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Development of Self-Worth Beliefs in the Context of the Acculturation Process Among U.S. Firstborn Latinos

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by

Flavia Fernicola

MSCP, Chestnut Hill College, 2016

BS, Georgina Court University, 2013

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Acculturation is a process of receptivity toward a larger group's norms while conserving

inherited values and beliefs from one's home country and ancestors. Intergenerational

conflicts often characterize the acculturation of Latinos. Firstborn generations play

unique roles in bridging the gap between their parents' home country and the host

country. The acculturation process of Latinos is associated with the development of their

self-worth. A deeper understanding of how U.S. firstborn Latinos develop self-worth

beliefs in the context of their acculturation process is needed. The purpose of this

interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) study was to gain a deeper understanding

of how U.S. firstborn Latinos develop beliefs of self-worth within the context of their

cultural identity formation. The fourfold theory of acculturation guided the study. Data

were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten U.S. firstborn generation

Latinos. Data were analyzed following IPA thematic principles. Results indicated that

support and guidance from parents and other members of the enclave played a paramount

role in participants' success and significantly contributed to their Latino identity. While

findings indicated that this process was arduous during their formative years, it proved

rewarding in adulthood. Their beliefs of self-worth were contingent upon personal

achievements such as work titles and academic degrees. The results of this study have the

potential to be used for positive social change in terms of facilitating a deeper

understanding of the complexities inherent in acculturation, promoting cultural

sensitivity, and providing valuable resources to those navigating the delicate balance

between distinct cultures.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Every immigrant undergoes acculturation, a process of cultural and psychological changes that follow intercultural exchange (Berry, 1997). Acculturation implies adjusting to norms of the host group while conserving inherited values and beliefs from the home country and descendants. Acculturation of Latinos is characterized by the relationship between family factors and cultural adaptation, including intergenerational conflicts (Bagci et al., 2019). Different stages and challenges composing the cultural process for U.S. firstborn generation and their parents can lead to ruptures of family ties which alter the family structure. Children typically have an easier time learning a new language, and direct and abrupt exposure to a new culture in school can prompt children to function as immediate culture brokers for parents (Bagci, et al., 2019). The stress of cultural and generational differences impacts family structure, and additional environmental stressors related to differences between cultures are substantial for identity formation of first-generation Latino born in the U.S.

While Latino immigrants have an overall better chance than firstborn Latino generation, of sustaining better mental health because they have embedded their home country culture and experienced new cultures with an existing foundation (Nguyen & Hale, 2017), their children do not have a concrete blueprint. Clashes due to norms and cultural values experienced at home that are different from parents' culture of origin and values and resources of mainstream culture in the U.S. make for a challenging adjustment process (Nguyen & Hale, 2017). The firstborn generation is part of a unique group divided between the U.S. and their parents' country of origin; they continually function

as the bridge between two cultures, and they perceive and are perceived from different cultural postures (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2018).

Factors aiding or hindering the acculturation process are linked to age, language proficiency, generational status, birth order, political climates, levels of host-culture adoption, and social and psychological adjustment (Ward & Kus, 2012). Acculturation's actual process and how individuals negotiate and navigate between cultures giving meaning to their cultural identity is less known (Barker, 2015). Considering that the available literature mainly focuses on immigrants, Christmas and Barker (2014) recommended further exploration of how the sons and daughters of Latino immigrants establish themselves while navigating between distinct cultures, how one culture is chosen over the other, and what experiences merge the two into one. I sought to understand how U.S. firstborn Latinos handle nuances and challenges of acculturation via constant bicultural exposure.

This chapter includes information regarding acculturation experiences among U.S. firstborn Latinos. This is followed by an explanation of Berry's fourfold acculturation model, the theoretical model supporting the study, and a review of the methodology that was selected to interpret fundamental concepts of this research. I also address the specific scope of this project along with delimitations and limitations. Finally, this study's significance is identified, both in terms of its contributions to the body of literature and unique challenges of being a U.S. firstborn generation Latino.

Background of the Problem

Latino immigrants endure experiences that can change their future generations, depending on how they acculturate. Among firstborn U.S. Mexican Americans, the more acculturation, the higher the likelihood of unhealthy behavior such as smoking, drinking, and high body mass index (Abraido-Lanza et al., 2005). Despite difficulties during the acculturation process, the life of U.S. firstborn generation Latinos shows some advantages, including a higher potential for learning new skills (Arndt & Ahkanasy, 2015). Living in between two cultures requires cognitive flexibility and intercultural sensitivity to accommodate both U.S. and Latino cultural distinctions (Christmas & Barker, 2014).

According to Silver (2015), U.S. society perceives firstborn generation Latinos, although born and raised in the United States, as newcomers. Having abundant resources available, exposure to the English language, and American culture makes a positive difference. Living in between two cultures is a complex process of coping and internalized mechanisms of defense that are essential to understand outcomes of firstborn generations living in bicultural settings and negotiating between settings (Torres & Rollock, 2009).

Although there are benefits of exposure to two distinct cultures, there are also challenges such as discrimination based on race and ongoing difficulties of being part of a minority group (Brown & Lee, 2015). Acculturation and the ongoing challenges of belonging for immigrants are additional barriers to young people trying to fit into the host society (Helsey, 2018).

According to Miller (2015), first-generation immigrants are less likely to engage in criminal activities and delinquent behavior compared to those born in the U.S. Olthof and Goossens (2008) claimed bully behavior was more likely to be associated with peer pressure and efforts that teenagers encounter while trying to belong, a double challenge for those trying to belong in two settings all the time. Trauma through acculturation passes to subsequent generations. The firstborn generation often experiences marginalization due to influences from other cultures (Tonsing, 2014). According to Berry et al. (1987), marginalized groups can find themselves not belonging into either home or host country.

The U.S. is a multicultural society where the number of immigrants is increasing in large proportions, with the largest population coming from Mexico (Bandeira et al., 2013). It is essential to understand the impact of acculturation on immigrants' perceptions of self-worth within larger society and how immigrant parents' acculturation process may impact lives of U.S. firstborn Latinos. Cultural influences from both U.S. and Latino countries leads to resilience and integration of the two cultures (Kapke et al., 2017).

Although life in enclaves has positive aspects such as healthier habits, enclaves also have lower social engagement outside their diaspora (Osypuk et al., 2009). Acculturation is an ongoing process of losses and gains, with multidimensional ramifications. Suarez-Orozco et al. (2018) discussed benefits of using an ecological approach, including extended members of an individual social circle, while working with U.S. firstborn generations, including struggles they face related to conflictual values from their parents and the host culture.

The acculturation process encompasses variables that reciprocally modifies demographic characteristics, shaping social, political, and economic lives of entire communities where immigrants are present (Britton, 2014). Smaller systems, such as enclave, a community inside of another and cogroups within the larger setting have an impact on the macrosystem. Financial recovery and success from life setbacks, such as the loss of job, being stroke by a natural disaster, account for another area of difference among immigrants. Firstborn generations in the U.S. were more likely to recover after an economic recession, due to geographic mobility that is acquired as a result of assimilation (Tran & Valdez, 2017).

There are significant barriers in immigrants' lives, such as the collectivistic nature of Latino family structure and parental enmeshment with their children, preventing individual growth in the newer generations' lives. Generational gaps and conflicts are common among U.S. firstborn generation Latinos (Dennis et al., 2010). It is a challenge for Latino parents overcoming barriers and acquiring strengths to raise children in the U.S. Challenges include limited informal support systems, racism, cultural shock, and financial difficulties (Perreira et al., 2006). Compared to firstborn generations of Asian Americans in the U.S., Latinos have more difficulties with occupational education and mobility (Nguyen & Hale, 2017). In general, parental involvement in school settings is an efficient barometer for later contribution in society, and parental engagement is a predictor of students' performance (Plunkett et al., 2009). Among Latino students, mothers' involvement in their children's school leads to positive academic performance (Plunkett et al., 2009).

Transmission of past trauma affects present struggles of generations who lead their lives with social-historical traumas their parents and grandparents passed down (Bako & Zana, 2018). Maintaining original family structure is a key component of identity formation (Lev-Wiesel, 2007).

