 2016). Employers require employees to be capable of problem-solving and performing job requirements with self-sufficiency (Vanek, 2016). Without English literacy, technological skills, and constructing ideas, ESL adults more than likely will have difficulties with gainful employment and higher wage-paying jobs (Vanek, 2016).

Findings from past research have revealed that ELL adult learners face burnout due to frustration if English proficiency takes longer than anticipated or desired as students grow tired of reading and studying (Vogt & Echevarria, 2015; Gardner, 2017). Some adult ELLs find the experiences of ELL too overwhelming and eventually drop out of the classes, while others have been more resilient and completed their educational programs (Janis, 2013; Flink, 2018). In some instances, adult learners were able to overcome challenges (Brooker & Lawrence, 2012). These students reported that they were able to lower their stress levels through social interactions and exploring their feelings of acculturative stress with school-based supporters who helped them to get more involved in developing social networks (Brooker & Lawrence, 2012). Social relationships are significant support systems that helped to decrease acculturative stress (Brooker & Lawrence, 2012; Janis, 2013; Ouellette-Schramm, 2016). On the other hand, other students implied that they had different experiences with their ELL and managing stress levels (Brooker & Lawrence, 2012). For instance, some participants reported feeling as if having a poor grasp on English skills created barriers to social relationships, caused difficulties with completing assignments, and presented challenges performing up to the standards of instructors or peers (Brooker & Lawrence, 2012).

Chavez-Korell and Torres (2014) noted consideration of how acculturation factors beyond the classroom may have an impact on cognitive functioning and the success of acquiring ESL. The factors Chavez-Korell and Torres (2014) identified were limited economic resources, cultural adaptation, and ethnic discrimination. Janis (2013), Hulstijn et al. (2014), Brooker, and Lawrence (2012) helped to gain an understanding of the

perceived challenges with adult ELL programs with finding from their research. The literature analysis highlighted an opportunity to develop a new study that examines the learning environments and how they may or may not connect to the development of acculturative stress.

Summary

Throughout U.S. history, immigration has been a significant component of demographic growth and essential to the economic and social development of the nation (Duncan & Trejo, 2015). Statistically, the Latino population has been the minority ethnic group leading growth in the 21st century, with about 60 million immigrants moving to the United States since 1965 (U.S. Census, 2017). Acculturation, the process of immigrants adopting the attitudes, values, customs, beliefs, and behaviors of a new culture, has been noted as a migration challenge (Guo, 2015). Within this process of acculturation, immigrants attempt to adjust their cultural patterns and customs by merging them with those of the dominant culture (Horevitz & Organista, 2012). Acculturation results from continuous first-hand contact with the dominant culture and can have varying outcomes for individual immigrants (Horevitz & Organista, 2012). Concepts of acculturation extend beyond behavioral indicators and now encompass language use, values, and attitudes (Guo, 2015). Migrating to the United States has been deemed responsible for the decline in mental health outcomes among many Latino immigrants (Horevitz & Organista, 2012). Torres et. al, (2017) examined acculturation studies that explore aspects of how immigrants make meaning of their life experiences, language, cultural norms, values, and overall health. Bakhshaie et al. (2017) contributed

to the literature with findings that the length of time migrant groups live in the United States impacts risks of the development of acculturative stress. Acculturative stressors often include social and structural inequities that immigrants report upon arriving and settling in the United States (Torres, Crowther, & Brodsky, 2017). These stressors typically attributed to legal status, language barriers, and unequal access to the social community (Bakhshaie et al., 2017). Research shows that increased English language proficiency would allow increased access to health services and better communication with health service providers (Horevitz & Organista, 2012). Horevitz and Organista (2012) discussed the opportunities Latino immigrants have for participation in the larger mainstream communities with increased English language proficiency.

Researchers have pointed out that according to acculturation theories when immigrants acquire the beliefs, values, and customs of the new land, it is not expected for them to automatically discard their native cultures (Horevitz & Organista, 2012). The conceptual framework for the research study used Berry's model to examine how immigrants acquire such beliefs, values, and customs after emigrating to the United States Berry's models of acculturation consider how individual's behavior patterns change as a result of interactions with people in the new society. After successful completion of adult ELL programs, there has been evidence of immigrants being able to enter the professional workforce, engage in higher education opportunities, and reach optimal functionality in the United States (Ananyeva, 2014). Research has also shown that amid the acculturation process, acquiring English presents its own set of challenges (Ananyeva, 2014). Ananyeva (2014) noted second language acquisition as contributing to

the development of acculturative stress in ELL adults due to the difficulties respondents have shared. Ananyeva (2014) also identified language acquisition ability as a factor in acculturation because communication in the host country's language is essential to optimum functionality. The literature enlightened the opportunity to design research studies that further investigate if English language acquisition may be a source of vulnerability to acculturative stress in first-generation immigrants.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of how participation in an adult ELL program potentially contributes to acculturative stress in young, first-generation adult Latino immigrants. The focus was on the participants' perceptions of linguistic challenges, the pros as well as the cons of participating in an English language-learning program, and their experiences with acculturative stress during the transition of moving from their native country to the United States. In Chapter 3, I explain the rationale for using a generic qualitative research approach, provide a description of the research design, and discuss my role as the researcher. I also provide an overview of the data collection method, data analysis, process, and the sampling strategy. This chapter concludes with a discussion on the strategies for ensuring trustworthiness, the credibility of the data, and the ethical considerations.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question that guided this study was “What are the perceptions of first-generation young adult Latino immigrants (ages 18-25 years) enrolled in English language adult learning programs?” The methodology deemed most suitable for this inquiry was a generic qualitative approach, which allowed me to capture the perspectives of the participants in the study (Norlyk & Harder, 2010). When seeking to explain the mechanisms that cause a phenomenon, researchers often design a qualitative study (Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2017). Qualitative research studies typically take place in a natural setting, with the researcher as the instrument to extract

deeper meanings by observing participants as they reflect on their experiences and challenges (Levitt et al., 2017). Thus, for this study a generic qualitative approach was used to collect data.

There are other types of qualitative approaches that were explored and ruled out as they did not align with the research purpose. Ethnography, case study, grounded theory, and phenomenology are qualitative approaches that have similar characteristics, as they focus on an individual or small group of people sharing experiences and similar data collection processes. Ethnography was eliminated because the study was not focusing on a culture-sharing group as a whole and their interactions over some time (Levitt et al., 2017). Similarly, a case study was not the chosen approach because the inquiry did not focus on a phenomenon over some time using multiple sources of information (Levitt et al., 2017). Grounded theory was also an approach deemed inappropriate because the research was not seeking to develop a new theory to implement a process or an action (Levitt et al., 2017). Initially, the chosen methodology for the research was an interpretive phenomenology, which would have allowed for a deep inquiry into the personal experiences of Latino immigrants enrolled in an ELL program because the data reflect lived experiences and their social context (see Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015). But after a careful review of the purpose of the study and the desire to inquire about perceptions more so than lived experiences, I determined that more rich information is obtained through semi-structured interviews with questioning that leads to insights aligned with the purpose of the study (Labaree & Galletta, 2014). Therefore, a generic qualitative study was more suitable for the research.

Generic qualitative research is used to inquire about people's opinions, beliefs, or reflections of their personal experiences of things that occur in the outer world (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015). A generic qualitative study provided an analysis of the participants' perceptions of their life experiences and reflections about second language adult learning (see Percy et al., 2015). Through discussions with participants using a generic approach, I learned more about how young adult Latino immigrants, age 18-25, view ELL in a broader context of their lives and how they perceive things to be.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher's primary role is to serve as the instrument of data collection. For qualitative inquiries, the researcher becomes immersed in the data collection and interpretation process, acknowledges assumptions, and creates a relationship between themselves and the participants (Pascal, Johnson, Dore, & Trainor, 2010). For instance, empathy is a methodological tool used to establish rapport with study participants during interviews (Rivas & Browne, 2019). One of the primary focuses of empathy is to help the researcher to overcome biases relative to the phenomenon of study while influencing the objectives, scope of data collection, and the ways the data are analyzed (D'Silva, 2019). For human service practitioners, empathy is the act of perceiving, understanding, experiencing, and responding to the emotional state and ideas of another person (Mallison & O'Hanlon, 2019). When implemented during data collection, empathy encourages participants to reveal intimate details about their experiences, personal trauma, and sometimes secrets (Rivas & Browne, 2019). Therefore,

in this study, I used empathy and reflexivity (Berger, 2015; Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015).

Reflexivity is a strategy used in qualitative research to help maintain a balance between subjectivity and objectivity (Berger, 2015). Reflexivity helps the researcher to be aware of preconceptions (Horrigan-Kelly, Millar, & Dowling, 2016). This process also allows the researcher to bring to the forefront their positions on a phenomenon in terms of personal beliefs and values while objectively staying focused on the purpose of the study (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). In the research, I used a reflexive journal to document notes such as the reasons for developing this inquiry. As the researcher, I also used a reflexive journal to reflect on my assumptions about potential role conflicts with participants, my personal experiences with the participants' cultural group, and my beliefs or experiences that may indicate presuppositions (see Fusch & Ness, 2017).

Additionally, to confirm I had a clear understanding of participant responses, I used member checking as a part of the data analysis process, which is discussed in further detail later in this chapter. Member checking is a strategy used to control researcher bias and establish trustworthiness by ensuring accuracy in presenting findings (Kornbluh, 2015). Member checking occurs when the researcher verifies the interpretations and conclusions with the participants. During the data collection and data analysis processes, a summary of the information is drafted to later confirm with participants.

Controlling Researcher Bias

Controlling bias is an essential role of the researcher because it can pose a threat to the validity of the study (Yardley, 2017). To address this potential threat, I designed

the study to incorporate steps in the process that reduced or eliminated impartiality on the findings. First, I bracketed, outlining all the areas that may have influenced my research decisions. Bracketing is a methodological strategy used in qualitative research to lessen the potentially harmful impact of the researcher's preconceptions (Granek & Nakash, 2016). Bracketing is beneficial before data collection to set aside potential influences on the research like preconceived biases (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013). For my research, I bracketed areas where I may have a potential bias, suspending my perspectives about the Latino population by identifying and managing any assumptions and presuppositions about the selected population. I implemented bracketing throughout the research process.

A reflexive journal was also used to document prior knowledge and create self-awareness of impartiality that could have impacted trustworthiness. It was also maintained to keep track of and control personal biases that I may have brought to the study. Before interviewing participants, I used a reflexive journal to record my thoughts and ideas that identified as a potential bias. Due to my personal and professional experiences with ELL students and their families, it was important to initially record in the reflexive journal what prompted my motivation for researching this phenomenon. My interest in this topic originated from 12 years of teaching at the elementary level in a culturally diverse school system, which consisted of a high population of Hispanic students. I also co-taught at a parent academy, which is a resource to better equip parents with skills needed for at-home support with their children's academic assignments. I acknowledge that as an elementary educator in a predominantly Latino school community, specific experiences and perceptions have been established as a result of

working with this demographic. However, in this research, I focused on the perceptions of the experiences of adults in ELL programs without making connections to previous experiences and judgments from the elementary school setting. The implementation of a reflexive journal helped notate these experiences that may have contributed to potential personal biases.

Additionally, during the data collection phase, as participants were interviewed, their exact responses were recorded and not paraphrased. During data analysis, bracketing was implemented while analyzing the participants' responses. If there was potential for misinterpretation of a participant's response, member checking was used to confirm the intended response.

To also control my personal bias, I avoided any power differential that could potentially occur between me and the participants. If I discovered during the research process that I held a previous relationship with a potential participant or with one of the participants' family members, the participant would have been excluded from participating in the study. Although I have had professional experiences with Latino students and families, I have not had any interactions with those who fit the criteria of the study. My personal experiences have been with ELL students at the elementary age, not young adult ELLs.

Methodology

Participant Selection

The targeted population for this study was Latino or Hispanic immigrants in the United States who have participated in an ELL program. The sample for this study

consisted of young adults who identify as Latino or Hispanic and have lived in the United States for no more than 5 years. Participants also had to be a native of a Latin American country within Central America or South America in which Spanish is the primary spoken language. Participants could also be natives of the Caribbean or constituent entities that are Spanish speaking nations. These nations include Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. The criteria for participation in this inquiry was individuals currently enrolled in an ELL program or a recent graduate from an ELL program, with recent graduate defined as within the past 2 years.

Participants were initially recruited from an academic institution that provides ESL instruction to young adult students 18-25 years of age. I obtained permission from the school's principal to post flyers to advertise the study to recruit participants on the institution's campus. The research plan primarily entailed recruiting students enrolled in the school's ESL program who have achieved an intermediate or higher level of English proficiency. Requiring this level of English proficiency ensured participants had the language skills necessary to comprehend the interview questions and engage in discussions that yielded rich data. The institution categorizes students' level of English proficiency as (a) Level 1: beginner (no English language concepts at all); (b) Level 2: beginner-intermediate (Grade 2-3 English, limited ability to speak and read English language concepts); (c) Level 3: intermediate (progressing and able to speak, read and comprehend some language concepts); (d) Level 4: high intermediate (able to speak, read, comprehend, and write in English); (e) Levels 5 and 6: advanced (completely English proficient and able to speak, read, comprehend, and write in English as a bilingual

individual). Participant proficiency levels were self-reported, which could be obtained from their transcripts from the ELL institution of enrollment.

The recruitment of participants began with flyers posted on the campus of a public charter school that provides ESL instruction to immigrants. For anonymity and confidentiality, the name of the institutions will not be mentioned in the study. The flyer contained my contact information for potential participants to contact me to express an interest in participating in the study. The flyers also included eligibility criteria.

Sampling strategy. I used purposive sampling to recruit participants for the study. In qualitative research, purposive sampling is used to determine the characteristics of a population of interest for the study (Emerson, 2015). Purposive sampling is used in qualitative research to obtain rich information from those who have direct knowledge and experiences with a particular phenomenon (Emerson, 2015). As the researcher, my role was to decide what information was needed to answer the research question and to recruit the most suitable individuals to provide the answers (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Using a purposive sampling strategy, I selected participants who fit the criteria of being an immigrant from a Latin American country, migrated to the United States within the past 5 years, and were within the 18-25 age range (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). Purposive sampling was the best approach to recruit participants based on the specific criteria given for participation in the research.

Additionally, there are several types of purposive sampling: maximum variation, a homogeneous, typical, extreme case, critical case, total population, and expert sampling (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The strategy selected as the most appropriate type of

purposive sampling strategy for this inquiry was homogeneous sampling. Homogeneous sampling is a technique used for ensuring the selection of participants who share common traits that are relevant to answering the research question (Mwaiko, 2017). It is a sampling strategy that describes a particular subgroup of potential participants to reduce variation by selecting participants based on meeting certain criteria (Palinkas et al., 2015). Homogeneous sampling was the most suitable strategy to capture the similarities and differences of the perceptions of respondents within their subgroup (Mwaiko, 2017). Homogeneous sampling allowed participants who shared the same traits to divulge information about their perceptions and experiences, generating new knowledge and illuminating themes during the data analysis process (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Sample size

In qualitative research, sample sizes are typically much smaller than sample sizes in quantitative studies (van Rijnsoever, 2017). As the researcher, my role was to determine how many participants were needed to obtain the information to answer the research question. Thus, recruiting enough participants to collect data until saturation was reached was the goal (van Rijnsoever, 2017). A generic qualitative approach sampling 10-12 young adult Latino immigrants was perceived to be enough participants according to the concept of saturation (Wahlstrom, 2017). Saturation is at the discretion of the researcher, and there are no rules for the size of the participation pool in qualitative inquiries (van Rijnsoever, 2017). The maximum number of participants needed aligns with purposeful sampling and its aim to yield in-depth insights rather than the empirical generalizations often found in quantitative research (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora,

2016). The sample size should be large enough to obtain a variety of rich data yet small enough to avoid repetition in the data (Malterud et al., 2016). As a researcher, I knew when saturation was met when there were no new data being extracted from the interviewees and stopped data collection (Wahlstrom, 2017).