U.S. firstborn generation Latinos scored significantly higher in terms of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) compared to nonimmigrant children (Loria & Caughy, 2018). According to ACEs, the act of removing children from their family of origin is a significantly stressful event (Menzies, 2007). Consideration should be given to the potential negative impact on small children when separated from their parents for just a day, as they enter an unknown environment when going to school. Exposure to trauma and removal from a known environment can impact generations yet to come, and both have a long-term effect on mental health conditions. Acculturational trauma can manifest and extend to future generations, and immigration-related trauma creates a unique subset of mental health concerns for Latino immigrants in North America (Phipps & Degges, 2014).

While not the case for firstborn individuals in the U.S., legal status may be a challenge for their families (Meca et al., 2017). Self-critical perfectionism, acculturative stress, and depression are standard among international students during the acculturation process (Rice et al., 2012). Acculturation is particularly difficult for teenagers, and strong ties to their home countries may exacerbate ongoing struggles during the acculturation process (Valdivia et al., 2016). Acculturative stress, maladaptive perfectionism expectations, and time residing in the U.S. positively correlate with depression and can

exacerbate the acculturation process (Wei et al., 2007). Having realistic expectations may be a strength during the overall process of acculturation, decreasing depression. Acculturative stress is associated with psychological distress and social constraints influenced by cultural values from home countries (Wong et al., 2017). Social constraints function as a deterrent for an individual current adjustment and cultural identity (Wong et al., 2017). Adjustment goes beyond moving from one place to another and is a process complicated by race-based stressors and pressure to adapt to another culture involving self-concept and interpersonal struggles (Zhen-Duan et al., 2018).

Problem Statement

Acculturation is an adjustment process individuals endure when migrating from one place to another, often a different country, although it also occurs from state to state, city to city, and rural to metropolitan areas. Berry (2003) described acculturation as an ongoing exchange of cultural, social, and psychological values. Acculturation is a stressful adjustment that involves distress and pressure to adapt to new cultural norms and values (Zhen-Duan et al., 2018).

Firstborn generation Latinos often function as a bridge between their parents' culture from home and American culture, customs, and values (Bagci et al., 2019; Rodriguez-Keyes & Piepenbring, 2017). The acculturation process causes a change in family structures. Children adjust to new cultures rapidly, learning a new language when directly exposed to American culture in school, and may serve as cultural brokers for their parents (Bagci, et al., 2019). This can interfere with parental roles, generating stress

for developing children while growing up in between two cultures and developing their cultural identity.

Firstborn generation Latinos are more likely to struggle with mental illness than Latino immigrants (Nguyen & Hale, 2017). Cultural shock in the U.S. creates additional challenges in terms of adjustment (Nguyen & Hale, 2017). Acculturation impacts lives beyond immigrants, highlighting the importance of investigating how children of immigrants establish themselves, navigate between and prioritize cultures, and their reasons for doing so (Christmas & Barker, 2014). The acculturation process of Latinos is positively associated with development of their self-worth (Kapke et al., 2017). According to Kapke et al. (2017), acculturation risk factors such as acculturation stress, acculturation conflict, and perceived ethnic discrimination have negative relationships with global self-worth. Kapke et al. (2017) found that the bicultural orientation was a strong predictor of positive global self-worth. More research is needed to explore U.S. firstborn Latinos' development of self-worth beliefs in the context of their acculturation process.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how U.S. firstborn generation Latinos experienced growing up between two cultures and developed self-worth beliefs in the context of their acculturation process. I aimed to explore how firstborn Latinos negotiated, organized, and moved between cultures, and gave meaning to their cultural identity, as well as how they related this acculturation process to development of their self-worth beliefs. I explored how U.S. firstborn generation Latinos

addressed nuances and challenges of growing up between two cultures, as well as how they related these challenges to development of their self-worth beliefs.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do U.S. firstborn Latinos describe their acculturation process and give meaning to their cultural identity?

RQ2: How do U.S. firstborn Latinos describe the development of their self-worth beliefs in the context of their acculturation process?

Theoretical Framework

I used the fourfold theory of acculturation. Berry (1997) defined acculturation as the process of an immigrant minority group adjusting to the psychology of the host group, which is dominant in terms of numbers and power. The four types of acculturation styles are assimilation, delayed acculturation, reactive acculturation, and creative acculturation. They each represent a gradient of adjustment. Creative acculturation, or biculturalism, is the type of acculturation that involves adopting aspects of both original and host cultures. This type of acculturation also leads to more positive outcomes than assimilation, separation, and marginalization.

The fourfold acculturation theory was suitable for this study to understand the acculturation process U.S. firstborn-generation Latinos experienced and how they integrated family and host culture values. The four types of acculturation (integration, assimilation, separation, or marginalization) guided coding. Berry's theory of acculturation also helped guide interviews.

Nature of the Study

Interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) was the research design for this study. It involves exploring lived experiences of participants (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). A qualitative design was used to investigate the experiences of U.S. firstborn-generation Latinos in-depth. There is limited literature regarding challenges of those living in between two cultures. This approach facilitated the opportunity for participants to freely express their experiences growing up, informing the process of learning and adjusting to two different environments simultaneously while developing their sense of self-worth via semi-structured interview.

I focused on personal experiences of firstborn Latinos growing up between two cultures, acculturation in their lives, cultural identity, and perceptions of self-worth. Tonsing (2014) indicated firstborn generations encounter perceived discrimination, which negatively impacts access to jobs, housing, and education. Hence, there is a need for diverse communities to comprehend how U.S. firstborn generation Latinos, a group that will soon represent 30% of the U.S. population (Britton, 2014), integrating influences of family of origin, cultural values, and mainstream values. Moreover, low self-worth is a risk factor contributing to mental health pathologies among Latino communities (Guzman-Rocha, 2017). Understanding this can guide providers in terms of how to better serve these communities and also inform new immigrants on consequences of immigration to the U.S.

The research was advertised at two local organizations in New York City. For this first recruitment method, flyers were posted in those two organizations and a few

participants were identified from those outreaches. The remaining participants were selected using snowballing technique. I interviewed 10 participants who met the study's inclusion criteria and agreed to participate upon reviewing the informed consent form and study description documents. Interviews were semi-structured, lasted about one hour, and were recorded and transcribed after data collection. Participants were assigned an individual number other than using their names in order to protect their identity and comply with confidentiality rules. Multiple steps took place to assure trustworthiness, including reflective journaling, and a detailed description of data collection.

Definitions of Terms

Acculturation: A complex process which involves impacts on a person's physical, social, and psychological wellbeing during adaptation from their home culture to another culture (Berry, 1980).

Acculturative Stress: Physical and psychological factors which cause body and mind tension via environmental, emotional, financial, and social stress, often due to expectations from self or others because of the acculturative process (Berry et al., 1987).

Assimilation: Adhering to another culture and disconnecting from a previous set of values from a culture of origin; individuals divorce themselves from home cultures to interact with host cultures, (Berry, 1997).

Cultural Identity: is a component to which an individual identifies themselves, reflecting a sense of belonging to a specific cultural group (Zhen-Duan & Saez Santiago, 2018).

Firstborn Generation Latino: An individual born in the U.S. from parents born in South and Central America, or a descendant of Latino parents.

Hispanic: The U.S. Census Bureau uses the term to designate people of Spanish origin by their own will. Additionally, it refers to internalized colonization between groups, illustrating political and ancestral superiority of Europeans over indigenous groups (Comas-Diaz, 2001).

Hispano(a): Individuals who trace their history to the Spanish conquistadores and settlers who arrived in 1494 and occupied and dominated what is today Mexico, California, Texas, Florida, New Mexico, and Arizona from the 1600s to the 1800s (Comas-Dias, 2001). It includes those from Spanish-speaking countries, particularly individuals from or descendants of Latin America.

Immigrant: Individual who emigrates from one place and establishes residence in another land or country (McBrien, 2017).

Latinos: People originating from or having a heritage related to Latin America. Many prefer Latino over the term Hispanic because it excludes Europeans such as Spaniards from being identified as ethnic minorities in the U.S. It also includes Brazilians who do not qualify as Hispanics because their native language is Portuguese (Comas-Dias, 2001).