Instrumentation

Qualitative research prioritizes the depth and quality of the data collected, attempting to extend research beyond descriptions to provide the researcher with an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Anyan, 2013). In qualitative research, interviewing is a highly used data collection method (Anyan, 2013; Kvale, 2010). In social research, the purpose of interviewing is to obtain descriptions of how study participants view real-world experiences allowing them to openly share their scenarios, experiences, desires, and understanding relative to the specified phenomenon (Anyan, 2013; Arsel, 2017). Interviewing also serves as a method of establishing trust and rapport (Anyan, 2013). Based on the literature, I determined that interviewing was the best data collection instrument for the study. I developed an original set of interviewing questions to obtain the participant's experiences and perceptions.

I conducted semi-structured interviews to collect data to answer the research question. The semi-structured interviews captured the experiences, feelings, and perspectives of participants who have participated in an ELL program. The decision to use semi-structured versus structured interviews was based on the flexibility, spontaneity, and variation in the questioning associated with using semi-structured interviews (Labaree, 2014). The structure of the interviews contained open-ended and follow-up

probing questions as needed to collect information. The interview questions were designed to allow the participants to have opportunities to elaborate and extend responses about their experiences, with semi-structured questions guiding the interviewing process. A copy of the interview protocol and the researcher developed interview questions designed for this study are in Appendix A of this study.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Participant recruitment flyers were posted on an online student bulletin board at an institution in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and on social media platforms targeting the Latino/a population. The name of the institution is withheld at the request of the school's Administration for participant privacy, confidentiality, and ensuring the study does not make a connection to the school itself. Flyers were posted multiple times on my Facebook page to advertise the opportunity to people who may be familiar with the target population. The flyer was seen by two acquaintances of Latino descent who in turn asked for permission to post the recruitment flyer on their pages to assist with participant recruitment efforts. As a result, one of the Facebook acquaintances requested to ask the group administrator of a Latino group's Facebook page if the flyer could be posted there as well. The flyer was also posted on Instagram. The flyer provided pertinent information regarding the study to help them make a sound decision about participation. Pertinent information refers to the purpose of the study, eligibility requirements, data collection procedures, and informed consent for those who agree to continue in the process. It also contained my contact information for potential participants to notify me of their interest. Upon contact, I asked a short series of questions to determine eligibility

to participate in the study. The questions inquired about the birth country, length of time in the U.S., age, and English proficiency level. The self-reported responses determined if the person met the criteria for being a participant in the research study. Once I confirmed eligibility, I discussed anonymity, their right to withdraw from the study at any time and disclosed all relevant information about the process of the study. After that, subsequent virtual face-to-face meetings were scheduled for me to review and have participants sign Informed Consent to then proceed with the interviews.

Data collection. The interviews were used as the primary data collection instrument to obtain the information needed to answer the research question. Virtual face-to-face interviews were determined to be sufficient as the data collection instrument. This method provided an effective and reliable way of obtaining data directly from those who could share accounts and reflections of their experiences with the phenomenon of inquiry (Galvin, 2015). Face-to-face interviews also provided an opportunity for the researcher and the study participants to build relationships that were needed to collect rich and authentic data (Galvin, 2015). In addition to the interviews, with consent from the participants, the Zoom audio recording feature was used to capture the discussions in preparation for transcription of the interviews for the data analysis stage of the research process.

I chose to schedule multiple face-to-face meetings with potential study participants to allow adequate opportunities to establish rapport and trust. The face-to-face meetings were held on Zoom, a virtual meeting application. The interviews were semi-structured, consisting of a set of 12 predetermined questions, that I developed. I also

used follow-up questions as needed to gather additional clarification or explanations of a participants' responses to the interview question. The interviews lasted about 30-35 minutes. However, in some cases additional time was needed to collect rich data.

Participants were asked to delve deeper into their responses at times that I needed them to elaborate more. To address issues of confidentiality, at the beginning of each interview, each participant was assigned a pseudonym, or code number which was used on all research notes and documents to link information regarding the participant. Providing a pseudonym ensured that in the research discussions, the participant responses were strictly confidential. At the end of the interviews, the participants were emailed a note of thanks and a \$25 Visa gift card. This was a gesture to thank them for participating.

I began each interview by first obtaining informed consent from each participant. The primary purpose of informed consent is to protect the participants' welfare. Informed consent also ensures participants are well informed and feel positive about voluntarily participating in a study (Salkind, 2010). It consists of ongoing communication between the researcher and the participants, in which the researcher is taking the necessary steps to achieve optimum comfort levels for all participants (Salkind, 2010). The process of informed consent began with me, explaining the purpose of the study to participants. I also outlined the procedures and methodology, so participants were fully aware of the data collection and analysis strategies. I further explained the risks and benefits of participating in the research inquiry. The Informed Consent also noted the confidentiality measures taken in the study. A copy of the Informed Consent can be reviewed in Appendix C.

Memo-writing. Imploring face-to-face interviews is a way of capturing the tone of voice, facial expressions, and other body language during the conversations. Memo writing captures thoughts and feelings during the interview and the data analysis process (Stocker & Close, 2013). Memo writing is a way of reflecting on data, constructing themes and categories, and bringing everything together through analysis (Stocker & Close, 2013). I used memo writing to make notations of the physically observed components of the participants' responses during the interviews (Arsel, 2017).

Data Management and Analysis

After conducting interviews, the data analysis plan began by transcribing the interviews. I transcribed the interviews and stored them in a password-protected Microsoft Word file. Transcriptions were completed using the audio files to confirm the accuracy of the transcripts. The memos written during the data collection process were referred to for reflection and analysis against the transcripts. An analysis of the transcripts and review of the memos handwritten during the interviews helped me to understand the social experiences of Latino immigrants better and if they perceive ELL had an impact on their mental health well-being. Next, the transcripts were reviewed and coded, which involved extracting pertinent information from the phenomenon of inquiry. Colaizzi developed a qualitative data analysis process for researchers to follow to code the data, identify themes, and describe the phenomenon (Theron, 2015). In this section, I outlined how I implemented Colaizzi's method of data analysis to ensure credibility, reliability, and trustworthiness.

Transcribing. Transcription of each recorded interview transferred the interview statements from an oral format to a written text structure. Transcribing allowed me to read each of the participants' responses verbatim to prepare the data for coding. Kvale (2010) noted that transcribing interviews is the first stage of data analysis and prepares the data for closer review and analysis by transferring it to a written format. I listened to each interview and read the transcript, simultaneously, to confirm accuracy. After all transcriptions were confirmed, the interviews were ready for coding.

Coding. Coding categorizes data into themes to illuminate new insights or lead to discovery with the stories that are shared. Coding is an analytic process of examining data from narratives of experiences that lead to the discovery of concepts (Maher, Hadfield, Hutchings, & de Eyto, 2018). This process allows segments of data sorting for a clearer understanding of the social situation of inquiry (Maher et al., 2018). Through qualitative analysis, the data collected was coded and highlighted themes that emerged from participant responses during the interviews. Coding helped to identify broad categories and find emerging themes that were useful for establishing the next steps for the research by categorizing the interview statements. The transcripts from the interviews illuminated themes that emerged through the shared stories of Latino immigrants who had rich experiences with ELL in a formal institution. I manually coded the data, after the interviews were transcribed.

There are three stages of coding that I used during the data analysis process; open, axial, and selective coding (Theron, 2015; Woods et al., 2016). Open coding was the initial stage in which I was able to closely examine the data collected from the interviews

to compare it for similarities and differences (Theron, 2015). At this point, themes began to emerge in preparation for axial coding (Theron, 2015). Axial coding helped me to eliminate redundant codes and illuminate the dominant ones that emerge (Theron, 2015). The last stage of coding, selective coding, allowed the central themes to emerge. I then focused on the how and why questions that explain the participant's perceptions of the phenomenon (Theron, 2015).

Trustworthiness

As the researcher, one of my essential roles was to enhance the trustworthiness of the data collection and analysis process. Trustworthiness pertains to the truthfulness of the findings and how accurately the researcher interpreted the participants' reports of their experiences (Gair, 2011). Using Colaizzi's method, I carefully followed the 7-step process for data collection, organization, analysis, interpretation, and reporting. Colaizzi's method also helped to maintain trustworthiness, credibility, and reliability.

Colaizzi developed a qualitative data analysis process that I applied to the study. During data collection, with participant permission, I audio recorded each interview to fully capture verbatim responses and later transcribed them. After transcribing the interviews, I saved them in a password protected Microsoft Word document in which I was able to annotate during data analysis. To identify significant statements made in the responses to questions, I labeled the interview questions by number and grouped the responses to each question using the pseudo name assigned to participants. Next, I formulated meaning from the participants' responses by grouping the keywords and phrases that were relative to the phenomenon in question. Formulating meaning from the

responses helped to provide common meanings for the keywords and statements, which is known as the process of open coding (Theron, 2015). More specifically, open coding is a data analysis technique that involves applying codes that emerged from the text for similar concepts (Theron, 2015). Colaizzi recommended axial coding, which entails assigning codes to the themes and grouping together repetitions of codes that were drawn together during open coding (Theron, 2015). Letters were used to identify them. As such, the letters used to code the themes were aligned with individual participant responses accordingly. The importance of axial coding is to categorize the initial codes into key codes that will allow the data to emerge into themes that will formulate meaning (Theron, 2015). At this point, I determined that it was necessary to employ selective coding. Selective coding is when the transcripts are reviewed again, and themes are reduced. My decision to implement selective coding was based on the number of themes that emerged during the initial stages of coding, identifying categories of the themes (Theron, 2015). The final step of the data analysis process was to incorporate all of the themes into a description of the phenomenon.

After the interview transcriptions were completed, in two instances, I contacted the participants via telephone for member checking to ensure that I had correctly interpreted their disclosed statements, gaining clarity. This step was a part of the member checking process. Member checking is an important part of the data analysis process as it provides an opportunity to clarify or elaborate on participant responses (Willis, Sullivan-Bolyai, Knafl, and Cohen, 2016). This process allowed participants to review their transcriptions to confirm that I had captured and accurately interpreted the intended

responses. After data analysis and edits were made accordingly, I provided participants with a copy of the findings, which included the annotated themes for their review. The member checking process was helpful in establishing the credibility of the study.

Credibility

Credibility refers to how believable the findings of the inquiry are. Researchers establish credibility through the use of various strategies to collect, interpret, and present data (Gair, 2011). To enhance the credibility of findings from this research, I used member checking and reflexivity. Advantages of using member checks as a part of the research process are: (a) supports the ethical obligation of accurately presenting participant narratives of their lived experiences (b) provides the researcher with an opportunity to delve deeper by gathering additional details, clarify information, and address any gaps, and (c) presents participants with an opportunity to have new insights or an understanding of the phenomenon that they may otherwise not see (Kornbluh, 2015). The reflexivity journaling enhanced the credibility of the findings.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is often viewed as the process of the researcher continuously having self-dialogue and self-evaluation of active knowledge of one's position that may affect the research process and the outcomes (Berger, 2015). Reflexivity is when the researcher self-appraises and places the lens on one's position within the research and recognizes how that may have an impact on the research as a whole (Berger, 2015). The process of reflexivity allowed me to detach my researcher's values, beliefs, and prior knowledge and biases to enhance credibility. Credibility is enhanced through reflexivity because data

will be presented strictly through the lens of the participants and free of the researcher's hindrance of the constructing the meaning of the phenomenon (Berger, 2015).

Validity

In qualitative research, validity refers to the appropriateness of the research instruments, the processes, and the management of the data collected (Yardley, 2017). My role as the researcher was to determine how valid the overall research design is for answering the research question, analyzing the data, and reporting the results and conclusions (Yardley, 2017). I conducted a careful review of the literature to make judgments and decisions on the processes and procedures that will determine the validity of the proposed study. For instance, this study will inquire about the perceptions of those living a phenomenon. Therefore, a qualitative design was determined to be the most suitable research design to obtain the depth of information desired. From that point, following the procedures and protocols commonly used in qualitative studies was the approach I used to develop the proposed inquiry. I gave careful consideration to the various types of qualitative designs, sampling strategies, data collection instruments, and methods of data analysis and management at each stage of the research process (Yardley, 2017).

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of a study can be useful to other studies (Etikan, Musa, Alkassim, 2016). It also pertains to how applicable the findings may be in other research settings (Connelly, 2016). When a study exhibits transferability, the qualitative data is rich and provides a detailed description of the

phenomenon in a way that it potentially represents someone else's story without generalizing (Leung, 2015; Connelly, 2016). To demonstrate transferability, purposive sampling was used in this study. Since I was seeking rich, detailed responses to the interview questions, from a select group of individuals, purposive sampling allowed me to deliberately choose study participants that fit within a specified criterion (Etikan et al., 2016). In subsequent qualitative studies, purposive sampling provides an opportunity to develop studies with an identified selection of individuals that are well-informed on a phenomenon of interest. This research study can be duplicated using purposive sampling to select participants, with a different set of criteria, to inquire about the same phenomenon. Thus, transferring the context of the proposed study to a different group of people to inquire about the same phenomenon (Leung, 2015).

Purposive sampling aids in the transferability of the proposed study as well as audit trails. Audit trails will document all thinking, decisions, and methods used from the beginning to the end of the inquiry, to confirm valid data. The audit trails will consist of field notes, written memos, interview transcripts, and the reflexive journal. Full documentation of the inquiry will confirm that the findings are from the participants' experiences and perceptions and not those of the researcher.

Dependability

In qualitative research, dependability refers to how stable the data will remain over time and throughout the conditions of the study (Connelly, 2016). The purpose of dependability is to establish the researcher's documentation and process logs, which will note all activities that occurred during the research process (Connelly, 2016). One method

to achieve dependability is to conduct an audit trail. The audit trail documents all efforts taken to conduct the study. I included detailed steps taken to collect, interpret, and store data. Another purpose of the audit trail is for readers to read and gain an understanding of the reasons certain decisions were made during the research process (Connelly, 2016). Researchers who desire to replicate this study will be able to use the audit trail to gather information for making informed decisions about future investigations. The audit trail consists of interview and transcript notes, interview questions and protocol, informed consent, member checking notes, and all other documents or memos written throughout the research process.

Member checking is a technique used to enhance the dependability of findings from the research (Granek & Nakash, 2016). Member checking will provide participants to verify the accuracy of my interpretations of their experiences (Granek & Nakash, 2016). Details regarding the process that I used to conduct member checking are presented under the heading of credibility.

Confirmability

In qualitative research, confirmability refers to the consistency of the study's findings and whether it could be duplicated in a subsequent research inquiry (Connelly, 2016). Confirmability refers to the steps a researcher implements to document efforts to present valid data (Arsel, 2017). It also requires constant monitoring, self-checks, and audit trails to ensure the data is an accurate presentation of the meaning participants intended about their experiences. As a researcher, it was my role to monitor the accurate depiction of the participant perceptions. To accomplish this, I took steps to capture

verbatim responses through audio recording transcription of interviews and member checking to confirm the accurate interpretation of the participant perceptions for the phenomenon (Connelly, 2016). Self-checks were done through memo-writing during participant interviews as well as the consistent use of a reflexive journal to maintain self-awareness of prior knowledge and personal biases that could impact the findings.

Methods of confirmability also includes the researcher maintaining an audit trail of the data analysis and journals that were developed during data collection, as also mentioned in the discussion of confirmability (Connelly, 2016).

Ethical Procedures

Ethics refers to the moral principles that guide the decision-making and behaviors relative to interacting with others. Ethics must be considered and implemented as a part of any research design when conducting human research (Ingham-Broomfield, 2017).

The design of this study poses minimal risks to participants; however, it was still important to address ethical considerations. The recruitment of participants was done in a manner that protected the human subjects. Recruitment did not present any deceitfulness to the participants nor any organization in which the sample was solicited. The participants were made aware that their participation was strictly voluntary, and that they could withdraw at any time without penalty. Also, participant responses were confidential with no names disclosed in any of the research discussions. The participants of the study were provided with specific details that outlined the purpose of the study, the research procedures, and informed consent. All aspects of the research were carried out as approved by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

The study sampled Latino immigrants who have lived in the United States for at least five years. In an attempt to ensure confidentiality, Informed Consent was obtained from all study participants. Informed consent gave participants an adequate opportunity to review documentation outlining expectations from the researcher and their participation. Informed Consent presented clarity and understanding of the document to participants. It also communicated the benefits of the study to the population. Interviewing of participants took place in a one-on-one virtual meeting. All participants were assigned an identification number, or pseudonym, as a means of maintaining confidentiality. In the data analysis and discussions, participants were referred to by the assigned letter-number combination. The same identification number was used on documents stored in a secured computerized filing system that is password protected to avoid unauthorized access to data. Data will be stored for a minimum of 5 years post-publication and destroyed when it is no longer needed for research purposes.

Fidelity refers to outlining standards and expectations of the researcher, and equally important, upholding said agreements made during the investigation process (Ingham-Broomfield, 2017). Participants were guaranteed fidelity for all claims made by the researcher. Fidelity entails informing and explaining the rationale for every decision made during the research. It also encompassed sharing the memos and data interpretations with participants before proceeding with drafting final results to confirm agreement with the findings.

There were minimal risks in this research study. However, during the data collection procedures as participants reflected on their migration or acculturation

experiences, there was a potential for the development of an altered psychological state. However, this did not occur in any of the interviews. Arrangements were made with a licensed Professional Counselor for therapeutic psychosocial support to be provided to any participant presenting elevated stress and/or anxiety levels. I was prepared to, but no need arose to provide participants with the Counselor's contact information accordingly.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology that was used to inquire about the experiences of Latino first-generation young adults, who are participating in ELL programs and the vulnerability to acculturative stress. Chapter three gives specifics deemed the most feasible and appropriate to answer the research questions. I explained the participant selection process, data collection, and analysis procedures. Further explanation was given to highlight the validity of the research and ethical considerations. All aspects of establishing credibility for the research are discussed in Chapter 3, to illuminate significant findings of ELL and its perceived impact on the development of acculturative stress in first-generation Latino immigrants living in the United States.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore post-immigration acculturative stress relative to experiences with ELL, focusing on participants' perceptions of linguistic challenges and their experiences with post-immigration acculturative stress. The research question related directly to these perceptions. Chapter 4 includes the data collection process and data analysis results obtained from participant responses. This chapter presents the discoveries from the data collection and analysis of participant responses from this generic qualitative study using semi-structured interviews. The data were transcribed and coded to identify emergent themes. Through Colaizzi's data analysis method, I was able to identify themes and patterns in the data that I used to describe the phenomenon (Theron, 2015). Colaizzi's method provides a systematic data analysis process to help ensure credibility, reliability, and trustworthiness (Theron, 2015). Chapter 4 concludes with a summary of the significant findings related to ELL and acculturative stress, as noted by participants.

Research Setting

I conducted virtual interviews from July 20, 2020—October 4, 2020 to collect data from participants. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the interviews were held using the Zoom virtual meeting platform. The participants and I engaged in private discussions about their experiences and perceptions as ELLs. The average length of the interviews was approximately 40 minutes.

Demographics

The recruitment of participants yielded a total of 10 participants, with nine women and one man. The inclusion criteria for all participants were (a) currently enrolled or completed an ESL program in the United States, (b) between the ages of 18-25 while participating in an ESL program, (c) lived in the United States for a minimum of 5 years, and (d) migrated from a Latin American country. Each of the participants indicated that the completion of an ELL program was part of their college degree program's prerequisites. Table 1 provides the demographics of the participants (by a pseudonym), which includes gender, native country, and age at the time of ELL in a structured program. At the time of the study, the participants ranged in age from 23 to 25 years. Half of the participants were of Salvadorian descent, and the others were from other Latin countries (i.e., Columbia, Honduras, Mexico, Guatemala, and Costa Rica). The average time the participants lived in the United States is about 6-and-a-half years. Nine of the 10 participants completed the ESL program, and one participant is currently enrolled in an ESL program at the college level working toward her degree because of challenges keeping her from having success with the writing proficiency needed to complete the program.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

| Pseudonym | Gender | Current age in years | Native country | Age during ESL enrollment | Years lived in United States |
|-----------|--------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| H02 | Male | 24 | El Salvador | 18 | 8 |
| C06 | Female | 23 | Columbia | 19 | 9 |
| A13 | Female | 25 | El Salvador | 19 | 6 |
| B23 | Female | 24 | Mexico | 22 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|-----|--------|----|-------------|--------------|---|
| S13 | Female | 25 | El Salvador | 20 | 7 |
| B08 | Female | 25 | Guatemala | 20 - Present | 5 |
| M23 | Female | 23 | Honduras | 19 | 6 |
| Z17 | Female | 23 | El Salvador | 18 | 8 |
| B45 | Female | 25 | El Salvador | 20 | 6 |
| Y03 | Female | 25 | Costa Rica | 21 | 7 |

Data Collection

Participants were interviewed in a one-on-one session to discuss their post-immigration experiences as ELLs. Each of the participants responded to the questions, providing accounts of their experiences and sharing the perceived stressors they encountered as young adult ELL students. Themes emerged from the discussions with the participants. This section provides details from the transcribed interviews that helped to make clear the emergent themes.

H02

Participant H02, age 24, migrated from El Salvador with his parents at age 16. He was in high school and was automatically enrolled in an English speakers of other languages (ESOL) class in the public school. After graduating, he felt he needed to continue building English fluency and took evening classes offered to adults. He began the classes at age 18 years and completed the program at age 20. He was motivated to acquire English proficiency to understand how to complete the job applications so he could have better job opportunities and make money to earn a “respectable” living.

C06

Participant C06, age 23, migrated from Columbia at age 14 with her dad,

stepmom, and younger brother. She was in middle school and was automatically enrolled in an ESOL class in the local public school district. After graduating from High School, she had to take an English proficiency exam to determine her language needs for a college she applied to. She had to take ESL classes as a prerequisite in college before proceeding with her program coursework. She took the ESL classes beginning at age 19 for two semesters.

A13

Participant A13, age 25, migrated from El Salvador after completing a high school equivalent there. She wanted to pursue a career in the United States. She began ESL classes at age 19 at a community college in preparation for joining the U.S. workforce. It took her 1 year to complete the classes and gain English proficiency.

B23

Participant B23, age 24, was 19 years old when she migrated to the United States from Mexico. She took English classes in her native country before migrating to the United States. However, the English classes were nothing compared to what she experienced in the United States, as they only taught basic words and “conversational English.” Therefore, she had to take ESL courses for three years to achieve English proficiency. She was enrolled from ages 19-22 because her goal was to gain a higher education level to have better opportunities to succeed.

S13

Participant S13, age 25, was 18 when she migrated to the United States from El Salvador. Before migration, she took one English class once per week but stated that she

“did not learn much from that and understood very little English.” Once in the United States, she took the Accuplacer exam and was placed in Level 1 English courses at a local community college. It took her 2 years to complete the ESL courses before she was allowed to begin taking the coursework related to her degree. She took the ESL courses from ages 19-22.

B08

Participant B08, age 25, had exposure to the English language in elementary, primary, and high school in her native country of Guatemala. The Guatemala classes were said to teach basic English words like letters, numbers, colors, and phrases used to display polite manners. She needed to take an exit exam to graduate from the college in her home country but could not pass because of the English section. She decided to move to the United States for 3 months to complete an ESL program at age 20 so she could return home and take the exam. However, she met her current husband and has not returned to Guatemala. She has since pursued a career in social work and started college in the United States to finish what she started at home. Due to the challenges she has had with demonstrating writing proficiency, she has yet to finish the program. She has taken the courses multiple times because she quits due to her challenges with mastering the writing skills. It has been 5 years, and she is still enrolled, trying to achieve complete English proficiency.

M23

Participant M23, age 23, migrated to the United States from Honduras at age 17. She had no prior exposure to English before making the transition. She desired to move

to further her education and felt she needed to acquire English once she was in the United States so she could communicate with others, find resources that would help her have a better life, and socialize as a young woman building a new life. She enrolled in a local community college at age 19, where she took ESL classes for two semesters before beginning the coursework in her program. She was able to integrate well on campus because she took a student assistant job on campus, which she said helped her learn more English than what was taught in the courses.

Z17

Participant Z17, age 23, migrated to the United States with her parents and her younger brother from El Salvador. She was 15 at the time of migration and was automatically enrolled in ESOL classes in high school. She did not exit the program upon graduating from high school, which means she had not achieved English proficiency. She felt she would have a better career and a better chance of getting a well-paying job if she learned to read, write, comprehend, and speak English proficiently, so she enrolled in ESL classes at a community college. She did not desire to complete a degree program, and she just wanted to take the ESL classes and move on to the workforce. She enrolled at a local community college beginning at age 18 and finished within 2 years.

B45

Participant B45, age 25, migrated to the United States from El Salvador. She did not share whether she moved alone or with family. When asked, she did not want to talk about family and only wanted to answer questions about herself. B45 was age 19 when she transitioned to the United States and had no prior exposure to English at that time.

She wanted to learn the language to communicate with all people in different cultures, so the first year she was in the United States, she used TV shows broadcast in English to help her. That was not enough to help her achieve her goal of communicating and fitting in, so she enrolled in an ESL program that she learned about from an acquaintance. She was 20 when she enrolled and completed all ESL levels in 2 years. She then joined the workforce and has learned even more since developing relationships with colleagues and neighbors.

Y03

Participant Y03, age 25, moved to the United States from Costa Rica at age 18. She found a job in the Midwest as an au pair. She did not have any friends or family in the states and lived with the family she worked for. She wanted to communicate with the family and was learning English with their 1-year-old as they spoke to her. Since she did not want to have that type of job for a long time, she saved her money from the job and enrolled in college three years later. She had to take ESL courses as a prerequisite to her program, which she completed in three semesters. She then moved to complete the college coursework in her degree program and graduated with her bachelor's degree. She met an American man and married him. They now have children, so she is happy to have a family in the United States to share her life with.

Data Collection Procedures

I conducted a generic qualitative study with 10 participants who had participated in ESL programs as young adults. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, recruitment flyers were distributed electronically. The recruitment flyers were placed

on an online student bulletin board at an institution in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and on social media platforms targeting the Latino/a population. Flyers were posted multiple times on my Facebook page to advertise the opportunity. The flyer was seen by two acquaintances of the Latino descent who in turn asked for permission to post the recruitment flyer on their pages to assist with participant recruitment efforts. As a result, one of the Facebook acquaintances requested to ask the group administrator of a Latino group Facebook page if the flyer could be posted there as well. In addition, the flyer was posted on my Instagram page as well as the same two Facebook friends who helped to distribute the flyer on their pages so other Instagram followers would see the research participation opportunity.

The flyer provided pertinent information about the study to help potential participants make sound decisions about their potential participation. The flyer contained a synopsis of the purpose of the study, eligibility requirements, data collection procedures, and my contact information. I provided a Google voice phone number on the recruitment flyer, which is how potential participants contacted me to express an interest in participating in the research study. Upon contact, I verified eligibility to participate in the study by confirming the country of birth, length of time in the United States, and age at the time of participation in an ELL program before scheduling the Zoom interviews. Once eligibility was verified, I obtained the e-mail addresses from the potential participants to use as the platform to use for sending interview date confirmation and informed consent.

Before beginning the interviews, I e-mailed the participants the informed consent and requested an e-mail response as an electronic signature agreeing to continue with voluntary participation in the research study. As part of the interview protocol, and as a way to begin establishing rapport, I utilized the first 5 minutes of the participant interview to review the highlights of the informed consent previously e-mailed to them. I shared my motivation for conducting research on the topic and the overall purpose of the study. I also reiterated that I would maintain participant confidentiality, inclusive of the use of a pseudonym on all research documents. I reminded each interviewee that their participation was strictly voluntary and shared that at any point, they could withdraw from partaking in the research study without consequence.

Additionally, I informed participants that they would receive a \$25 gift card to thank them for taking their time to participate in the study. Following the review of the informed consent, I confirmed that participants understood everything contained in the informed consent and offered to answer any questions they may have had. Each participant agreed to proceed and replied to the e-mail as an electronic signature indicating they understood and agreed to continue with voluntary participation in the research study.

During the virtual face-to-face meetings, I used a semi-structured interviewing process in which I asked predetermined questions designed to collect data that was used to address the research question. A copy of the interview questions is included in Appendix A. Before beginning each interview, I asked for permission to audio record the meeting to capture later transcription discussions. All participants agreed to audio

recording the interviews. I used the Zoom audio recording feature to voice record the interviews. The audio from each interview was saved in a password-protected file to maintain participant confidentiality.

During the interviews, I observed participants' body language and voice tone to gauge their comfort levels and if additional probing may be necessary. All participants willingly provided detailed accounts of their experiences by fully answering the interview questions. The implementation of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions allowed participants to actively engage in the interviews, demonstrating comfort and a genuine eagerness to share their experiences. In most cases, the participant responses were so extensive that they answered pre-planned questions before I had the opportunity to ask. However, in these instances, I decided to ask the questions to allow participants an opportunity to add additional thoughts. Each time, the participant had more to add. Probing provided richer data and additional insights. After the first 15 minutes of the interviews, I offered a break to all participants. None desired to take a break and were passionate about continuing the discussion about their experiences. The interviews lasted between 35-45 minutes, with an average interview time of 40 minutes and no interruptions to our virtual meetings. I manually transcribed the interviews verbatim within seven days. After the transcribing process, member checking occurred to gain clarity on any unclear responses. All transcriptions were saved in a password-protected Microsoft Word folder.

The data collection process was changed from the previous plan presented in Chapter 3 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The original data collection procedures

included face-to-face interviews to occur in a private conference room of a local public library of the participant's choosing. However, due to the closure of schools, libraries, and most public business establishments, I consulted with the IRB to make changes to the data collection procedures allowing me to use online platforms for recruitment and to set up virtual meetings for the interviews. The new data collection procedures were approved by the Walden University IRB, approval number: 06-12-20-0544550. In qualitative research, the researcher should continue to collect data until saturation occurs (van Rijnsoever, 2017). A sample size of 6 to 10 participants was sought after, according to the research design. Upon interviewing the 10th participant, I realized that I had achieved saturation. After I realized no new insights were emerging from the interviews, I withdrew recruitment efforts and moved to the data analysis phase of the research.

Data Analysis

During data analysis, my focus was to identify overarching themes in ESL Latino immigrants' post-immigration experiences with acculturative stress. I used the audio recordings while reading the manually transcribed interviews and the memo notes captured while interviewing to categorize meaningful words and patterns that emerged in response to the interview questions. I identified themes among the participants' responses by using Colaizzi's 7-step method for data analysis.

As part of the data analysis process, within the transcribed documents, I made notes on each participant's transcription, using the Google document comment feature, and highlighted significant words and phrases that were indicative of acculturative stress.