Marginalization: Rejecting both receiving and origin cultures and experiencing a feeling of not belonging to either culture (Berry, 1987).

Racial discrimination: Extension of racist thoughts or feelings based on skin color, cultural heritage, or nationality (Healey, 2014).

Resilience: The ability one has to present with a positive attitude in the face of adversities and overcome obstacles as well as persevering in terms of personal growth (Sisto et al., 2019).

Separation: In contrast to assimilation, individuals deny values from the host culture and remain loyal to their heritage culture, and ultimately separate from the host group (Berry, 1997).

Assumptions

I assumed participants provided honest information about their experiences as firstborn generation Latinos growing up in the U.S. I assumed that participants would not have a difficult time remembering or being honest during interviews. I confirmed that parents were fully acculturated in their home country and promoted a general Latin American culture within their households in the U.S., while participants were integrating into mainstream American culture. I assumed that information reflected the clear testimony of participants at the time of the interview.

Scope and Delimitations

This study involved emphasizing unique experiences involving growing up between two cultures for U.S. firstborn generations of Latinos in New York City. Latinos are the largest minority group in the U.S. (Capielo Rosario & Dillon, 2019). Specifically, I focused on firstborn generation Latinos who had two immigrant parents who both came to the U.S. after adolescence. Considering the wide diversity of Latino communities, transferring results to other Latinos located in different geographical areas within the

United States is limited to the differences between the city environment versus suburban and rural areas.

Limitations

Some limitations existed with this research. The impact of current stressors has the potential to alter participants' state of mind, influencing a more positive or negative view of life in the United States and perceptions of the acculturation process. These changes can significantly shape an individual's entire perspective on their identity as bicultural individuals, leading them to lean more towards American or Latinos identities, as well as their sense of self-worth. Finally, bias could have limited the study due to its qualitative nature, and possible influence from how questions were presented. Recommended measures such as self-reflection and close supervision were successfully applied in order to address the impact of bias.

Another limitation was that the sample did not represent all Latino communities. Furthermore, my position as the mother of a U.S. firstborn generation Latino and passion for improving immigrant children's lives could have negatively impacted clarity and transparency in the study due to my bias. Strategies to address research bias are addressed in Chapter 3, along with ongoing personal reflections.

Significance

The Latino community in the U.S., particularly New York City, is growing exponentially. While studies explored how first-generation immigrants experienced acculturation, there is minimal research on the impact that acculturation has on U.S. firstborn generation individuals. The result of this study includes insights for educational

and health providers regarding how acculturative styles and the acculturation process impact U.S. firstborn generation Latinos. Adding information to the existing body of literature on acculturation and self-worth also enhances educational and health providers' cultural sensitivity to optimize quality of life for U.S. firstborn generation Latinos. This population and their families will be better equipped to deal with challenges that may arise while navigating between two distinct cultures. Parents considering immigrating will have access to information regarding the acculturation process and the construct of their children's self-worth beliefs.

Summary

This chapter includes a background of U.S. firstborn generation Latinos and how they conduct their lives and develop their cultural identities and sense of self-worth. I outlined the theoretical framework and methodology for this study. The purpose, research questions, and limitations are also addressed in the chapter. This was followed by information about the significance of the study. Chapter 2 includes information about current literature concerning backgrounds of firstborn generation Latinos.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

With more than 190 million people worldwide living outside their country of birth (Baker, 2015), matters of immigration are of large proportion and of international needs. The Latino community is the largest minority community in the U.S. In New York City, the total population according to the 2020 census was 8.7 million people, and 14.4% of the population are Spanish-speaking individuals. It is estimated that by 2037, the Latino community will represent 40% of the U.S. total population (Kapke et al., 2017).

Immigrants go through a process of redefining themselves and their lives after the immigration process. Literature on U.S. firstborn generation Latinos is limited, and a commonly used term to define the population is second-generation immigrant, which can be confusing for those who were born and raised in the United States and may not even know their parents' home country. Referring to the U.S. firstborn generation as immigrant is categorically incorrect; by definition, an immigrant is one who immigrates.

In this chapter, the literature search strategy that was used to examine existing literature is presented. After explaining the strategy to complete an exhaustive literature review, the conceptual framework is discussed to promote inclusion of various concepts of interest in the study. I provide a general overview of the following topics: living between two cultures, acculturative stress, life in enclaves for immigrants and macrosystem, family structure and parental involvement and transference of values, habits, and traumatic experiences. Finally, the chapter concludes by highlighting the gap in literature and affirming the need for this research.

Literature Search Strategy

I used a search of different sources and topics to yield an inclusive and thorough

literature review for this topic. Keywords were: *Latinos/and or Hispanics*, *firstborn U.S.*

generation, *immigrants*, *acculturation*, *trauma or intergenerational trauma*, *Latino*

enclaves or Latino neighborhood, *integration or assimilation*, *separation*,

marginalization, *discrimination*, *resilience*, *stress or acculturative stress*, and *second-*

generation immigrants. I used the following databases for this study: PsycINFO,

PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, Thoreau, EBSCOhost, SAGE Journals, ProQuest,

ScienceDirect and Google Scholar.

Theoretical Framework

This study was designed using the fourfold theory of acculturation. As a

consequence of immigration, many societies become culturally plural, where individuals

of many cultural backgrounds come to live together in diverse cultures (Berry, 1997).

According to Berry (1997), acculturation is the process of an immigrant minority group

adjusting to the psychology of a larger group that is dominant in terms of numbers and

power.

The fourfold theory of acculturation includes four types: assimilation, delayed

acculturation, reactive acculturation, and creative acculturation. They represent a

continuum of adjustment that is also known as biculturalism. Type of acculturation

involves adopting aspects of both original and host cultures. Assimilation is when the

individual rejects their culture of origin, adopting customs and values of the host culture

(Berry, 1997). Separation is defined by the individual holding firmly to the home country

culture and full rejection of the host culture, avoiding involvement in new values and traditions (Berry, 1997).

Maintaining one's home culture while cultivating daily interactions and immersion with other groups is integration. A degree of cultural integrity is maintained but not at the expense of learning new habits and adopting values (Berry, 1997). Marginalization is characterized by lack of belonging to both host and home cultures. The individual shows little interest in maintaining home country cultural values, cultivating friendships, or making make new friends in the host culture.

The fourfold theory is suitable for this study to understand the impact of the acculturation process on U.S. firstborn generation Latinos, how they make meaning of their lives in the U.S., and how they describe self-worth beliefs in the context of acculturation. Psychological acculturation and adaptation are employed to refer to psychological changes and eventual outcomes that occur as a result of individuals experiencing acculturation.

Literature Review

Living Between Two Cultures

In the context of organized communities, the discussion of functional transitions between two cultures highlights duality as a central characteristic, particularly in smaller communities emerging into a host society (Arndt & Ashkanasy, 2015). Abraido-Lanza et al., (2005) explored healthy behavior and acculturation levels and hypothesized that Latinos would have more favorable health behaviors and less risk factor profiles than Caucasians. Also unhealth behaviors and risk factors become more unfavorable with

greater acculturation (Abraido-Lanza et al., 2005). Higher acculturation was correlated with unhealthy behaviors such as alcohol intake, smoking, and obesity regardless of improvements in terms of practicing physical exercise.

Christmas and Barker (2014), using the term first- and second-generation Latino immigrants, investigated the affirmation that intercultural communication aptitude develops as a result of the intercultural adjustment. A sample of 216 participants (103 men and 113 women) first-generation immigrants and firstborn Latinos in the U.S. generation was used to measure how acculturation strategies guides adjustment. Most of the participants (n = 146) identified Mexico as their or their parents' country of origin. Other countries represented included: El Salvador (n = 14), Colombia (n = 10), Puerto Rico (n = 7), Peru (n = 7), Cuba (n = 6), Guatemala (n = 5), Honduras (n = 5), Brazil (n = 5), Argentina (n = 3), Venezuela (n = 3), The Dominican Republic (n = 2), Uruguay (n = 1), Bolivia (n = 1), and Costa Rica (n = 1).

The participants responded to a survey with 24-items designed to assess intercultural sensitivity, a 12-item assessing cognitive flexibility, and a 20-item Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (Zea et al., 2003).

The results indicate that first-generation immigrants have a higher level of intercultural sensitivity, higher cognitive flexibility and also scored higher compared to firstborn generations (second generation immigrants) on biculturalism (Christmas & Barker, 2014), indicating a substantial disadvantage for the U.S. firstborn generation. Moreover, the authors recognize the lack of agreement on terminology in regard to who is first or second based upon their age of immigration (Christmas & Barker, 2014).

However, according to the definition, an immigrant is one that emigrates from one geographical area to another, implicating that it is grammatically incorrect to use the term immigrant to an individual born in the country. Defining cultural identity is more than splitting individuals into categories, contingent upon race, and it is detrimental to ignore the philosophical traits that derive a race.

Mize (2013) proposed a reconceptualization of theories explaining race, culture, class, and the experience of Latinos as racialized groups. While the concept of race in Latin American culture has been rooted in the notion of cultural hybridity or racial mestizaje of Europeans, Africans, and indigenous people, in the United States, the history is intensely tied to the institution of chattel, and precise separation of power, a free man or not, based on the culture of "one-drop" to separate black from white (Mize, 2013). While it should be easy for the group composed of Latin Americans to blend and quickly adopt an integration model and instead of living in between two cultures, Barker (2005) discussed the importance played by host culture and its meaning during this process. The cultural rejection of the host group has a substantial impact on the Latino group, a vulnerable population already conditioned from past generations to the lower value of the hybrid culture.

Silver (2015) examined how race and ethnicity leverage the formal and informal support available to firstborn Latino students in a new setting. According to Silver (2015) the impact of the support system for Latino students also makes a high point on the perception of hybrid society as inaccurate, considering that Latino students are seen as newcomers. The controversial aspect also bridges the value of co-ethnic communities,

claiming that it may promote upward mobility and function as a barrier between the host culture. The stereotype faced by firstborn Latino students while attending school is of illegal and potential criminals, characterizing, and leading to discrimination and isolation (Silver, 2015). The longitudinal study completed in Aleen Creek, North Carolina informed the experiences regarding discrimination and isolation of about 800 students, 41% Latino, 34% Caucasian, and 25% black, to a disproportionate rate of teachers, of 7 African Americans, 49 Caucasians, and 1 Latino, for starters (Silver, 2015). Different forms of racism and detrimental behavior exist beyond the student's interactions and diverse school environments. The multicultural interaction noted was natural, but Caucasian students identified Latinos peers as "workers of the chicken plant," and Caucasian parents did not support their friendship.

On the positive side, Allen Creek, NC was more inclusive than many other settings that many of students were once a part of strengthening their identity and promoting biculturalism. Furthermore, Allen Creek High school in partnership with a local University, created the Latino Achievement Club (LAC), affording Latinos not only a place to belong but pass on the message that being Latino equates to more than laborer force or part of the "chicken plant" (Silver, 2015). The proactive and inclusive approach of Allen Creek High affords the positive community incorporation of resources, upward mobility, and a healthier environment for the community in general (Silver, 2015).

Although it is recognizable and praised that biculturalism or the integration of cultural values stands out positively in the life of immigrants and their families, it is a process easier written than practiced. Torres and Rollock (2009) investigated how Latino

immigrants navigate two different cultural contexts, identifying it as a strength particularly for Latino youth. Although the integration of immigrants into the host culture is beneficial to all groups, according to Berry (2003), compromising between cultures and fostering within the environment is less likely to occur. The findings in Torres and Rollock (2009) indicated that biculturalism is related to the psychological wellbeing of Latinos from Mexicans, Mexican Americans, South Americas (4%), and Puerto Ricans (2%) in a small midwestern city. The benefits of biculturalism include increasing one's ability to handle environmental adversities, as it provides a broader portfolio of value systems and a more flexible cognitive process (Torres & Rollock, 2009).

The complex process of coping and internalized mechanism is essential to understand the outcome of a successful negotiation for immigrants living in between two cultures. The findings support the concept of preserving properties of the traditional Latino culture in integration within the new culture, along with the implementation of an active coping skill is a protective mechanism for higher self-esteem and an essential component of psychological wellbeing (Torres & Rollock, 2009).

Furthermore, in the context of the value of integration, Suarez-Orozco et al. (2018) proposed a treatment model for the adaptation of immigrant-origin children, who have at least one foreign-born parent. This model recognizes the additional challenges faced by this population, emphasizes the importance of an ecological approach in addressing their struggles with the two cultures, and acknowledges the inherent ecological stressors present in communities represented by minority groups.

The impact of perceived discrimination can affect individuals from their psychological wellbeing through their academic performance; it has the conceivable strength to pass along discrimination to future generations (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2018). According to Suarez-Orozco et al. (2018), children as young as seven years of age hold biases about immigrants and voice their opinion about incarceration. Moreover, studies support the harmful implication of negative stereotypes on youth and their developmental advance, the lack thereof, challenges building relationships, and ultimately the implications of a sense of belonging that all humans thrive in attempting to achieve, a general sense of being a part of a group.

The endless contextual barriers to the successful adaptation of immigrant-origin children are better conceptualized through the lenses that recognize the impact of perceived discrimination and the negative impact of psychological distress endured during the adjustment phase (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2018). Helsel (2018) discussed different methods that children of immigrant's cope with the challenges of immigrants and how acculturation indicates an additional barrier to desperate young people trying to fit in the middle of society.

Acculturative Stress

Negative Impact

Meca et al. (2017) investigated the impact of acculturation for Latino immigrants lacking legal status. Provocative exploration includes an emphasis on the possible negative impact of biculturalism, considering the pressure on the individual to conform with expectations from the new culture and still maintain old values (Meca et al., 2017),

granted that at times there are values that may not co-occur alongside. Accounting for the challenges involving biculturalism, it is contingency into multiple factors such as family values, generational time, and political temperature are a few variables (Meca et al., 2017). The results reveal that 33% of the Latino immigrant in Houston and 42% of Arkansas of the undocumented Latino immigrant, supporting the validity of Berry's fourfold model of acculturation (Meca et al., 2017). Although with criticism, mainly referring to the marginalized approach, the validation of the model is supported that according to these results, one-third of the sample identifies themselves not belonging to either group. Although several variables could account for these negative feelings, specifically related to the lack of legal status, the stressors are all related to the challenges of being an immigrant, having left their home country, and perhaps not being able to return for different reasons.

Meca et al. (2017) consider the possibility of immigrants being discriminated against in their community, with higher status, the length of time in the United States, and the impact of this time on their overall health may also contribute to their identification with the marginalized group. The stress of acculturation, however, adopts many forms, and it does not seem to prioritize a group of immigrants over the other, it appears that the main differences lay on the stress, however resulting in one form of acculturation or the other. Rice et al. (2012) studied the association between self-critical perfectionism, acculturative stress, and depression among international students, identifying that acculturative stress and depression were greater among international students compared to national students. The students coming from collectivistic societies were more inclined

to perceive their failure as their family's and not just their own (Rice et al., 2012). Another source of stress for immigrant students was claimed to be their challenges with the language, even though speaking English, their accent, and is immediately perceived as different was a source of stress (Rice et al., 2012). The pressure to perform well and the challenges to adjust increase at large the likelihood of accomplishing both, academic performance and cultural acceptance and belonging. It helps illustrate the ongoing and multiple battles that an immigrant goes daily and how, at times, the immigrant needs to accomplish tasks that compete with one another and are equally important.

An exploration of unrealistic expectations and performance as well as maladaptive perfectionism informs us of how detrimental it can be to students. While trying to perform and belong at the same time, this can possibly be linked to depression (Wei et al., 2007). Furthermore, it was supported that maladaptive perfectionism intensifies the relationship between acculturative stress and depression. Maladaptive perfectionism has the most substantial influence, exacerbating the impact of acculturative stress on depression (Wei et al., 2007). Inversely, realistic expectations may strengthen the overall process reducing the effect of acculturative stress on depression. While this particular stressor may be unique to the first immigrant generation, and not the U.S. firstborn generation, it is an informant of the firstborn generation's expectations based upon the only information available to the first generation of immigrants. The findings begin to draw a draft on the complexity involving the lives of firstborn U.S. generation Latinos.