Some of the words or phrases that were repetitive in participant interviews that were perceived to cause stress were unaware, difficulty learning, lack of time to study, unanticipated course expectations, discrimination due to language barriers, and lack of access to resources. To identify significant statements made in response to the questions, I grouped participants' responses by interview question number and then identified themes across the responses for each interview question. For open coding, I also formulated meaning from the participants' responses by grouping the keywords and phrases that were relative to the phenomenon in question (Theron, 2015). Axial coding was also done by assigning codes to the themes then grouping repetitions of codes identified during open coding. The coded transcripts were placed in a password protected file where it will remain secured for five years, as specified by the Walden University IRB regulations. There is no plan to destroy the research documents after five years, but to keep the files indefinitely.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness, I implemented the data collection procedures and data analysis process outlined in Chapter 3. Colaizzi's data collection method, organization, analysis, interpretation, and reporting also helps to maintain trustworthiness, credibility, and reliability (Theron, 2017). Colaizzi's method is designed to enhance accuracy in presenting findings in the research study (Theron, 2017). During the interviews, I audio-recorded the interviews to ensure I captured verbatim discussions in order to present accurate accounts of the participants' experiences. There were two occasions in which I needed to do member checking with participants after transcribing the interviews.

Member checking is a validation strategy used to enhance the trustworthiness of research (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, and Walter (2016). Member checking helps to keep the researcher from imposing personal beliefs and to enhance the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations (Birt, et al., 2016). I contacted two participants by email after the interview to schedule a subsequent discussion. In both instances, the participant responses were inaudible on a question asked during the interview. To enhance accuracy and avoid imposed interpretation, I had to verify the statements to gain clarity. Both participants willingly participated in a subsequent discussion that lasted approximately 15 minutes each. I replayed the audio for each participant, then asked if they could clarify the inaudible response for data analysis. I was able to obtain clarification in both instances and made the appropriate edits to the transcriptions to proceed with data analysis. The process of member checking provided the opportunity to delve deeper by gathering additional details, clarifying information, and it gave me a chance to have new insights or an understanding of the phenomenon that may not have occurred without the follow-up. Once clarifications were made, I identified categories and themes that accurately reflected Latino ELL immigrants' perceptions of young adult second language acquisition post-migration.

Credibility

Researchers establish credibility through the use of various strategies to collect, interpret, and present data and present it in a believable manner (Berger, 2015). Member checking was beneficial in establishing credibility as well. Member checking allowed me to go more in-depth after the interview discussions by gathering additional details and

clarifying information. Member checking also allowed me to set aside my interpretations based on my personal experiences with ELL school-aged students. Member checking also helped me to validate my research by gaining a clearer understanding of the participants' perceptions of their post-immigration experiences and vulnerability to acculturative stress. Credibility is also enhanced through reflexivity, as data is presented strictly through the participants' lens, free of the researcher's perception of the meaning of the phenomenon (Berger, 2015). Reflexivity is a process that helps the researcher to be aware of preconceptions (Horrigan-Kelly, Millar, & Dowling, 2016). I implemented reflexivity to detach from my values, beliefs, prior knowledge, and biases to enhance credibility. Prior to beginning data collection, I used a reflexive journal to make recordings such as the reasons for developing the inquiry about this particular phenomenon. For instance, I notated my personal interest in this topic, which originated from 12 years of teaching at the Elementary level in a culturally diverse school system. I also noted that I co-taught a parent academy, which was a resource to better equip parents with skills needed for at-home support with academic assignments. It was interesting to observe similar patterns of behavior among children and the adults who recently migrated to the U.S. While researching to learn more about, and I documented adaptive behaviors, I learned that there was a gap in the literature that helped to develop the current study on the Latino population. The purpose of making these notations was to help to control bias and to reflect on assumptions stemming from my personal experiences with the participants' cultural group and beliefs or experiences that may indicate presuppositions. During data collection, I took notes while interviewing participants to document my thoughts about

their responses. I also made notations using a comment feature on the Google document used to transcribe interviews. These notes were additional thoughts generated by listening to the interviews while transcribing. Notetaking in the reflexive journal helped me to continuously reflect on interpretations of my experiences while learning of the participants experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon. Credibility was enhanced through reflexivity because the data will be presented strictly through the lens of the participants and free of any interference with constructing meaning of the phenomenon (Berger, 2015).

Transferability

Transferability pertains to the level at which the research findings are useful to researchers in the future (Connelly, 2016; Etikan, Musa, Alkassim, 2016). Purposive sampling was used to enhance the transferability of the research because it was deemed as the best approach to recruit participants based on the specific criteria required for participation in the research in order to address the gap in the literature. The purpose of qualitative research is to obtain rich information from those who have direct knowledge and experiences with a particular phenomenon (Emerson 2015). Therefore, using a purposive sampling strategy, I deliberately focused on selecting study participants that fit the criteria of being an immigrant from a Latin American country, who migrated to the U.S. within the past five years and is within the 18-25 years age range (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). To enhance transferability using this approach, I used detailed descriptions to describe the results. I also provided details outlining participant recruitment, data collection, and analysis procedures in order for future researchers to

consider findings from this study for studies on similar topics. Lastly, the detailed descriptions provided will help future researchers to develop studies on similar topics, using the gaps and limitations of this study.

Dependability

The purpose of dependability in qualitative research is to establish the researcher's documentation and process logs, notating all activities that occurred during the research process (Connelly, 2016). In this study, I enhanced dependability by developing an audit trail to document all of my efforts in conducting this study. The audit trail consists of documentation detailing every step taken to design and conduct the research study. This includes records of the initial participant recruitment and the changes made due to the Covid-19 pandemic. I have also outlined detailed descriptions of the data collection and analysis procedures in the audit trail as well. Such detailed descriptions include memo notes and annotations written in the reflexive journal before and during interviews, along with transcript notes. The audit trail also includes the interview protocol and questions, informed consent, and member checking notes. Researchers desiring to replicate this study will be able to use the audit trail to gather information for making informed decisions about future investigations.

Confirmability

Confirmability outlines the steps a researcher implements to document efforts to present valid data (Arsel, 2017). It was my role as the researcher to monitor the accurate depiction of the participants' perceptions (Connelly, 2016). To accomplish this, I captured verbatim responses through audio recording transcription of each interview.

When appropriate, I also arranged follow up discussions with participants, using member checking as the strategy to confirm the accurate interpretation of their responses relative to their perceptions about the phenomenon. Self-checks were also done through memo-writing during participant interviews, as well as the consistent use of a reflexive journal to maintain self-awareness of prior knowledge and personal biases that could impact the findings. I also developed an audit trail of the steps implemented to conduct the study, as outlined in the dependability section.

Results

The research question which guided this study was: What are the experiences of first-generation young adult Latino immigrants (ages 18-25 years) enrolled in English language adult learning programs around acculturative stress? To attempt to answer this question, I asked the participants 12 questions during the semi-structured interviews to gain insights into their experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon. Responses to the interview questions were grouped into the following four categories: (a) goals/desired outcomes after achieving English proficiency, (b) barriers to achieving goals, (c) experiences as an adult ESL immigrant, and (d) acculturating into the U.S. culture. The participant responses to these questions helped me identify themes in adult ESL immigrants' experiences and perceptions. Those themes are present in Table 2.

Table 2

Theme Identification

| Categories | Emergent Themes |
|--|---|
| Motivation to learn English Proficiently | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve overall economic status • Obtain higher education • Increase job opportunities |
| Obstacles to ELL program completion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial expenses for coursework • Lack of knowledge regarding processes: • Understanding the enrollment process • Financial aid application • Program advisement • Required technology • Access to resources |
| Perceived Challenges as an ELL Immigrant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Difficult/hard process ○ Impact of age in ESL learning ○ Difficulty learning new language ○ Enrollment in courses with younger college students ○ Course Expectations ○ Lack of time the study ○ Nonacademic Stressors ○ Balancing personal responsibilities ○ Conflicting work and school schedules ○ Raising children ○ Financial responsibilities • Depression ○ Anxiety ○ Stress ○ Academic stressors |
| Experiences of integrating into the U.S. culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying and teasing • Ethnic discrimination • Language barriers • No sense of belonging • Uncomfortable interacting with native U.S. citizens • Desire to maintain a native culture • Desire to live among other people of Latino descent |

Motivation to Learn English Proficiently

To gain an understanding of why the participants were motivated to learn English proficiently, I asked two questions: (1) What motivated you to participate in a structured

ELL program? And (2) What were your desired outcomes for participating in an English language program? Participants expressed being motivated to become English proficient as it presented better career opportunities with greater potential to earn more money.

Some participants also stated the motivation to complete an ELL program as a part of the college degree program selected. All of the participants shared the perception that it was a requirement to acquire the English language proficiently in order to improve their economic status in the United States. To achieve a more favorable economic status, English proficiency provides better opportunities to earn more money, positions them for better career opportunities, and is a prerequisite to obtaining a higher education degree.

When asked, “What motivated you to participate in a structured ELL program, participant B23 spoke of how mastering English would lead to better opportunities and increased security. The quote below captures the response given by B23:

I wanted to have an education, and I wanted to have better opportunities to succeed, and so obtaining a higher level of education was one of my goals.

Communicating with my husband was the second goal because my primary goal was to master the English language, not just to be able to speak and communicate with someone but to be able to write and later on, graduate, have a diploma, or go into a higher level of education and obtain employment.

Participant M23 also expressed being motivated to learn English proficiently to obtain higher education and have better job opportunities. She stated:

The reason why is because I wanted to get into higher education, so I felt so that in order for me to like actually I guess to, to find better opportunities or find like

better resources I needed to be able to communicate with others and also like learn the language as I went.

To uncover the motivation to learn English Proficiently or the goals set forth, participants were also asked, “What were your desired outcomes for participating in an English language program?” Participant A13 said she was seeking an improved economic status with better career and financial opportunities. She elaborated further, stating, “I figured that I would have more opportunities if I speak it.” I probed further to find out exactly what opportunities she was referring to, and she shared that getting better job was her desired outcome. Participant Y03 contributed to the development of the theme that obtaining a higher degree was a motivating factor for completing a structured ESL program. In the discussion, she stated:

I wanted to finish my degree, and I needed first to get a certain level of English before starting to take credit classes, so that was actually what motivated me to continue in that program. Right now, I’m in a business management, getting my bachelor’s degree, so that’s what I was trying to do when I to get the English classes.

Obstacles to ELL program completion

From the interview discussions, it was noted that participants had experiences with unexpected challenges that had a significant impact on their goals for achieving English proficiency. From those discussions, the theme barriers to achieving English proficiency emerged. During the interview, participants were asked, “Have there been any barriers to achieving your English proficiency goals?” The participant responses

identified the perceived barriers as unexpected financial expenses for ELL coursework, a lack of knowledge of the process of course enrollment, applying for financial aid, program advisement, access to technology, and other resources that would have mitigated challenges students can encounter at a higher learning institution. Participant's often had an expectation of completing the ELL programs within 1-2 years. However, the barriers to achieving this goal extended the length of time of their studies.

Multiple participants expressed that the financial burden of paying for the classes was a barrier. Comments from Participant H02 highlighted the participants' financial burden of paying for the ELL classes. According to H02: "Night schools or extra school for learning English you have to pay out of pocket so you know if you're not able to, then I guess you cannot go if you think you cannot pay."

Participant S13's response supported the theme that there are perceived barriers to achieving English proficiency for young adult immigrants. She stated:

Yeah, it was really difficult going through the whole process. I had to figure it out by myself; it was hard. I had to find financial assistance, complete that financial assistance process, and even after I was already enrolled in my classes, it was hard navigating everything like what classes would I take, how do I enroll, where should I go, all of that process. Also, trying to figure out everything was hard because, at the same time, I was also getting used to a new country, leaving everything behind and starting all over, and having an uncertain future because I know if I was going to be able to even go to school, how I was going to pay. When I finished, it took me six years to get my degree.

Participant C06 spoke very passionately about the barriers to achieving English proficiency goals. Her discussion included,

Yes, ooh there were a lot, a lot of barriers, I mean in Columbia like I knew the process, the educational process like what to do when you're graduating and if I did not know my mom, my uncle, my aunt, everybody knew what to do at this time to start writing stuff for college. But here, I would not have known what I had to start preparing for, like the FAFSA and all that stuff. I felt like they said all that stuff in class, and they expect you to go to your parents who are American, and they know everything, and like you know how and he did not know, so I feel like I missed out a lot on scholarships and grants and a lot of information that I did not know because this just was this was all new to me.

Participant C06 contributed to the emerging theme that a lack of knowledge of institution's processes for taking coursework is a perceived barrier to attaining English proficiency. She stated, "had I known about financial aid, the types of it, eligibility for it, and all of that stuff, I could have gotten money to help me pay for the school expenses."

The quote below captures more of the response given by C06:

I'm Latina, I'm a woman, and at that point, I wanted to go for political science and I was like I could have gone to another school, I did not know about that school, I did not know all this stuff, and it frustrated me because, because you know I could have done so much with my life. I'm happy how things are now, and I think things happen for a reason, but I could have done a lot more if I had more information, resources, or someone willing to kind of help, like I mean sit

down and start like A to Z because I did not know anything.

Perceived challenges as an Immigrant

In the interview, participants were asked, “Can you share any challenges you have experienced as a Latino immigrant?” This question was designed for participants to describe their experiences as an adult ELL student so they could describe their feelings during the process of acquiring ESL. Some of the participants shared how one’s age at the time of being enrolled in ELL classes had an emotional impact as well as an impact on the level and pacing of success. In this case, learning ESL was perceived to be more challenging for adults than it is for children who are immigrants. Participant Z17 commented that “When you are a child, you are like a sponge and capture things right away. Me being an adult was much harder, and it was taking much longer to learn basic stuff.” Participant Y03 made the following statement relative to age being a challenge in ESL adult learning:

“Children’s minds like they catch English or any language better than in an adult, like adults we already have the language set up in our minds, so it’s hard because every time you try to learn something new and you start comparing it with them so children because they are just learning so they catch everything at the same time, so it’s easier for them.”

Participant S13 shared her perspective of age being a challenge for ESL immigrants and how her experience often made her sad because of the difference between learning and socializing. The quote below captures her response:

“Being in college around younger adults was challenging. I started in the class,

and it was like most of the people really young, and I was older in the class, and sometimes I felt like what am I doing here with a lot of kids? I don't belong here. My age made a difference in my experience because I was older, but like my sister, she came when she was younger, she was 4 or 5. It was easier for her to fit in because she basically went to the school system here since she was in kindergarten.

As a way to uncover challenges faced by ESL Latino immigrants, participants were asked to describe their feelings during the process of learning ESL. Their responses shed light on the perceived challenges young adult ESL students face when seeking to acquire English proficiently. Participant Z17 comments reflected the difficult that the participants felt when learning English. This participant said the following:

My feelings at first were like, Oh God, I cannot do it, this is really hard, and I just wanted to give up, this is no joke. I felt like it was getting harder and harder because it is very different from Spanish, and I just wanted to just have an interpreter when I needed it.

Participant A13 indicated how he felt when learning English in the following comment: "It was hard to talk to people like you only talk to people who speak your language, but it was just hard to talk to other people in general and understand the classes that you're going through." Participant A13 reflected on her experiences and faced challenges as an ESL immigrant. She recalled times when the Teachers would get frustrated with her for not progressing faster. She shared,

One stressful part would be when the teacher would get frustrated with you and

looking at you like I already taught you this and why are you not learning it. I will always remember that. One teacher was like I'm teaching you the basics, and you're still not learning. And I was like I'm just beginning, and you're not giving me a chance. It takes a while for you to learn some things, and they want you to learn things like really quickly, and it's not always that way. I only had one teacher that made me feel that way, so it was memorable and very stressful.

On the contrary, participant H02 offered a different mindset about his experience as an ESL adult student. He was more positive in his approach which he shared helped to monitor his stress levels. H02 stated,

I was actually understanding anger and sadness being released, but something went off in my head to just work hard at it and handle whatever came my way.

I've always been about making money, so I just did what I needed to do to finish school so I could then find a job and start making money.