Wong et al (2017) investigated a group of firstborn or second-generation immigrants' Latinos and Asians in Texas, exploring how acculturative stress and social constraints were associated with higher levels of psychological distress. Wong et al (2017) recruited a sample of 306 college students to assess for their levels of acculturative stress, social constraints, psychological distress, and general stress.

The results indicated that there are negative consequences of acculturative stress among immigrants of racial and ethnic minorities (Wong et al., 2017). The impact of social constraints was somewhat ambiguous considering the limited amount of research, although the stress-buffering hypothesis indicates that perception of social support is beneficial for those facing stress (Wong et al., 2017). Also, the findings indicate that Latinos are expressive individuals. The role of social constraints was found to moderate the association between acculturative stress and psychological distress among Asians but not for Latinos.

The authors discussed several limitations of study including a combined result for both, Asian and Latinos, the large majority of the sample being females, the education of participants and the findings potential challenges with generalizing the results. The limited finding regarding social constraints and their impact or the lack thereof were also a combination of both, first generation immigrants and second generation (U.S. firstborn individuals). Implicating on an additional call to investigate further how firstborn U.S. Latinos experience their lives in the country, the development of their cultural identity and the implications it has on their own value and the place in society. While being part of both, home culture and the mainstream culture is a facilitator on adjustment, there are

lower participation of Latinos in sports and organized activities compared to non-Latino peers (Guzman-Rocha, 2017).

Protective Factors

Valdivia et al., (2016) investigated a total of 682 students, 226 were immigrants, and firstborn generation in Spain for their adaptability and identification with two cultures. The participants' background included Ecuador, Colombia, Honduras, Cuba, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Pakistan, India, China, Senegal, Gambia, Morocco, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Portugal, Romania, Ukraine, Poland, and Georgia. Considering that immigrants do not acculture similarly and not within all domains of life, younger children are known to assimilate better traits of the host culture (Valdivia et al., 2016).

The authors asked the participants to identified where their first- and second-best friends where from [first best or second-best friend], which used the Vancouver Index of Acculturation and measured cultural identification, quality, and strength of friendship (Valdivia et al., 2016). The results indicated that 45% of their friendships were among individuals belonging to the same ethical groups, and there were no significant differences in friendship quality, either ethically the same or cross culturally (Valdivia et al, 2016). Participants who identified with their culture of origin primarily tended to have the closest friendships. The individuals who identified with an integrated style of acculturation were less likely to have strong ties friends compared to individuals who were able to embed both cultures, the Latino and American culture.

The group of participants within the marginalized and assimilated category of acculturation presented with significantly lower scores on close friendships than integrated or segregated groups (Valdivia et al., 2016).

Zhen-Duan et al (2018) examined the association between ethnic identity, cultural stress, and self-concept among adolescents in Puerto Rico. The cross-sectional study explored ethnic identity and psychological constructs that extended beyond the simple act of moving from one place to another. The sample of 187 adolescents, all from low-income areas attending public schools in PR responded to questionnaires measuring their self-concept, ethnic identity and cultural stress. The study also examined the negative association between self-concept and cultural stress, as well as whether the influence of adolescents' ethnic identity on their self-concept is moderated by their level of cultural stress (Zhen-Duan et al., 2018).

The authors hypothesized that ethnic identity is positively correlated with self-concept and a moderator for the individuals' degree of cultural stress (Zhen-Duan et al., 2018). The study's findings emphasize the importance of establishing a strong foundation, highlighting cultural stress a crucial variable in the self-concept of both males and females experiencing high cultural stress. Boys scored significantly higher than girls on cultural stress which was negatively associate with self-concept. A feeling of inferiority was noted among males and hypothesized that connection from colonial mentality and shame for being Puerto Ricans, indicating a poor self-concept (Zhen-Duan et al., 2018). Additionally, the exploration and resolution of ethnic identity were positively associated with higher ratings of self-concept (Zhen-Duan et al., 2018).

Discrimination Factors

Bagci et al., (2019) observed the impact of preparation for bias among two groups, one with 64 European immigrants in the U.K. and 67 Turkish-Kurdish in Turkey with imagined exposure to discrimination. The study explored the impact of imagined contact effects on minority group members' acculturation strategies, perceived discrimination, feelings of belongingness, and social acceptance. The participants benefit from, and instead of direct contact strategies that require contact between group members face to face replaced by indirect contact strategies that do not need the exposure, the situations were virtually created (Bagci et al., 2019). The foundation is based mainly on the underlying need for social acceptance and belongingness.

The background research shows that individuals within the ethnic minority group often feel isolated and rejected by peers from the host culture. While direct contact can improve feelings of belongingness of ethnic minorities, the fear of rejection prevents primary exposure, indicating that imagined contact facilitates intercultural communication and the integration of students in academic exchange programs (Bagci et a., 2019).

The participants were separated into study groups, assigned one group to imagine that they were having a pleasant and exciting contact with the majority group throughout a hiking trip, and a control group. They were given two minutes to write about their experiences. A Likert scale was used to measure acculturation, perceived discrimination, belongingness, social acceptance, and manipulation checks, and covariates do not assure the level of engagement and difficulties of imagery exercise. The second and third study

groups were composed of Kurds immigrants, a group that had experienced discrimination for several years in Turkey's history.

The results showed that, the perception of social acceptance was considerably lower for the second and third groups, while imagined contact led to a significant decrease in perceived discrimination for a study group. The measure for perceived discrimination was particularly high for groups two and three, particularly for group two, where ingroup identification was higher than others. Also, to support the benefit of imagery exposure, the findings call out attention to the need to design a specific approach to work with immigrants within the extremes of ingroup identification in order to remediate perceive discrimination.

Consistent and supportive of several factors on the importance of understanding discrimination's impact is how it can be transmitted even unconsciously to others. Brown and Lee (2015) completed a study with 261 elementary school-aged children, 196 were first-generation immigrant and U.S. firstborn Latinos, and 65 nonimmigrant children answered how they experienced immigrants. The authors explored children's understanding of immigration issues.

While adults openly voice their opinion about their beliefs on the impact of immigrants on the economy, employment, or crime rate; unlike children who behave in ways that impact societal and family dynamics in the community by rejecting others. The children were provided with a developmentally appropriate explanation of immigration. They were asked to answer within a Likert scale from not at all true to very accurate in a variety of levels of agreement and disagreement to questions that inform their attitudes

toward immigration, attributions for anti-immigration attitudes. "Some American people are upset when people move to America from other countries," where some nonimmigrant children resume their answers to yes or no, and immigrant children resourced to the Likert scale. The open-ended questions "Do you think people *should* be allowed to move here from other countries? Why or why not?" The closed questions, "Should people be allowed to move here even if it is against the law?" They responded "yes" or "no." Approximately 97% of children were in agreement that people should be able to relocate to the U.S.

The results indicated that children believe that moving to wherever one desires is a "human right," "because it is not fair if they did not." The reported understanding of nonimmigrant children was that immigration revolves around the pursuit of American freedoms, the dream, and explicit reflection of the American Declaration of Independence. Immigrant children presented more concrete ideas of the material benefits offered in the United States, a nation that saw a desirable and prosperous place that afforded them a better life. Moreover, the immigrant children's understanding of immigration was directed to family values and primacy of reunification as once separated in the name of their parent's departure seeking a more comfortable life for their children.

On the bright side, anti-immigrant views were not perceived mainly among children, who did not report negative views on their friends from other countries. The findings indicate that children understand ethnic and cultural discrimination, which accounts for anti-immigrant attitudes. The racial discrimination of immigrants, on the other hand, is a learned behavior for smaller children (Brown & Lee, 2015) and for adults

an arrogance driven by misinformation and interpersonal fear (Linares, 2008) that negatively impact society due to its high association with forms of psychological distress such as depression (Tonsing, 2014).