Depression

In order to identify any themes that aligned with stress relative to academic experiences, participants were asked three questions: (1) Tell me about your experiences as an adult ELL student, (2) Describe your feelings during the process of learning ESL, (3) What, if anything, are experiences you have had as an ELL student that may have been stressful. In this section, sample participant responses will be presented to demonstrate how academic-related stress emerged as a theme, with subthemes being course expectations, lack of time to study and perform personal responsibilities, financial obligations to complete the ELL course program. Some of the responses identified

academic-related stressors, while other discussions identified non-academic related stressors. The non-academic related stressors arose as a result of being an ELL student but were not directly related to things that took place in the academic setting. In both cases, participants expressed feelings of depression. In this section, the participant responses are presented to exhibit how depression emerged as a theme.

Academic Related Stressors

Many of the participants communicated that they experienced depression as they struggled to learn ESL. Comments from participants reflected the range of emotions that ultimately led to depression, stemming from both academic related and non-academic related stressors. For example, participant C06 expressed anger from being unaware of her institution's financial aid processes, which led to "stress and frustration." C06 stated, "That was so stressful for me, and it just kind of angered me because I was like, I kept hearing some people saying things as I applied for this scholarship. I could have gotten that too, and my grades weren't half bad. In addition, Participant B08 spoke in depth about the stress that developed as a result of the financial obligations for completing the ESL coursework. She spoke of how the expenses for the coursework was a barrier to achieving English proficiency and said the financial burden increased the level of stress she experienced, describing how the stress caused her to seek professional help. B08 gave a response, in great detail, which is captured in the following quote:

I did not have enough money to go to college, so I started taking those ESL classes and started working as a nanny. The stress put on me to have to pay to bring me to start doing easy jobs. This forced me to really continue on the path to

achieving my goal. So, I started babysitting to give me some money, but it doesn't take me to any place professionally. At this pace, I was not learning English at all; the English I needed to meet my goal in the profession. So, it was all this stress, the burdens that I was carrying because of my life, I'm not traveling with food, with money. I'm not saying I'm rich, but I have a way to live, my husband's work. But it was my professional goal that relates with my language that was the barrier. It had been like a roller coaster. But after that, I start taking the psychiatry medication, that psychiatry medication stops your brain, so like two months ago, I started therapies with a psychologist, and that is working for me. It was a roller-coaster...happiness, loneliness, frustration, and sadness. There was a point that I had depression episodes, but for me, it had been more like frustration.

In addition, participant B23 contributed to academic stress as a subtheme with her recount of feelings of depression. She stated,

Sometimes I feel depressed, and it's for other reasons and not my English communication, just because this is one part of my life and it is important, but it's just one part of my life, and I am making an effort to get better at it. I tried to master the language, and so I try to feel proud of the accomplishments that I did make.

Participant B45 expressed teasing in the academic setting as a stressful occurrence for her. She said,

being made fun of was one of the things that was stressful for me. In one of the classes I had, I recalled some other student that obviously spoke fluent English,

you know, making fun of me and saying things about me and I was sad and scared, and I was crying because I did not know exactly all the words that he was saying and what they meant and if he was just being funny and whatnot so those were kind of the feelings created, like insecurity and fear which was probably the most feelings that I can recall. And just being scared of speaking up for saying something wrong. I think to this day that still scares me a little bit.

A13 added her recount of experiences of non-verbal bullying or discomfort in the academic setting. She expressed how the treatment of English-speaking peers were stressful and impacted the level of which she believed she could be successful and achieve her goals. A portion of her response was as follows:

I'm going to say there was something, there was a little bit of bullying but not the way you see it now, now I feel like it's just different like, you get the different looks from people, or they try to talk to you, and you're like looking at them like I don't know what you're saying, or I can respond back to you, and there's the look of okay what are you doing here, then why are you even here or you will imagine what they're saying to you, but you don't get it.

Another academic-related stressor identified was the unexpected course expectations. Participant C06 shared that she initially thought she would be able to complete her schoolwork easily and complete the program so she could move onto the core content in her degree program. She expressed a shift in her mindset about the course expectations and how it impacted her emotionally. C06 said,

When I first started the class, I went in with a more like an "ahh whatever this is a

class I'm going to pass easy" attitude because I was not expecting the class to be hard and I guess I took it for granted. At first, I got really angry and kind of like stressed until I realized the work I had to put into the class to learn English.

Participant M23's discussion added to academic-related stressors as a sub-theme due to feelings of defeat as she put forth the effort to complete the course requirements. M23 shared that her academic experience was stressful, mainly because of the expectations placed on ESL students with a lack of empathy from Professors. Her response was as follows:

I guess in the academic part it was a little bit challenging for me because I was learning, I was making friends there, I was doing all of these things but when I went into the classes it was a different language, so it was very complicated and at times it was so stressful because I felt like how am I going to do it like I cannot do it at? Many times, I doubted myself, and I'm not going to lie, there was this one time when I couldn't make it, and I was like, I cannot do it. I feel like some Professors or some teachers in a school or in University they don't know the struggles; they don't know all these things, so they just expect for you to be at a certain level, and you have to be at a certain level, but it's like they don't understand that for some students it takes longer than for others to learn.

Participant S13 expressed stress related to the lack of knowledge of the available academic resources. She contributed to the study by sharing,

I would say trying to do assignments for my other classes was challenging probably because of the limited English language skills that I had, so it was more

difficult. In the beginning, like the first classes, I did not know I could actually go to, or I wasn't using the Writing Center as support. It was really frustrating; it was stressful.

Participant B45 expressed that much of her stress came from the expectation to participate in class. She was fearful of being embarrassed because she did not feel comfortable enough with English skills even though they were all learning together. She was surprised that it was a course expectation to talk and present in front of her peers.

B45 shared,

speaking in front of the class, it was stressful, and I was always so scared that the teacher was going to ask me to speak when we were going over something in the English class. I knew that he was going to say open up your books and let's go over page whatever and he would randomly ask people to read whatever we were going over that day and I always had that fear, so I was like, please don't, don't pick me 'cause I was scared that I was going to have to be out loud and I did not feel like I was ready to be in that class, so that was very stressful for me.

In addition, participant B23 shared that she remembered getting frustrated and stressed because of the course expectations for students to have access to and be familiar with technology that she was unfamiliar with. She stated,

using the technology was like, Oh my God, do I have to do this, use Blackboard, what is Blackboard? How do you access Blackboard? Why do I have to do this? Why cannot I just print out my paper and give it to you. Like, what, now I have to use the computer for everything. Like I don't have to write it, and it was like,

okay, let me go now and take a course to start writing with a computer. And now I have to learn how to use Microsoft Word, and now I have to use Excel, now I have to do a PowerPoint! How do I do a chart? And so, it was like, a lot of knowledge that I was gaining, and it was stressful.

Non-Academic Related Stressors

Throughout the interviews, multiple participants referenced acculturative stress as a state that develops due to multiple influences beyond the academic setting, saying that ESL learning is just a small part of the problem. English proficiency is a significant part of acculturating to the United States, but it was pointed out by participants that analyzing stress needs to look at areas beyond the language because they all tie together and can have an impact on one's mental health.

For instance, B23 shared her reflection of times that she felt she was in a depressive state, and it was not relative to her academic studies. She was stressed about life and trying to survive. Participant B23 stated,

Sometimes I feel depressed, and it's for other reasons and not my English communication, just because this is one part of my life and it is important, but it's just one part of my life, and there are other things that bothered me too.

Similarly, A13 expressed that she had moments of being depressed about post-immigration challenges that were not related to ESL learning. She experienced emotional trauma by migrating to the United States alone. Participant A13 stated,

There was a couple of times I felt stressed, but I don't think it was due to, well my language might have played a part, but it was just the whole moving here and the

story behind it. I moved here with my dad, and I left my mom back home, so it was just adapting to a new family while learning a new language, so it was just a lot of new stuff to deal with.

When B08 responded, she indicated that she was under a great deal of stress because she needed a job. She acknowledged that a lack of English proficiency was a stressor, but the challenges with non-academic related stressors, i.e., finding employment to earn a living, put her in a state of depression. B08's response was captured in this quote:

I experienced a lot of anxiety because I need to find a job which is kind of related to academics because I need the English to get a job in the profession I want, but the stress comes from needing the money to live too.

Participant C06 contributed to the insight that Latino ESL young adult immigrants experience feelings of depression for reasons beyond the academic setting. Adaptation to the culture during ELL is a significant part of one's acculturative stress. C06 shared that she experiences "anxiety all of the time here in the U.S." She further stated that:

Recently, maybe the last two or three years have been different because I can manage it, but I was in therapy, I had anxiety because it was, or it's a very lonely culture. People are rude and super mean and cold, and sometimes it's like the shame of not speaking properly and people treat you in a certain way because of your accent, and then sometimes you say something, and you know they know what you said.

Participant H02 reflected on his experiences as an ELL student and said he did not experience any stress beyond what was anticipated with the process of migrating and

learning a new language, but he recalls factors outside of the academic setting that were challenging. He shared that although he had minimized stress relative to the academics, he remembered missing his people and feeling stressed about day-to-day matters. His response was captured in the following quote:

I remember missing my friends. With everything put together, the stresses of missing friends and family, the stresses of not understanding the people here, the stresses of trying to navigate in this new world, with people that you're around and all those things put together, and it makes you think what am I doing here?

Participant S13 contributed to the development of the theme of depression due to non-academic related stress. She expressed also having moments of feeling like she wanted to return to her native country because of the challenges she was having that made her feel “overstressed and depressed. S13 stated,

I would say that probably the first two or three years I did not want to be here, I keep saying that I want to go back, but I was debating, and I knew I had no future over there and I knew my future was here, but I was having so many challenges, so that was like an internal debate. I would say like it added to my depression symptoms and anxiety. Having like not knowing what to do about my future and not knowing if I was going to achieve all of my goals and even throughout the school, there were times where I will question myself or feel like things in my own language, in Spanish, it would be easier for me. So, they were so many instances that I faced that depression symptoms that I able to find some help and participate in therapy.

Participants further expressed a lack of knowledge or access to resources as a barrier to achieving their goal. They indicated that it would have helped pay for the ESL classes. Statements from participants revealed that coming into the United States as an immigrant, they did not know the enrollment process; were oblivious to program advisement; and, most importantly, were unaware of financial aid, scholarships, and grants. These challenges were perceived to create a high level of stress due to the need to find ways to cover their academic expenses. As a result, challenges with stress and depression arose.

Integrating: The Preferred Mode of Acculturating into the U.S. Culture

There is a wealth of literature identifying reasons Latino immigrants experience acculturative stress. Stressors other than ELL experiences leading to the development of acculturative stress among the Latino immigrant population have been discussed in great detail in previous research. This research study addressed the gap in literature, exploring a vulnerability to acculturative stress during ELL for young adult Latino immigrants. This study used Berry's model of acculturation as the conceptual framework. Therefore, predetermined questions were asked with the goal of seeing if any themes would emerge relative to the mode of acculturation, as identified by Berry (1980) used by the participants. The questions participants were asked were: (1) Can you describe how you feel you fit into the United States culture? (2) Thinking about how you fit into the U.S. culture, would you say that you have solely maintained your native culture, tried to merge both cultures, or have no desire to identify with either culture, but instead make decisions on what is comfortable for you, not focusing on the values and beliefs of either culture?

Participant responses aligned with integration as the preferred mode of acculturating into the U.S. culture. When asked, “Can you describe how you feel you fit into the U.S. culture,” Participant Y03’s response aligned with the integration model. She stated,

When I first got here, I was impressed. I came here when I was 21 years old, so I was impressed with everything, everything was new and beautiful. Now I’m feeling like this is my culture here. I’ve adapted to my life. I have the kids here, so now I have to share with them everything here and every celebration. So, I adapted to here as my culture now. I do celebrate the holidays here because in my country holidays are different. Still, I remember when they are and text my parents and say happy this day or whatever, but it’s not like I celebrate those days here now that I’m in the U.S.

Participant S13 expressed having challenges with fitting into the U.S. culture initially, but as time went on, she found herself embracing the U.S. culture while still partaking in her native culture’s beliefs and traditions. Her response was captured in the quote as follows:

So, I feel like at the beginning I wasn’t fitting in, and that was part of what led me to having depression. I would say I was experiencing depression and anxiety because I was trying to fit in, and I was trying everything like learning English, but it was just difficult, and I would say experiencing depression made it even more difficult. I was trying to fit in with the American culture. But it was just hard. My family in my home would speak Spanish and kept most of our traditions. Most of my friends were Spanish speakers; I would say I merged both

cultures because I will celebrate whatever my family celebrated; we would celebrate whatever main holidays they would celebrate in the U.S. but probably not the same ways that everyone else celebrate because we still keep our roots too.

Participant B45 also chose to adapt to the U.S. culture while maintaining her native culture's values, traditions, and beliefs. Her perception on integrating as her mode of acculturation was evidenced by the following quote,

I feel like even though I wasn't born here, you learn how to fit in, you learn to adapt to the culture, to the food, to the traditions because you know we never celebrated the 4th of July, we never celebrated Thanksgiving Day, and now those are some of the things that you know, it's part of our life now. So, I feel like we have, or at least, I have adapted to the way of life here because it's completely different from what I used to know. We still do some of the things that we used to do back home, of course, is not the same, but we try to live out both cultures.

Participant A13 expressed maintaining her native culture was important to her, but she also wants to try to fit into the new land by practicing the U.S. norms as well. Her statement alluding to integration as her mode of acculturation was as follows:

I'm just part of the working force now, but when you're exposed to different environments, and you come from a different culture and you are exposed to a different way of life, once you create opportunities it's just you, it makes you want more, it makes you reach your goals and because you're, given the opportunity compared to people that have not made it here. I think we just have

somehow combined both cultures. I married someone from the same country, so we speak Spanish at home, and we also go to a church that has Spanish; also, within my family, when we meet, we speak Spanish. We also eat Spanish food, but that doesn't mean we don't eat other types of food. I will do some American things, but I really stay in my own culture because it feels more comfortable for me to keep our values.

On the other hand, participant M23 had a different experience and has chosen separation as her mode of acculturating into the U.S. She decided to maintain her native culture expressing that she does not fit into the U.S. culture and has decided not to make much of an effort to focus on it; she will just "be who she was born to be." Her response was captured as:

I would say at first it was hard really, hard because I felt like I did not fit in. I felt like it was so hard, I felt like I'm never going to be able to be like an American, you know, like I'm never going to be, sufficient enough to compete with these other people or to find these jobs or to get to the places I wanted to get or to do the things that people do. I tried to fit in both cultures, but it was hard at first, but then I was like I had to embrace who I am, where I come from, like how I do things that I always speak my accent and everything but then at times I was like making friends who were also Spanish speakers too.

Participant B23 also expressed strong feelings about not fitting into the U.S. culture and not being interested in integrating as her mode of acculturation. She stated,

I think that it doesn't matter that now after so many years, I was like studying or taking a class here and there. It doesn't matter that I have a bachelor's level degree. It doesn't matter that I'm married. It doesn't matter that I have children; I still don't feel part of this culture. I still haven't assimilated 100% into residing in the U.S., and I think a lot of it has to do with, not only the job that I'm doing because like for the past seven years, I have been in social services so seeing the discrimination, seeing the inequalities that exists, and it just hasn't reassured me that I really belong here. That also has to do with the political environment. But a lot of times, it's just like I could be at night trying to go to bed and just thinking, do I really want to be here? The fact that for me, a lot of the U.S. values don't fit in with me right, I see a lot of individualism. I see everyone is in it for themselves. The thing is, because I don't feel like part of this country, I don't celebrate the holidays over here, so for me, celebrations over here are meaningless.