Capielo Rosario and Dillon (2019) presented findings that implicate the complexity underlying discrimination in deeper dimensions and unrepairable psychological harm to immigrants, their families and future generations. The ultimate result of discrimination is the unprecedented feeling not belonging in society. The authors examined how acculturation-acculturative stress and depressive symptoms were related among 367 Puerto Ricans living in the U.S.

Although Puerto Rico was incorporated to the U.S. in 1898, the American Citizenship status does not faze the pride and Latino cultural value of immigrants from Puerto Rico. Puerto Ricans reported feelings strange in American (Capielo Rosario & Dillon, 2019). Using Berry's (1997) fourfold acculturation theory of acculturation, the authors explored groups of Puerto Rican participants who identified with similar patterns of scores on bidimensional behavioral and acculturation, bidimensional ethnic identity acculturation, and acculturative stress.

The study measured the group's bidimensional behavioral acculturation with the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (ARSMA-II), a bi-dimensional 30-item summated rating measure. The ARSMA-II assesses Latinos behavioral orientation (LOS) and Anglo behavioral orientation (AOS). The test uses a Likert-type scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely often or almost always), 16 items help generate the LOS score (LOS; "I write in Spanish"), and 14 items were used to create the AOS score (e.g., "My

friends now are of Anglo origin") (Capielo Rosario & Dillon, 2019). Six items on the LOS were modified to include the terms "Puerto Rico" and "Puerto Rican" instead of "Mexico" and "Mexican."

Bi-dimensional ethnic identity was measured with the Ethnic Identity Scale and used to assess bi-dimensional ethnic identity orientation, a 17-item scale that assesses three domains of ethnic identity: exploration (7 items, "I have participated in activities that have exposed me to my ethnicity"), affirmation (6 items, "I dislike my ethnicity") and resolution (4 items, "I understand how I feel about my ethnicity"). Each item on the EIS is scored using a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Does not describe me at all) to 4 (Describes me very well) (Capielo Rosario & Dillon, 2019).

Acculturative stress was measured using the Levels of acculturative stress, informing the Social, Attitudinal, Familial, and Environmental Acculturative Stress (SAFE). The SAFE scale consists of 24 items that access acculturative stress in social, attitudinal, familial, and environmental contexts of acculturating individuals (Capielo Rosario & Dillon, 2019). Example items include "I don't feel at home" and "It bothers me when people pressure me to become part of the main culture." Each item is rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (not stressful) to 5 (extremely stressful). To measure depression, the Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D), a test with a 20-item scale that looks at affective, somatic, and interpersonal circumstances related to depression symptoms (Capielo Rosario & Dillon, 2019).

Berry's (1997) fourfold acculturation model, and four strategies reflect the interplay between acculturation and enculturation: assimilation (adherence to the host

culture and disconnection from the heritage culture), separation (disconnection from the host culture and retention of heritage culture), biculturalism (adherence to both cultures), and marginalization (disconnection from both cultures). The advantages and disadvantages of each acculturation style are that biculturalism may be linked to the least amount of acculturative stress and marginalization the highest and highest stress connected to depressive symptoms (Capielo Rosario & Dillon, 2019).

The results indicate that the highest level of depressive symptoms was among those individuals identified as partial marginalization, having a moderate exploration of American culture, the partial separation was found with low stress and full biculturalism moderate stress. The results also indicated an important factor among the group with the absence of assimilation profile despite the long-term residing in the United States, reinforcing the feeling of not belonging in the U.S. or in Puerto Rico. A pioneer on the use of person-centered, rather than variable-centered Capielo Rosario and Dillon (2019) informed the Latino group's unique acculturation-acculturative stress relation with depressive symptoms.

On the importance of belonging and the efforts of social being place since an early age are the findings of Olthof and Goossens (2008) from a study with 194 boys and 184 girls who were in 15 different classes from six different elementary schools, ages 10 through 13. The authors explored the troubles they went through in order to belong to any group. A worldwide concern, the bully behavior in schools and verse settings showed its roots in basic principles of the human race, the desire to belong, and fear of rejection. The need to belong and fear of rejection can trigger an extensive range of interpersonal

behavior, one of them being anti-social, even though it is more likely to alienate individuals (Olthof & Goossens, 2008).

The authors used peer reports to inform how important the children considered it to be like that person and their responses to learn when some peers rejected them. The findings indicated that boys' and girls' essential reason for their anti-social behaviors was the desire to belong, boys to boys' group, and girls less likely to girls' group, but still their desire to be accepted by the anti-social boys (Olthof & Goossens, 2008). While bullying is not necessarily a successful strategy, it speaks to their desperation and lack of emotional resources, indicating additional variables contributing Latinos in the legal system (Miller, 2015). One resorts to avoid rejection, attempting to belong to a group, any group, contributing to the understanding of those who automatically engage society as the other group.

Tonsing (2014), using Berry's acculturation model, examined the acculturation and adaptation experiences among 404 first and second-generation (firstborn Hong Kong) and the difference between the two groups. The authors used the 32-item Stephenson Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (SMAS), to assess the two acculturation attitudes, the Ethnic Society Immersion (ESI; 17 items), assessed attitudes towards the heritage culture, and the Dominant Society Immersion (DSI) measured attitudes towards the host culture (Tonsing, 2014). The designed study offered a comparison between the two groups, firstborn and immigrants, showing essential differences between the groups, such as age, ability to speak the host language, and friendship among the host culture.

Firstborn generation presented higher levels of psychological distress, social,

cultural adaptation was perceived easier, same perceived discrimination for both groups, and more in alignment with the assimilation model of acculturation.

Perceived discrimination was directly related to the firstborn generation's lower self-esteem, higher levels of psychological distress, and social adaptation difficulties for both groups. The firstborn generation, who was more likely to assimilate to the host culture, compared to members from the group that identifies as marginalized, could be explained as acquainting the influence of another outside culture.

Lastly, it is essential to recognize that perceived discrimination correlates with higher levels of psychological distress, reports of lower self-esteem, and more challenging life for both groups. Adherence to heritage culture was associate with higher self-esteem, lower psychological stress and easier sociocultural adjustment (Tonsing, 2014). In general, firstborn Hong Kong participants showed a high level of psychological distress compared to the general South Asian groups.

Criminalization

Miller (2015) investigated the pervasiveness of juvenile court involvement among foreign and U.S. firstborn Latino youth and the type of offenses that lead them to the legal system. A metadata analysis using a longitudinal study of 90, 000 participants enrolled in U.S. middle and high school between the years of 1994 to 1995. Studies reveal that foreign-born Latinos are less likely to report criminal records compared to the generation born in the United States. While most of the research available focus on comparisons between black and white, a recent shift focuses on Latino experiences in the juvenile system (Miller, 2015).

A subsample of 20,745 foreign and non-foreign-born Latinos was selected for the in-home interview portion of the study for the first wave, followed by three additional rounds of data collection (Miller, 2015). The author investigated the participants' involvement with the juvenile justice system, whether participants were born in the U.S. or outside and the types of crimes by charges and convictions in addition to demographics informing age, gender, and social-economic status.

The results indicated that foreign-born Latinos were much less likely to have police contact, arrests, convictions, be on probation or be detained. On the other hand, foreign-born Latinos were more likely to be convicted of assault, purchase alcohol illegally, and be charged with other misdemeanors. Native born were more likely to be convicted of the crimes of robbery, theft, and significant traffic charges. Overall, the findings indicated that Latinos are more likely to receive harsh treatment while being native increased the likelihood of police contact or arrest while the conviction was disproportional (Miller, 2015).

Life in Enclaves for Immigrants

Cultural Security

Bandiera et al. (2013) used a meta-analysis with data from administrative records of 24 million migrants who entered Ellis Island, NY, between 1892 – 1924, combined with census and demographic accounting exercise to estimate the growth of immigrants in America. The immigrants arriving in the U.S. from 1820 were required to take on a foreign name at the entrance, even if their stay was temporary, having to obtain documentation with American versions of their names prior to departing their homeland.

Social class discrimination began the leading cause of under-counting immigration when first-class passengers were processed onboard and second class at their arrival at Ellis Island.