Summary

The young adult Latino immigrants that participated in this study shared experiences as ELL students trying to achieve English proficiency post-migration to the U.S. I conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews to obtain the data from ten participants who previously participated in structured post-high-school ELL programs. The research question that guided this study was: What are first-generation young adult Latino immigrants' (ages 18-25) perceptions of acculturative stress, relative to experiences in adult ELL programs? The participant responses were based on their experiences within the phenomenon in question. All but one of the participants

successfully completed their ESL programs before earning an Associate's or Bachelors degree. The one participant mentioned is currently working to complete her ESL program requirements. Participants in this study provided their perceptions of their experiences through reflections of the years they were enrolled in ESL programs, recounting descriptions of thoughts and feelings that made clear the themes relative to the phenomenon in question. Their responses illuminated aspects of the ESL courses that were not considered stressful; however, most of the discussions were indicative that there are frustrating and stressful components of being in ESL programs as adults, especially for those who have other responsibilities. All of the participants identified their motivation for enrolling in an ELL program as wanting to obtain a college degree in order to have better job opportunities. For most participants, the ELL experiences were challenging and created high levels of stress, and in some cases, led to depression. The themes that emerged illuminated the various challenges and barriers to acquiring English proficiency within 1-2 years. Overall, the themes that emerged from analyzing participant responses were categorized as perceived challenges as an ELL immigrant, obstacles to ELL program completion, depression, and integrating into the U.S. culture.

As evidenced by the themes that emerged from the discussions during the interviews, there are opportunities to improve conditions for ELL immigrants. Participants were asked for recommendations based on their experiences as ELL immigrant students for those migrating in the future can have less stressful experiences. Their recommendations for improvements were based on perceptions of their own experiences and reflections of what they felt would have worked better for them as young

adult learners and will be discussed in the findings section of Chapter 5. Additionally, in Chapter 5, I discuss recommendations and implications for social change and future research opportunities.

Chapter 5: Findings Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore post-immigration acculturative stress relative to experiences with English language learning. Previous researchers suggest a lack of evidence of the experiences, social, and cultural influences that develop acculturative stress in Latino immigrants within 5 years of living in the U.S. (DaSilva et al., 2017). Participants for this study's consisted of 10 Latino/a immigrants who had lived in the United States for a minimum of 5 years. Each of them was between the ages 18-25 years at the time of enrollment in a structured ELL program. For this study, I designed a generic qualitative inquiry that allowed me to capture the perspectives of the participants in the study. I also incorporated Berry's theory of acculturation theory to guide this study. Colaizzi's 7-step data analysis process was used to analyze the data.

Interpretation of the Findings

Latino immigrants often have challenges with post-migration social adjustment challenges, typically due to limited English proficiency (Kim et al., 2018). The challenges Latino immigrants face such as poverty, acculturation, education, housing, and finding gainful employment, have been noted to increase susceptibility to acculturative stress (Al-Hoorie, 2017). But little is known about how ELL may contribute to acculturative stress. Therefore, this research addressed whether participating in ELL programs contributed to acculturative stress among first-generation young adult Latino immigrants after settling in the United States.

In this study, participants reflected on their experiences, sharing what they perceived as challenges with transitioning to the United States and learning English as a part of that process. The participants expressed negative experiences beyond the classroom that are important to note and served as stressors during acculturation. Previous research had also suggested that U.S.-born Latinos have higher mental illness rates than foreign-born Latinos due to the stress of acculturating to a new country (Bridges et al., 2012). The findings from my study confirm that Latino immigrants often face mental health challenges as a result of the stress from trying to achieve English proficiency while adapting to the new culture. The participants indicated that their experiences were impactful due to the perceived challenges that could be avoided if the U.S. culture was designed to have resources and services that are beneficial and informative for all who reside in the nation.

Motivation to Learn English Proficiently

About half of the immigrants that transition to the United States annually have limited access to citizenship, jobs and job training, or other post-secondary education because of their limited English skills (Parrish, 2015). Previous research indicates that Latino LEP immigrants come to the United States less educated than other immigrant groups, so they are more likely to live in poverty (Zong & Batalova, 2015). The findings are consistent with findings from previous research regarding the relationship between English proficiency and economic prosperity. Each participant interview began with me asking participants to discuss their motivation and goals for becoming proficient in English. The three primary themes that emerged from the responses were to enhance life

by obtaining a higher education, having increased job opportunities, and improving overall economic status.

Several researchers have indicated that acquiring English proficiency is imperative to compete with educated English speakers in the labor force (Madrigal-Hopes et al., 2014; Taylor; 2012; Zong & Batalova, 2017). With the changing economy, U.S. jobs rely heavily on workers with post-secondary education and skills to join the workforce (Madrigal-Hopes et al., 2014; Zong & Batalova, 2015). The study participants' responses aligned with previous literature, as they each shared their primary motivation for coming to the United States was to obtain a higher education. The participants all indicated that they came to the United States with the expectation of obtaining a higher education so they would have better job opportunities, but English proficiency was perceived as a requirement to maximize functionality in the United States. Therefore, they had strong desires to complete an ESL program to build a new life.

Obstacles to ELL Program Completion

Study participants also shared experiences of facing a variety of barriers to achieving English proficiency. There were two primary themes that emerged from the analysis of participant discussions: a lack of knowledge of academic resources and the expenses for the coursework. According to Alvear (2018), in the United States adult, basic education programs are offered to receive English literacy instruction through federally and state-funded programs. A few of the study participants confirmed that there are basic education programs, but they only provide foundational or conversational English skills. Participants elaborated on the literacy skills needed for higher-paying jobs,

which is much more complex than what is offered for free through government resources. This revision to The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 made a shift in defining literacy as an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, mathematically compute and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family, and as an individual in society (Vanek, 2016). The revisions created more rigorous ELL program offerings at the post-secondary and collegiate level, which required expenses that posed challenges for ELL immigrants, according to study participants. Most of the participants also shared that financial obligations to take the ESL courses were a primary stressor and was a significant barrier to achieving their personal and professional goals.

A lack of knowledge of academic resources included participants' challenges with understanding the enrollment process for an ELL program of choice. This lack of understanding also impacted completing the course requirements within a 1-2-year time frame as anticipated. Study participants expressed having better awareness of campus services and resources would have helped to make the learning process much more manageable and minimize student challenges. All of the participants indicated a genuine lack of awareness of campus services that would have minimized student challenges. Participants also mentioned having to go through the ELL process during the age of technology as a significant challenge. The limited access to technological resources required to enroll and complete coursework was perceived as a significant hindrance to many respondents.

Perceived Challenges as an ELL Immigrant

Language competency and acquiring a second language creates stress during the acculturative process due to the pressure from the dominant culture to speak English fluently to become valued as active members of society (Torres, Crowther, & Brodsky, 2017). The participants shared their challenges with learning new grammar, writing, semantics, and vocabulary. Some of the participants felt the language challenges were primarily due to their ages. It was noted by most of the participants that the age at which an immigrant learns a new language can be quite impactful on the level of success and the timeliness of such. In addition to age impacting the ability to grasp concepts quickly, the young adult participants felt social discomfort in ESL classes with other students who were much younger than them. It affected their desire to interact in the academic setting because there was a sense of inferiority socially. The participants thus highlighted that there are non-academic related stressors that tainted their experiences as young adult ESL learners (see Torres et al., 2017). These perceived non-academic related stressors will further be discussed in the next section.

Depression and Acculturative Stress

There was a wealth of information in the literature on stressors that impact immigrants in the process of acquiring ESL. For example, Zhang, Hong, Takeuchi, and Mossakowski (2012) examined how limited English proficiency affected psychological distress in Latino and Asian immigrants who migrated to the United States as adults, revealing that levels of LEP potentially influenced other factors that impact psychological distress in immigrants as they may perceive that they are being victimized or stigmatized

as a result of the language barriers. According to the literature, acculturative stressors may include things such as legal status, language barriers, and unequal access to the social community, as well as other social and structural inequities that immigrants experience upon arriving and settling in the United States (Chavez-Korell & Torres, 2014; Torres, Crowther, & Brodsky, 2017). However, in the current study, the themes that emerged under the category of acculturative stress and depression were identified as: balancing work schedules, raising children, having time to study, and financial responsibilities outside of academic needs. Several respondents also shared that the high expectations placed on them by the teachers and professors added to their stress. The demands of the classes were more than expected with the graded assignments and class participation. The emergent themes in this study more closely aligned with the literature that suggests that acculturative stress can develop from discrimination, a change in family responsibilities, economic hardship, or lack of understanding of the system of values and beliefs presented by a new culture (Concha, Sanchez, de la Rosa, & Villar, 2013).

Acculturative stress has been defined as the psychological effect of cultural adaptation, which can potentially lead to a decline in the mental health and overall well-being of individuals (Cabellera et al., 2016; Schwartz, 2013; Whitehead, Parra-Cardona, Wampler, Bowles, & Klein, 2020). Several researchers have documented that acculturative stress is associated with adverse mental health issues as anxiety and depression among individuals in the Latino immigrant population (Bakhshaie et al., 2017; Duncan & Trejo, 2015; Salas-Wright, Robles, Vaughn, Cordova, & Perez-Figueroa, 2015). A few of the participants were transparent in sharing how the stress of their overall

experiences as ESL students compromised their mental health status. Four of the 10 participants expressed being impacted by stress to the magnitude of having to seek professional assistance for therapy and medication to cope with the stress to move forward with their English proficiency goals. Their mental health challenges included isolation, having episodes of anxiety attacks, and succumbing to depression.

Many immigrants have difficulty coping with the imbalance when trying to merge customs, values, and beliefs of their native culture and the dominant cultures in a new country (Da Silva et al., 2017). These coping difficulties typically result in an altered mental or emotional state of being known as acculturative stress (Da Silva et al., 2017), which is more likely to occur in cultures like the United States because it is a diverse country with vast cultural differences (Salas-Wright, Robles, Vaughn, Cordova, & Perez-Figueroa, 2015). Acculturative stress encompasses multiple psychosocial difficulties and stressors that can be summarized by four factors: (a) perceived discrimination, (b) familiar acculturative gaps, (c) English learner-related stress, and (d) decreased sense of school and community belonging due to challenges within the structured school environment (Abraído-Lanza et al., 2016).

Acculturative stressors include things such as legal status, language barriers, and unequal access to the social community, as well as other social and structural inequities that immigrants experience upon arriving and settling in the United States (Chavez-Korell & Torres, 2014; Torres, Crowther, & Brodsky, 2017). Many of the participants in this study shared coping difficulties with the challenges outlined in the literature. They expressed having non-academic related stressful experiences that affected their mental

well-being, whether they specifically mentioned seeking professional help to cope with their circumstances. Nine of the 10 participants shared negative experiences. One participant shared that her stress levels were elevated because she missed her family and had no social circle in the United States to help her with coping with the stress of the courses and challenges, she had with everyday life. Another participant expressed that not being English proficient caused her to have stress because she wanted to communicate with people in her classes or on the job, but because she did not have the words to carry on a conversation, she felt defeated in many aspects of her life. Some participants shared experiences of discrimination in their day-to-day life due to how they were treated rudely by natives of the United States. Although none of the 9 participants had the same experiences, many had commonalities. For instance, 2 participants discussed incidents in which they were teased or bullied for being an outlier in their classes due to the language barrier. All of the participants shared challenges at some point in their interaction with people in the mainstream culture that seemed discriminatory due to the language barrier, and these experiences gave them anxiety about being in public settings. Five of the ten participants expressed feeling disheartened about transitioning to the U.S. and not quickly acquiring the social status they had hoped for. These negative feelings often made them question if they should continue to try to achieve their desired goals or if they should return to their native countries and press forward there. Additionally, this created feelings of only wanting to live in communities among Latino descent people to help ease the pressure and decrease the stress.

Theory of Acculturation: Integrating into the U.S. Culture

The conceptual framework used for this study was Berry's model of acculturation, in which immigrants are said to adapt to the new culture in one of 4 ways: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. Participants were asked about their acculturation experiences guided by two questions to uncover their perceptions about maintaining their native culture and adapting to the U.S. culture. These questions were asked to confirm the mode of acculturation participants used to adapt to the United States post-migration. All of the participants expressed challenges with fitting into the U.S. culture at some point, which created higher than desired stress levels. Belongingness was directly connected to limited English proficiency, and the participants expressed, the more proficient they became in English, the more they felt they fit into the culture. While participants did express their experiences with belongingness and shared how they regarded their native and the new culture's customs, it was not determined in this study if a sense of belongingness or the method of acculturation has an impact on acculturative stress. It is a consideration for a future study to develop an inquiry that delves into that topic further. Despite 3 out of 10 participants expressed that separation was their chosen mode of acculturating because they did not want to disown their native culture and had challenges with parts of the U.S. customs, the majority chose integration as their mode of adapting. Most of the participants adapted to the U.S. culture using integration as the mode of acculturation because they believed in maintaining their native culture but felt it was best to submerge themselves in the new culture by practicing many traditions beliefs in what they considered their new home.

Interpretation of findings and conceptual framework

Berry (1980) developed a model of acculturation to describe the cultural and psychological factors that govern the relationship between acculturation and mental health for transitioning immigrants. Berry (1980) noted that changes in mental health stability depended on the individual's personal acculturative experiences. I chose Berry's model of acculturation as the conceptual framework for this study due to the impact the four categories of acculturation are said to have on the vulnerability to acculturative stress. Berry's theory of acculturation was used to the phenomenon of acculturative stress associated with ELL. Berry's model of acculturation was used to gain insights on how the participants chose to acculturate when they migrated to the United States because it is an aspect that can influence stress levels in first-generation immigrants. The participants in this study expressed the importance of merging their native cultural community with the U.S. culture's belief systems. The shared language and non-language related experiences were useful in interpreting their vulnerability to acculturative stress. The majority of the participants expressed using integration as their mode of acculturating into the U.S., based on how they regarded their native culture and the U.S. culture, post-immigration. Doná and Berry (1994) found that immigrants who exhibited lower stress levels acculturated using the integration model as opposed to assimilation, separation, or marginalization. While integration has been documented as yielding the lowest levels of acculturative stress, it is evident that this model still creates a vulnerability to acculturative stress and depression based on the participants' stories about their post immigration experiences as young adult ESL immigrant students. All but one participant

has had high levels of stress while trying to achieve English proficiency while simultaneously establishing a new life in the U.S.

Berry's theory of acculturation was used to guide this research study, specifically with integration being the category of focus used to explore the phenomenon of acculturative stress and the process of ELL. Findings from the Berry and Hou (2016) study revealed that integration was the most preferred mode of acculturation. The findings of this study confirm that integration is the preferred mode of acculturating, according to the experiences expressed by the study participants. The participants shared their adaptation experiences and scenarios that impacted their decision on the method of acculturation they were chosen. Concha et al. (2013) noted the interactions immigrants make in a new society often represent external stressors for Latino immigrants as a result of racial discrimination, limited language proficiency, and fear of the unknown relative to cultural values as well as the social, economic, educational, and political norms associated with the new culture. The experiences participants shared included ethnic discrimination, language barriers, perceived bullying, social status, discomfort fitting in with the native citizens, desire to maintain their native culture, and desire to live among other people of Latino descent. During data analysis, three experiences that were repetitive and emerged as primary themes connecting to integration as the preferred mode of acculturation were: ethnic discrimination, perceived bullying, and discomfort fitting in with native U.S. citizens. Despite the experiences that shed light on the themes, participants still preferred to merge their native culture with the U.S. culture in order to integrate while striving for a better way of life.

Limitations

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore post-immigration acculturative stress relative to experiences with ELL in young adult Latino immigrants. The eligibility criteria required participants to have been between the ages of 18-25 years old at the time they completed a structured ELL program in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The participants in this study must have lived in the United States for a minimum of 5 years. There were limitations in the research, which included sample size, age of the participants, geographic location, and potentially skewed findings due to self-reporting.

The first limitation was the sample size. When designing the study, I decided to maintain a small sample size to allow for the collection of rich information from 10-15 participant perspectives. The rationale for selecting this sample size was because the goal was to obtain depth versus breadth (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). The sample size is often considered a limitation in qualitative studies because the researcher runs the risk of developing empirical data that only produces what was already known (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). The second limitation was the geographic location. The age of the participants created another limitation of the study. The criteria for the study included young adults between the ages 18-25. This criterion created a limitation because the experiences of Latino immigrants in younger or older age groups were not captured and therefore the findings cannot be generalized across a larger population. The study participants were selected from the Washington, DC Metropolitan area only. This creates a limitation of the study because the findings cannot be generalized across a larger

population since the data only includes the perceptions of those in the selected region of the U.S. Since this study relied on data from participant interviews solely, it, therefore, may not be transferable to ELL immigrants in other states throughout the country. Lastly, self-reporting can be a limitation of the study. Self-reporting can impact the transferability of results about the participants (van der Werff & Buckley, 2017). Interviews rely on participants to provide responses that are truthful, but participants could potentially falsify their reflections and experience, making it a threat to the overall accuracy of the data analysis (van der Werff & Buckley, 2017). The research study could potentially contain untrustworthy data due to the possibility that study participants did not disclose truthful information in the recounts of their experiences as ELL students. Self-reporting also limits the study from being generalized because the findings do not incorporate insights and perceptions from ELL Latino immigrants that were not included in the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research study examined the perceptions of the experiences of young adult Latino immigrants and the vulnerability to acculturative stress post-migration to the United States. The breadth of information obtained from the study participants will add to the existing literature. The limitations of this study will also create opportunities for future research on ELL immigrants and acculturative stress.

Based on the discussions with the participants, there is an opportunity to collect data on ELL immigrants' perceptions using a different set of eligibility criteria. Since the findings suggest there is a significant impact of the age of acquiring ESL, future research

should examine the perceptions of experiences of students who achieve English proficiency at a younger age. Many of this study's participants shared their perception that younger children have better success with learning a second language because they are able to understand and grasp the concepts faster. Study participants also suggested that adults' acculturative stress is often influenced by non-academic related stressors that younger children do not encounter. Future research could explore a pool of adult participants that migrated to the United States and took ESL classes during their primary school ages. Using this criterion could confirm or refute indications that the age of ELL determines the vulnerability to acculturative stress in Latino immigrants. I would recommend a future study that analyzes the experiences of ELL immigrants to use either a qualitative or mixed methods design. A qualitative study would allow the researcher to delve deep into the experiences as an ELL immigrant. A mixed-methods research allows an opportunity to collect data that does not solely rely on discussions from participant interviews. The study could also be duplicated as a qualitative study examining immigrants from other ethnicities. Changing the ethnicity of the immigrant population would add to the literature by allowing a comparison of acculturative stress levels among individuals of different ethnic groups who migrated to the U.S. It would be insightful to analyze the similarities and differences of the acculturative experiences of ELL students within all age groups.

Implications for Social Change

Overall, the findings of the research will provide insights into the challenges young adult Latino immigrants encounter during the process of second language

acquisition post-migration to the United States. The study participants were allowed the opportunity to revisit their experiences as ELL students striving for a better way of life. Each participant expressed gratitude for being given the opportunity to reflect, with someone hearing their stories recounting their experiences. All of the participants were willing to share their stories. They did so with enthusiasm about the possibility of their recollection aiding future Latino immigrants who migrate to the U.S. seeking English proficiency for better opportunities.

Future researchers, human services professionals, and academic leaders can incorporate the insights of this study into the pre-existing body of literature relating to Latino immigrants, ELL, and acculturative stress in order to improve this issue. The study participants made recommendations for improving the ELL process for future adult learners. The primary recommendation was for academic institutions to ensure all students are knowledgeable of the school's resources and services available from the beginning to the end of program completion. Another recommendation was to have group tutoring or one-on-one support for struggling ELL students. It was noted that these services were available for all other coursework, but not the ELL courses. Lastly, participants suggested that there are therapeutic services available for ELL adult students who encounter high levels of stress due to academic and non-academic related matters to help develop coping skills. The new information can be beneficial for providing academic institutions with insights on developing systems and structures that improve access to programs and resources for all students. Human services professionals can also use insightful data to expand the current network of social support resources for

individuals and families with post-migration challenges. Such support programs can be developed to provide Latino immigrants and other immigrants with coping skills strategies through prevention and intervention resources.

Conclusion

Adult ELL programs and acculturative stress have been the focus of a wealth of research studies. Previous studies have not focused on ELLs within the young adult age group, as they have primarily focused on either school-aged children or older adults. This research study had a lens on the experiences of young adults between ages 18-25 during their time of learning ESL, in seek of themes that may emerge as vulnerabilities to acculturative stress. The study was effective in collecting rich data from participants that provided insights about the experiences of achieving English proficiency while acculturating into the U.S. culture. The findings of the study indicated that young adult Latino immigrant ESL students face many challenges in and out of the academic setting as a part of the acculturative experiences. The most significant insight from this study was that the process of learning English as an adult second language learner should not be examined in isolation but should be done in conjunction with a wealth of stressors that impact the successful completion of the English proficiency program. As the participants expressed, learning English is a part of the whole acculturation process, so when examining vulnerabilities, the entire picture should be analyzed.

References

- Abraído-Lanza, A., Echeverría, S., & Flórez, K. (2016). Latino immigrants, acculturation, and health: Promising new directions in research. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 219. doi:10.1146/annurev-publhealth-032315-021545
- Ai, A. L., Aisenberg, E., Weiss, S. I., & Salazar, D. (2014). Racial/Ethnic Identity and Subjective Physical and Mental Health of Latino Americans: An Asset Within? *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 53(1/2), 173-184. doi:10.1007/s10464-014-9635-5
- Alegría, M., Molina, K. M., & Chen, C. (2014). Neighborhood characteristics and differential risk for depressive and anxiety disorders across racial/ethnic groups in the United States. *Depression and Anxiety*, 31(1), 27-37. doi:10.1002/da.22197
- Al-Hoorie, A. H. (2017). Sixty years of language motivation research: Looking back and looking forward. *SAGE Open*, 7(1), 1. doi:10.1177/2158244017701976
- Alvear, S. A. (2018). The additive advantage and bilingual programs in a large urban school district. *American Educational Research Journal*. doi.10.3102/0002831218800986
- Ananyeva, M. (2014). A learning curriculum: Toward student-driven pedagogy in the context of adult English for academic purposes, English for specific purposes, and workplace English programs. *TESOL Journal*, 5(1), 8-31. doi:10.1002/tesj.73
- Anyan, F. (2013). The influence of power shifts in data collection and analysis stages: A focus on qualitative research interview. *The Qualitative Report*, 18(18), 1-9. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol18/iss18/2/>.

- Archuleta, A. J., & Lakhwani, M. (2016). Balancing cultures: Acculturation, environmental mastery, emotional regulation, and depressive symptoms among first-generation Latino/a youth. *Social Work in Mental Health, 14*(3), 271-291. doi:10.1080/15332985.2015.1017136
- Arsel, Z. (2017). Asking questions with reflexive focus: A tutorial on designing and conducting interviews. *Journal of Consumer Research, 44*(4), 939-948. doi:10.1093/jcr/ucx096
- Austin, Z., & Sutton, J. (2014). Qualitative research: getting started. *The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy, 67*(6), 436-440. doi:10.4212/cjhp.v67i6.1406
- Bakhshaie, J., Hanna, A. E., Viana, A. G., Garza, M., Valdivieso, J., Ochoa-Perez, M., & Zvolensky, M. J. (2018). Acculturative stress and mental health among economically disadvantaged Spanish-speaking Latinos in primary care: The role of anxiety sensitivity. *Psychiatry Research, 26*(1), 421-427. doi:10.1016/j.psychres.2018.01.009
- Bekteshi, V., Hook, M., Levin, J., Kang, S., & Tran, T. (2017). Social work with Latino immigrants: Contextual approach to acculturative stress among Cuban, Mexican and Puerto Rican women. *The British Journal of Social Work, 47*(2), 447-466. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcw003
- Bekteshi, V., & Kang, S.W. (2018). Contextualizing acculturative stress among Latino immigrants in the United States: A systematic review, *Ethnicity & Health*. doi:10.1080/13557858.2018.1469733

- Behara, J., Khan, K. A., & Hasan, B. (2018). Predicting effects of acculturation strategies on acculturative stress. *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology, 9*(1), 190-192.
doi:10.15614/ijpp.v9i01.11770
- Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research, 15*(2), 219-234.
doi:10.1177/1468794112468475
- Berry, J. W. (1980). Social and cultural change. In *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology* (pp. 457-486). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon. Retrieved from ERIC database.
- Berry, J. W. (1994). Acculturation and psychological adaptation: An overview. In A.-M. Bouvy, F. J. R. van de Vijver, P. Boski, & P. G. Schmitz (Eds.), *Journeys into cross-cultural psychology* (pp. 129-141). Berwyn, PA: Swets & Zeitlinger. Retrieved from ERIC database.
- Berry, J. W., & Hou, F. (2016). Immigrant acculturation and well-being in Canada. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne, 57*(4), 254-264.
doi:10.1037/cap0000064
- Bridges, A., Andrews, A., & Deen, T. (2012). Mental health needs and service utilization by Hispanic immigrants residing in mid-southern United States. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing, 23*(4), 259-368. doi:10.1177/1043659612451259
- Brooker, A., & Lawrence, A. (2012). Educational and cultural challenges of bicultural adult immigrant and refugee students in Australia. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning, 52*(1), 66-88. Retrieved from ERIC database.

- Cabellero, T. M., DeCamp, L. R., Platt, R., Shah, H., Johnson, S. B., Sibinga, E. M. S., Polk, S. (2016). Addressing the mental health needs of Latino children in immigrant families. *Clinical Pediatrics*, 56(7), 648-658.
doi:10.1177/0009922816679509
- Castro-Olivo, S. M., Palardy, G. J., Albeg, L., & Williamson, A. A. (2014). Development and validation of the coping with acculturative stress in American schools (Casas-A) scale on a Latino adolescent sample. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, 40(1), 3-15. doi:10.1177/1534508413500983
- Cervantes, R., Padilla, A., Napper, L. & Goldbach, J. (2013). Acculturation-related stress and mental health outcomes among three generations of Hispanic adolescents. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 35(4), 451-468.
doi:10.1177/0739986313500924
- Chan, Z. C., Fung, L., & Chien, T. (2013). Bracketing in phenomenology: only undertaken in the data collection and analysis process? *The Qualitative Report*, 18(30), 1–9. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol18/iss30/1>.
- Chavez-Korell, S., & Torres, L. (2014). Perceived stress and depressive symptoms among Latino Adults: The moderating role of ethnic identity cluster patterns. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 2, 230. doi:10.1177/0011000013477905

- Concha, M., Sanchez, M., De la Rosa, M., & Villar, M. E. (2013). A longitudinal study of social capital and acculturation-related stress among recent Latino immigrants in South Florida. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 4*, 469.
doi:10.1177/0739986313499005
- Connelly, L. M. (2016). Trustworthiness in qualitative research. *MEDSURG Nursing, 25*(6), 435-436. Retrieved from Walden University Medline database.
- Da Silva, N., Dillon, F. R., Verdejo, T. R., Sanchez, M., & De La Rosa, M. (2017). Acculturative stress, psychological distress, and religious coping among Latina young adult immigrants. *The Counseling Psychologist 45*(2), 213-236.
doi:10.1177/001100017692111
- Diaz, T., & Bui, N. (2017). Subjective well-being in Mexican and Mexican American women: The role of acculturation, ethnic identity, gender roles, and perceived social support. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 18*(2), 607-624.
doi:10.1007/s10902-016 9741-1
- Dillon, F., La Rosa, M., & Ibañez, G. (2013). Acculturative stress and diminishing family cohesion among recent Latino immigrants. *Journal of Immigrant & Minority Health, 15*(3), 484-491. doi:10.1007/s10903-012-9678-3
- Donà, G., & Berry, J. W. (1994). Acculturation attitudes and acculturative stress of Central American refugees. *International Journal of Psychology, 29*(1), 57-70.
doi:10.1080/00207599408246532
- Duncan, B., Trejo, S. (2015). Assessing the socioeconomic mobility and integration of US Immigrants and their descendants. *Annals of the American Academy of*

Political and Social Science, 657(1), 108-135. doi:10.1177/0002716214548396

Driscoll, M.W., & Torres, L. (2013). Acculturative stress and Latino depression: The mediating role of behavioral and cognitive resources. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 19(4), 373-382. doi:10.1037/a0032821

Emerson, R. W. (2015). Convenience sampling, random sampling, and snowball sampling: How does sampling affect the validity of research? *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 109(2), 164. doi:10.1177/0145482x1510900215

Etikan, I., Musa, S., Alkassim, R. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*. 5(1) 1-4. doi: 10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11

Fox, R.S., Merz, E.L., Solórzano, & Roesch, S. (2013). Further examining Berry's model: The applicability of latent profile analysis to acculturation. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*. 46(4) 270-288. doi:10.1177/0748175613497036

Flink, P. J. (2018). Latinos and higher education: A literature review. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 17(4), 402–414. <https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1177/1538192717705701>.

Fusch, G. E., & Ness, L. R. (2017). How to conduct a mini-ethnographic case study: A guide for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(3), 923-941. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/sm_pubs/109 .

Gair, S. (2011). Feeling their stories: Contemplating empathy, insider/outsider positionings, and enriching qualitative research. *Qualitative health research*,

22(1), 134-143. Retrieved from <https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1177/1049732311420580>.

- Galvin, R. (2015). How many interviews are enough? Do qualitative interviews in building energy consumption research produce reliable knowledge? *Journal of Building Engineering*, (1), 2-12. Retrieved from <https://doi:10.1016/j.jobe.2014.12.001>.
- Granek, L., & Nakash, O. (2016). The impact of qualitative research on the 'real world': Knowledge translation as education, policy, clinical training, and clinical practice. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 56(4), 414-435. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022167815574623>.
- Flores, S. M., & Park, T. J. (2013). Race, ethnicity, and college success: Examining the continued significance of the minority-serving institution. *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 42, 115-128. doi:10.3102/0013189X13478978
- Gardner, S. (2017). GED success: Case study of an English language learner in correctional education. *Journal of Research & Practice for Adult Literacy, Secondary & Basic Education*, 6(2), 37-48. Retrieved from Walden University Education Source database.
- Guo, Y. (2015). Language policies and programs for adult immigrants in Canada: Deconstructing discourses of integration. *New directions for adult & continuing education*, 146(41-51). doi:10.1002/ace.20130
- Horevitz, E., Organista, K. (2012). The Mexican health paradox: Expanding the explanatory power of the acculturation construct. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral*

Science.35(1) 3-34. doi:10.1177/0739986312460370

Horrigan-Kelly, M., Millar, M., & Dowling, M. (2016). Understanding the key tenets of Heidegger's philosophy for interpretive phenomenological research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 15(1), 1-8.

[https://doi:10.1177/1609406916680634](https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406916680634).

Hulstijn, J. H., Young, R. F., Ortega, L., Bigelow, M., DeKeyser, R., Ellis, N. C., Lantolf, J.P., Mackey, A., and Talmy, S. (2014). Bridging the gap. *Studies in second language acquisition*, 36(3), 361-421. doi: 10.1017/S0272263114000035

Ingham-Broomfield, R. (2017). A nurses' guide to ethical considerations and the process for ethical approval of nursing research. *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 35(1), 40-47. Retrieved from <http://www.anmf.org.au/>.