In the United State, a country often regarded as the ultimate multicultural society, the number of immigrants has been steadily increasing since the 1800s (Bandiera e al., 2013). The focused-on Latinos, particularly those originating from Mexico, is due to the fact that they constitute the largest immigrant population. Bandiera et al (2013) aimed to illustrate the economic and psychological impact of Latinos, extending beyond their diaspora. While it is essential to consider the importance of cultural security, and the impact when not fostered, there are multiple challenges that immigrants endure while adjusting their lives in the host country.

Osypuk et al. (2009) investigated the pros and cons of living in enclaves with an initial sample of 1902 participants of Chinese and Latino enclave immigrants. The authors measure eating habits, the practice of walking, social cohesion, civic participation, and exercise conducive environment. The authors identified that Chinese and Hispanic adults living in neighborhoods with higher immigrant composition tended to have diets lower in fat or processed foods than their counterparts who lived in neighborhoods with lower proportions of immigrants.

Second, among Hispanic individuals, living in a neighborhood with higher proportions of Latin-American immigrants was associated with lower physical activity levels. Next, the results for diet and physical activity reveals that enclave neighborhoods appeared to have better access to healthy foods. However, they had worse environments

related to physical activity, for example, safety in the neighborhood and poor social environments such as community participation and engagement between members.

Last, it was identified that perceived discrimination on the adaptation outcomes were influential for both groups as well as immigration status. Also, limited language proficiency lead to lack of social circle and consequentially no support system. In addition, supporting poor outcomes in the neighborhood immigrant composition of health behavior association was the individual levels of social-economic status.

Integration

Britton (2014) examined the association between Latino spatial assimilation and Latinos' closest friendships among 500 Latinos in Harris County, Texas, USA. Harris County has the second-largest Latino population in the country and one of the most racially and ethnically diverse populations anywhere in the nation. The author analyzed to what extent are Latinos who live outside of Latino enclaves are more likely to socialize with Caucasians and have close social ties. The magnitude is neighborhood racial and ethnic diversity reflected in the diversity of Latino residents' closest friends.

The data on Latinos' three closest friends were hauled from the 2006 Houston Area Survey (HAS) and data on neighborhood racial/ethnic composition from the 2000 U.S. Census and the 2005–2009 American Community Survey (ACS). The participants were asked to name three close people outside of their families and whether they were Latinos. Also, a second measure was a categorization of friendship, allowing participants to identify the following scale: (i) Latino friends only; (ii) non-Anglo friends; (iii) diverse friends; (iv) exceptional Anglo friend or (v) mostly Anglo friends. The groups were

divided into four groups based on their geographical location, described as Latino Enclaves, Majority other, Integrated/Multiethnic, and Majority Anglo.

The results support the importance of intergroup connections, as the Latino groups who live in neighborhoods that provide greater exposure to Anglo peers and interracial marriages were more likely to promote Latinos' integration with other groups, building up their support system. Also, childhood exposure to multicultural communities promotes assimilation as it reinforces the strong ties through lifelong friendship.

Tran (2010) analyzed three sets of data drawn from longitudinal surveys with firstborn generation Latinos to explore the loss and gain of language assimilation. The acquisition and maintenance of language is an essential component of acculturation for immigrants for the past century (Tran, 2010). The author reinforces the applicability in light of bilingualism research in the U.S., as it is assumed that English attainment occurs at the cost of Spanish abandonment, despite evidence of the constructive and synergistic effects of bilingualism (Tran, 2010). More on the rationale of disadvantages is that first-generation immigrants who learned the host language remain loyal to their mother tongue, communicating between adults in Spanish, creating a barrier between the firstborn generation and their parents.

The author analyzes the level of proficiency for both English and Spanish of data from 1992 -2002 from Portes and Rumbaut (2001) of the trajectory of children of on average age of 14, living in Metropolitan areas of Miami and San Diego. The sample was composed of participants different Latino countries, including 663 Cubans, 130 Colombians, 41 Dominicans, 352 Mexicans, 184 Nicaraguans and 178 Central and South

Americans. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) explored the variability of English and Spanish proficiency, which examined the participants' ability to understand, speak, read, and write in English and Spanish and its evolution among second-generation Latinos (Tran, 2010). A Likert scale was used to answer "How well do you understand/speak/read/write English/Spanish?" with four response categories: (1. not at all, (2. not well, (3. well, and (4. very well). It accounted for household composition and friendship network, to whether having more social contact with Spanish speaking and the use of Spanish at home and school as a predictor.

The results from Tran (2010) indicate that fluency may increase parallel in alignment with previous cross-sectional studies on language assimilation on the firstborn generation. The current generation of firstborn U.S. is more likely to embrace the framework of bilingualism across all stages of data, scoring from 3.7 to 3.9 out of a 4-point scale. It was reported that a higher level of proficiency on oral skills compared to written skills. Generally, across all four measures, both English and Spanish proficiency increased over time, suggesting that English acquisition and Spanish retention occurred simultaneously and are not mutually exclusive processes.

It was noticed, however, a difference between groups, reinforcing previous studies that reported intra-Latino differences, hypothesis particular to a group of Mexicans is the vast majority within the groups. Adherence to Spanish was reported accountable for increasing opportunities to socialize among similar groups. The overall development of English and Spanish proficiency goes beyond bilingualism skills; it also

has important implications for the field of psychology, contributing to a deeper understanding of communities as whole (Kamala et al., 2023).

Although integration and facilitating interconnectedness are beneficial, there are inevitable barriers to equally providing newer generations as the environment encourages the cheer integration of values at a fair proportion. Palacios et al., (2017) explored the differential role of childcare among firstborn generation Latinos, to whether the context is associated with the language used between mother and child. The total household language-use, the outcomes in English and Spanish, and how child care contributes in general to mother and child use of English and Spanish language.

The sample extracted from a southern state, a suburban and rural area, 83 families with children between the ages of two and four. The sample of participants consisted of primary caregivers were Mexican-born mothers who chose to communicate in Spanish. The participant responded to the questionnaire to inform the language between the child with mother, mother in general, and the total household language use. The Children were administered the Woodcock–Muñoz Language Survey in English and Spanish. The form of child care included preschool, Head Start, Rising Stars 1, or daycare (including relative care, non-relative care in a home setting).

The results indicated that children in parental care were more likely to speak the mother's language; in the household, they were more likely to speak the language they spoke within their childcare. The overall scores of vocabularies indicate a positive association between language use and vocabulary outcomes, and it would indicate that children spoken to only in Spanish have higher vocabularies than children spoken to in

English and Spanish. Interestingly, a negative association between parental care and Spanish scores was found, children in parental care scored 9.15 points lower on the Spanish picture vocabulary than children attending Head Start, center-based care, or other non-home-based care. Children in parental care revealed lower English and Spanish picture vocabulary, on average, compared to children attending out of home childcare.

Although the current research indicates that best route for acculturation is integration, leading Latinos to meaningful lives, there is still a disproportional number of Latinos struggling with mental illness, legal problems, and low performance in school and at work. The available studies suggested the acculturation process of Latinos is associated with the development of their self-worth (Kapke et al., 2016); and low levels of self-worth are considered a risk factor for depression among Latinos (Guzman-Rocha, 2017). These factors combined lead to greater challenges not only for Latino families and their enclave, but for society in general.

Family Structure and Parental Involvement

Conflict

Among the challenges of acculturation for the firstborn generation Latinos in the U.S., are the family structure and immediate differences between caregivers. Dennis et al., (2010) investigated the perception of intergenerational conflicts, family dynamics, and psychosocial functioning among the first and second-generation born, Latinos and non-Latino students. The study included 331 Latino college students (70% female) aged 17 to 26 (mean = 20.14 years, $SD = 2.20$). Of these, 89 were first-generation immigrants (born outside the United States), 171 were second-generation (born in the United States

with parents born outside the U.S.), and 71 were third generation or beyond, indicating that both they and at least one of their parents were born in the United States.

The majority (70%) of the participants were of Mexican origin, 15% were of Central American origin, and 1% were South American origin, and the remaining 14% did not state their country of origin. Fifty-four percent of the mothers and 60% of the fathers had less than a high school education; 16% of their mothers and 11% of their fathers had a high school diploma, and 30% of their mothers and 29% of their fathers had at least some college education. Besides, 33 African Americans (65% female) and 18 European American (72% female) college students were included as comparison groups. All of the participants in this comparison group were the third generation or greater, and all were aged 17 to 26.