Janis, T. (2013) The Community College: bridge or roadblock to higher education for U.S. adult immigrant English-language learners?. *Research in Comparative and International Education*. 8(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/rcie.2013.8.2.149>. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8535.2011.01271.x

Kim, G., Kim, M., Park, S., Jimenez, D., Chiriboga, D. (2018). Limited English proficiency and trajectories of depressive symptoms among Mexican American older adults, *The Gerontologist*, 59(5), 856-864, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gny032>.

Khan, M. J., Altaf, S., & Kausar, H. (2013). Effect of perceived academic stress on students' performance. *FWU Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(2), 146-151. Retrieved from <http://www.fwu.edu.pk/general.php?goto=research>.

- Kornbluh, M. (2015). Combatting challenges to establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 12*(4), 397-414.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2015.1021941>.
- Krogstad, J., Stepler, R., & Lopez, M.H. (2015, May 12). English proficiency on the rise among Latinos: U.S. born driving language changes. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from: <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/05/12/english-proficiency-on-the-rise-among-latinos/>.
- Labaree, R. V. (2014). Galletta, Anne. Mastering the semi-structured interview and beyond: from research design to analysis and publication. *CHOICE: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries, (5)*, 812. Retrieved from Walden University Gale Academic OneFile Select database.
- Levitt, H., Motulsky, S., Wertz, F., Morrow, S., & Ponterotto, J. (2017). Recommendations for designing and reviewing qualitative research in psychology: Promoting methodological integrity. *Qualitative Psychology, 4*(1), 94-22. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/qup0000082>.
- Lindholm-Leary, K. (2012). Success and challenges in dual language Education. *Theory into Practice, 51*(4), 256–262. doi.10.1080/004058412012726053.
- Lopez, G. & Radford, J. (2017, May 3). Facts on U.S. Immigrants, 2015: Statistical portrait of the foreign-born population in the United States. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from: <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2017/05/03/facts-on-u-s-immigrants/>.

- Lorenzo-Blanco, E.I., Meca, A., Unger, J.B., Szapocznik, J. (2018). Cultural stress, emotional well-being, and health risk behaviors among recent immigrant latinx families: The moderating role of perceived neighborhood characteristics. *Journal of Youth Adolescence* 48(114). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-018-0907-5>.
- Madrigal-Hopes, D. L., Villavicencio, E., Foote, M. M., & Green, C. (2014). Transforming English language learners' work readiness: case studies in explicit, work-specific vocabulary instruction. *Adult Learning*, Vol. 2, 47. doi:10.1177/1045159514522432
- Maher, C., Hadfield, M., Hutchings, M., & de Eyto, A. (2018). Ensuring rigor in qualitative data analysis: A design research approach to coding combining NVivo with traditional material methods. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 17(1), 1–13. <https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1177/1609406918786362>.
- Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2016). Sample size in qualitative interview studies: guided by information power. *Qualitative health research*, 26(13), 1753-1760. <https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1177/1049732315617444>.
- Massey, D., Durand, J., Pren, K. (2016). The Precarious Position of Latino Immigrants in the United States: A Comparative Analysis of Ethnosurvey Data. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 666(1), 91-109. doi: 10.1177/0002716216648999

- Matua, G. A., & Van Der Wal, D. M. (2015). Differentiating between descriptive and interpretive phenomenological research approaches. *Nurse Researcher*, (6), 22. Retrieved from Retrieved from Walden University Gale Academic OneFile Select database.
- Mishkind, A. (2016). Adult education: What makes teaching effective? Retrieved from https://www.calpro-online.org/documents/CALPRO_BRIEF_13_508.pdf.
- Mwaiko, N. (2017). Overcoming obstacles to educational access for Kenyan girls: A qualitative study. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, (2), 260. Retrieved from Walden University Supplemental Index database.
- Nguyen, A.-M. D., & Benet-Martínez, V. (2013). Biculturalism and Adjustment: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 44(1), 122–159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022111435097>.
- Norly, A., & Harder, I. (2010). What makes a phenomenological study phenomenological? An analysis of peer-reviewed empirical nursing studies. *Qualitative Health Research*, 20(3), 420-431. doi:10.1177/1049732309357435
- Ouellette-Schramm, J. R. (2016). Developmental diversity in the academic language-learning experiences of adult English as a second or other language learners: A constructive-developmental study. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 66(3), 219-236. doi:10.1177/0741713616640882
- Oye, C., Sorensen, N., & Glasdam, S. (2016). Qualitative research ethics on the spot: Not only on the desktop. *Nursing Ethics*, 23(4), 455-464. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0969733014567023>.

- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, *42*(5), 533–544.
<https://doi.org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>.
- Parrish, A. (2015). Improving Instruction for English Language Learners through the Development of Coteaching. ScholarWorks. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/1860>.
- Pascal, J., Dore, C., Trainor, R., & Johnson, N. (2011). The lived experience of doing phenomenology perspectives from beginning health science postgraduate researchers. *Qualitative Social Work*, *10*(2), 172-189.
doi:10.1177/1473325009360830
- Percy, W. H., Kostere, K., & Kostere, S. (2015). Generic qualitative research in psychology. *The Qualitative Report*, *20*(2), 76. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/>.
- Pew Research Center. (2013). Between two worlds: How young Latinos come of age in America, Washington, D.C. Retrieved from: <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2009/12/11/between-two-worlds-how-young-latinos-come-of-age-in-america/>.
- Pratt, L. & Brody, D. (2014). Depression in the U.S. Household Population, 2009-2012. National Center for Health Statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs.htm>.

- Rastogi, M., Massey-Hastings, N., & Wieling, E. (2012). Barriers to seeking mental health services in the Latino/a community: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Systemic Therapies, 31*(4), 1-17. doi:10.1521/jsyt.2012.31.4.1
- Revollo, H-W., Qureshi, A., Collazos, F., Valero, S. & Casas, M. (2011). Acculturative stress as a risk factor of depression and anxiety in the Latin American immigrant population. *International Review of Psychiatry, 23*(1), 84-92, doi: 10.3109/09540261.2010.545988
- Rivas, A., & Browne, B.C. (2019). Experiences in researching conflict and violence: Fieldwork Interrupted. Policy Press. doi: 10.1080/17502977.2019.1649845
- Roth, K. B., Musci, R. J., & Eaton, W. W. (2019). Heterogeneity of Latina/os' acculturative experiences in the national Latino and Asian American study: a latent profile analysis. *Annals of Epidemiology*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annepidem.2019.07.016>.
- Salas-Wright, C. P., Robles, E. H., Vaughn, M. G., Córdova, D., & Pérez-Figueroa, R. E. (2015). Toward a typology of acculturative stress: Results among Hispanic immigrants in the United States. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 37*(2), 223–242. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986315573967>.
- Salkind, N. J. (2010). *Encyclopedia of research design* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi:10.4135/9781412961288
- Santos, M. M., Nagy, G. A., Hurtado, G. D., West, P., Santiago-Rivera, A. L., Lee, H.-J., & Kanter, J. W. (2017). Acculturative stress as a moderator of treatment engagement and retention in behavioral activation and treatment as usual for

- Latinos with depression. *Journal of Latina/o Psychology*, 5(4), 275–289.
<https://doi.org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1037/lat0000074>.
- Saunders, C., & Hunter, S. (2018). Immigration & change in Rhode Island's golden age: A program for adult English language learners. *Journal of Museum Education*, 43(4), 385. doi.10.1080/10598650.2018.1523655
- Schwartz, S. J., Weisskirch, R. S., Zamboanga, B. L., Castillo, L. G., Ham, L. S., Huynh, Q. L., ... & Davis, M. J. (2013). Dimensions of acculturation: Associations with health risk behaviors among college students from immigrant families. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 58(1), 1-15. doi:10.1037/a0021356
- Shin, H., & Kominski, R. (2017). Language use in the United States: 2007. U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey Reports. Retrieved from
<https://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/language/data/acs/ACS-12.pdf>.
- Stocker, R., & Close, H. (2013). A novel method of enhancing grounded theory memos with voice recording. *Qualitative Report*, 18. Retrieved from
<https://eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=EJ1005522>.
- Sullivan, C., & Kashubeck-West, S. (2017). The Interplay of International Students' Acculturative Stress, Social Support, and Acculturation Modes. *Journal of International Students*, 5(1), 1–11. Retrieved from <http://jistudents.org/>.
- Sun, S., Hoyt, W. T., Brockberg, D., Lam, J., & Tiwari, D. (2016). Acculturation and enculturation as predictors of psychological help-seeking attitudes (HSAs) among racial and ethnic minorities: A meta-analytic investigation. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 63(6), 617–632. <https://doi->

org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1037/cou0000172.supp.

- Taylor, P., Lopez, M., Martinez, J., Velasco, G. (2012). When labels don't fit: Hispanics and their views of identity. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from:
<http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/04/when-labels-dont-fit-hispanics-and-their-views-of-identity/#about-this-report>.
- Theron, P.M. (2015). Coding and data analysis during qualitative empirical research in Practical Theology. In *Die Skriflig*, (3), e1. Retrieved from
<https://doi.org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.4102/ids.v49i3.1880>.
- Torres, C. A., Crowther, M. R., & Brodsky, S. (2017). Addressing acculturative stress in psychotherapy: A case study of a Latino man overcoming cultural conflicts and Stress-Related to Language Use. *Clinical Case Studies*, 16(3), 187-199.
 doi:10.1177/1534650116686180
- U.S. Census Bureau (2017). Fact for features: Hispanic heritage month 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2017/hispanic-heritage.html>.
- Vanek, J. (2016). De facto language policy in legislation defining adult basic education in the United States. *Language Policy*, 15(1), 71–95. Retrieved from
<https://doiorg.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1007/s10993-015-9356-0>.
- van der Werff, L., & Buckley, F. (2017). Getting to know you: A longitudinal examination of trust cues and trust development during socialization. *Journal of Management*, 43(3), 742–770. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206314543475>.
- van Rijnsoever, F. J. (2017). I cannot get no saturation: A simulation and guidelines for

- sample sizes in qualitative research. *PLoS ONE*, *12*(7), 1–17. <https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0181689>.
- Verile, M. G., Ertl, M. M., Dillon, F. R., & De La Rosa, M. (2019). Acculturative stress among Latina young adult immigrants: The mediating role of receiving community context. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*, *5*(1), 91–110. <https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1037/tps0000185>.
- Vogt, M. & Echevarria, J. (2015). Reaching English learners: Aligning the ELA/ELD framework with SIOP. *California Reader*, *49*(1), 23–33. Retrieved from Walden University Supplemental Index database.
- Wahlstrom, J. (2017). The researcher in the field—Some notes on qualitative research in mental health. *European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling*, *19*(1), 97–109. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13642537.2017.1289972>.
- Ward, C., & Geeraert, N. (2016). Advancing acculturation theory and research: The acculturation process in its ecological context. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, Vol. 8, 98–104. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.09.021
- Ward, C., & Kus, L. (2012). Back to and beyond Berry’s basics: The conceptualization, operationalization, and classification of acculturation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *36*(4), 472–485. doi: 10.1016/j.ijintrel.2012.02.002
- Warriner, D.S. (2016). Here, without English, you are dead: ideologies of language and discourses of neoliberalism in adult English language learning, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *37*(5), 495–508, doi: 10.1080/01434632.2015.1071827

- Whitehead, M. R., Parra-Cardona, R., Wampler, R., Bowles, R., & Klein, S. (2020). Longitudinal changes among Latino/a immigrant parental acculturation and extra-familial immigration-related stress. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986319900029>.
- Woods, M., Paulus, T., Atkins, D. P., & Macklin, R. (2016). Advancing qualitative research using qualitative data analysis software (QDAS)? Reviewing potential versus practice in published studies using ATLAS.ti and NVivo, 1994–2013. *Social Science Computer Review*, 34(5), 597-617. doi:10.1177/0894439315596311
- Yardley, L. (2017). Demonstrating the validity of qualitative research. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12(3), 295–296. <https://doi.org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262624>.
- Yeh, C. J., & Mayuko, I. (2016). International students reported English fluency, social support satisfaction, and social connectedness as predictors of acculturative stress. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 29(3), 15-28. doi:10.1080/0951507031000114058
- Zhang, W., Hong, S., Takeuchi, D., & Mossakowski, K. (2012). Limited English proficiency and psychological distress among Latinos and Asian Americans. *Social Science & Medicine*, 75(6), 1006-1014. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2012.05.012
- Zong, J. & Batalova, J. (2015, July 8). The limited English proficient population in the United States. *Migration Policy Institute*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/limited-english-proficient-population-united-states>.

Zong, J., & Batalova, J. (2017, March 8). Frequently requested statistics on immigrants and immigration in the United States. *Migration Policy Institute*. Retrieved from: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states>.

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Acculturative Stress and Adult ELL Programs: From the Perspectives of First-Generation Latino Immigrants

PART I. INSTRUCTIONS

Good morning/afternoon. My name is Jamilah Byrom, and I first want to thank you for coming to speak with me today. The purpose of the interview is to allow me to learn more about your experiences as a Latino immigrant in the process of learning the English language. I would also like to hear how you feel about your experiences with English language learning and any stress you may feel. To have a better understanding, I will be asking you a few questions that will help with our discussions. There are no right or wrong answers to my questions, so I'd like for you to relax and feel comfortable with sharing your thoughts and feelings as you respond to the questions. If I ask you anything that you do not understand, just let me know, and I will try to ask a different way. If, at any point, during the interview, you feel anxiety or stress, please tell me immediately, and we will stop the interview to take a break. I understand that reflecting on your experiences at times may be difficult, so if you begin to feel too overwhelmed to continue, we will end the interview, and there will be no consequences.

PART II. Audio Recording Permission

If it is okay with you, I would like to audio-record your interview. The purpose of tape recording is so I will be able to get all of the details of your response, while I listen to your responses carefully. All of your responses and your identity will be kept confidential, which means anyone that reads the research study information will not ever

know who you are. May I have your permission to tape-record your interview? Great, next, I would like to review what is called an informed consent form. This form outlines the expectations from me as the researcher and you as a research participant during the interviewing process.

Appendix B: The Interview

Acculturative Stress and Adult ELL Programs: From the Perspectives of First-Generation Latino Immigrants

Introduction (Researcher): Good day. Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. I appreciate the chance to learn about your experiences immigrating to the United States as an English language learner. Again, my name is Jamilah Byrom, and I will be asking you a few questions about your experiences in your native country and how life has been since your move to the United States. I will also ask for you to share your experiences with the English language learning program. I want you to speak freely and comfortably when answering questions so I can learn about your thoughts and ideas about your experiences.

If I ask any questions that you are not comfortable answering, please say, “I do not wish to respond to that question,” and we will move on. There are no consequences for deciding not to answer a question. At the end of the interview, I will assign you an identification number. This number will be used throughout the research to discuss your responses to ensure no one knows who you are.

So far, do you understand how the interview will work?

I will begin the interview by asking a few basic personal questions about you. None of the questions will ask for you to identify yourself, as your participation in this study is confidential. Are there any questions about the interview process? Do you need anything to make you comfortable before we begin? We will now begin.

Thank you.

Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. Prior to moving to the U.S., did you have any exposure to the English language?
If yes, describe your experiences with English.
2. What motivated you to participate in an English language learning program?
3. What were your desired outcomes for participating in an English language program?
4. Tell me about your experiences as an adult English language learning student.
5. Describe your feelings during the process of learning English as a second language?
6. Please describe your personal goals now that you have achieved English proficiency.
7. Have there been any barriers to achieving your goals?
8. Can you describe how you feel you fit into the United States culture?
9. Can you share any challenges you have experienced as a Latino immigrant?
10. What, if anything, are experiences you have had as an ELL student that may have been stressful.
11. Tell me about any time(s) that you have felt sad or had anxiety after migrating to the United States.
12. What recommendations do you have for ELL programs so future ELL immigrants will have less challenges?