The author used self-developed measure of intergenerational conflict to measure intergenerational conflict. A modified version of acculturative stress measurement was used to measure three aspects of acculturation, the language used and fluency, and American adherence, three items indicating their endorsement of mainstream culture. The family function was measured by the family environment scale, and adjustment was measured with self-esteem Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory (1965) and depression was measured with the Center for Epidemiological Survey Inventory (Radloff, 1977).

The findings indicated that Latinos ages 23 to 26 were more likely to report age differences in intergenerational conflicts than younger ones, intergenerational conflicts, and psychosocial adjustment related to the increase of depressive symptoms and family conflicts, a predictor for depression. On the other hand, family cohesiveness is a predictor

for healthy self-esteem. On that note, first coming and U.S. firstborn Latinos reported higher acculturation conflicts than future generations and their non-Latinos peers.

Moreover, Latino young adults in immigrant families are more likely to feel more American than their parents. When there is a distinction between cultural values, family obligations, and gender role expectations, in comparison to the more individualistic expectations of American youth, there is a higher potential to create additional distress for the firstborn generation when making decision related to marriage and career choices.

The authors reported the need to further examine perceived conflicts between parents their following generation over cultural expectations related to gender, education, autonomy and relationships.

Perreira et al. (2006) investigated how Latinos parents overcome the present challenges and the acquired strengths required for Latino immigrants raising children in the United States. A qualitative study with 18 participants was conducted, a sample of first-generation Latino immigrant parents living in North Carolina. The participants were asked: What motivated your family to move to the United States? What was life like for you and your family before you moved to the United States? Tell me about your journey to the United States. What is your first memory of being in the states? What do you like most (least) about living here in North Carolina? Tell me about your child's experience with the school system in North Carolina. Tell me about your child's experience with the health care system in North Carolina. Have you noticed any changes in your child since you moved here? What advice would you give a parent who was moving to the United States from your home country?

The results suggest that the process started with the purpose of immigration. The parents' goals and values for their children that could not be fulfilled in their home country due to poverty and wars. The participant discussed the desires for social change, the sacrifices, economic and social segregation challenges, fear of new environment with diversity and racism confrontation. Also, the challenges navigating the new social context, developing bicultural coping skills and the new interaction within the family-child relationship. The parents handle an unknown atmosphere at work, school, and even at home. The challenges included limited informal support systems, facing racism, cultural shock, and financial difficulties.

The authors further discussed how Latino and children of color present with physical characteristics that are different from U.S. Caucasian born children, an additional challenge to several daily struggles that are part of the life of immigrant families. The process continued through the parent's adjustment to their new reality of parenting practices in response to the moment, and families' life ration challenges. The authors identified the challenges of parenting in the United States and their resourcefulness in finding new strategies, institutional support systems and constantly reshaping their environment to foster children's positive outcomes.

Achievement

Nguyen and Hale (2017) conducted a study with a sample of 3592 participants. The sample was composed of 61 % Latinos from Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, Colombia, Dominican Republic, and other unspecified Central and South American countries. Also included was 39% Asians from the Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, China, Japan,

and other Asian countries. The authors explored the association between acculturation and self-esteem, as an aspect of psychological wellbeing and belongingness.

The authors recapped that self-esteem is contingent upon positive or negative evaluation of self-worth and is an essential dimension of mental wellbeing. Healthy self-esteem shapes emotional and social development. The data reviewed focused on the participants' perception of how factors associated with immigrant youth acculturation influence self-esteem and how their effects vary by panethnicity/race.

Another different data analysis from Portes and Rumbaut (2001) the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to measure on a four-point Likert scale the participants' self-esteem. Family Context: This continuous variable measure intergenerational conflict with a three-item index: "How often do you get in trouble because your way of doing things is different from that of your parents?" (Never, Sometimes, most of the time, all of the time); "My parents do not like me very much" and "My parents are usually not very interested in what I say" (Not true at all, not very true, Partially true, Very true), higher values indicate greater conflict. Discrimination: This binary variable indicates an individual's self-report of having experienced discrimination (1 = Yes). Self-Identification: Self-identification significant less as an individual's identity and consists of four categories (see Portes and Rumbaut, 2001): (1) a national origin identity (e.g., Chinese, Mexican); (2) a hyphenated identity (e.g. Cuban-American, Filipino-American); (3) "American"; or (4) a pan-ethnic/racial identity (i.e. Asian, Latino).

The first two categories are related to the country of origin and immigrant experience; the latter two are identities constructed in the U.S. context. The fourth category reflects a coalescing of distinct national origin into pan-ethnic/racial identities in relation to the white majority. Language Proficiency: The English Knowledge Index (EKI) and Foreign Language Knowledge Index (FLKI) measure respondents' ability to speak, understand, and write a language based on a four-point scale, ranging from low comprehension to fluency (Portes & Rumbaut 2001).

The results indicated that Latino participants reported higher self-esteem scores, older age, and SES were related to a higher GPA and a predictor of higher self-esteem. As the authors predicted, perceived discrimination and self-esteem negatively associated, language proficiency a protective factor for both groups. While bilingualism is a protector factor facilitating mobility, the higher scores on self-esteem among Latinos are attributed to family support and retention of Spanish culture and family values. Another significant observation in the the study was the added stress experienced by the Asian group due to the pressure of conforming to stereotypes, particularly the expectation of being the "smart group".

Moreover, the support system is the difference that parental support makes on adolescents' school achievement among immigrant families. Plunkett et al. (2009) discussed how parents' participation and students' performance in school is an efficient barometer for later contribution in society, and parental engagement the strongest predictor of students' positive performance. The study investigated how 1245 adolescents, 13–16 years old (M = 14.5); 58.9% female, 41.1% male; 57.5% Latino;

40.6% 1st generation youth (i.e., foreign-born), 59.4% 2nd generation youth in high

schools in the Los Angeles County. The parental involvement was based on the mothers'

and fathers' monitoring schoolwork help and educational advice. The results indicated

that among Latinos, academic engagement was positively correlated to good grades when

mothers were involved with academic matters more than fathers, particularly because

immigrant fathers were working long hours. The parental engagement that was the

strongest predictor of higher grades was monitored by both father and mother, while

mothers' educational advice was indirectly associated with higher grades among

adolescents. Enchantingly, the factor was that among firstborn generation schoolwork

mothers and adolescents' academic engagement was not related, while they worked

harder under the impression that their mothers were supervising their work.

Transference of Values, Traditions, and Trauma

Transferal

Almeida Martins et al., (2008) presented a family case study and how

triangulation can be transmitted between generations. According to Bowen (1978), there

are vital forces that keep the equilibrium between families and when these forces are not

well synchronized, they represent a challenge to individuation. The concept of

undifferentiated, familiar to all children at birth has its primary purpose: to differentiate

and obtain autonomy and independence, should attachment follow its natural and healthy

course. The family is considered an emotional unit, and plausible to be influenced by

chronic anxiety that can lead to fusion, an emotional attachment between mother and

child characterized by dependency and conflicts. Almeida Martins et al. (2008) presented a case where the wife's infidelity is causing the couple intense stress in their relationship, and the husband seeks assistance. The evidence suggests that the wife comes from a dysfunctional family where members function independently and are disorganized, while the husband's history suggests a higher level of dependency and reliability between the members. The wife exercises a form of triangulation with her father, distancing herself in order to manage the anxiety, a fact that is repeated in the next generation; the son isolates himself when in difficulties dealing with family conflicts (Almeida Martins et al., 2008).

At the same time, the daughter now a teenager, starts to follow in the footsteps of her mother when the mother was a teenager, defiant and unwilling to align with her mother, triangulating with the father, creating a scenario where the couple's relationship is being threatened by the close relationship between father and daughter.

Bakó and Zana (2018) discussed the world of transgenerational trauma and how it passes from one generation to the next while working with holocaust survivors and their children. The authors explored the impact of trauma on five family cases, second and third-generation Holocaust survivors, and survivors of social-historical trauma. The stage of living through a transgenerational environment atmosphere and impact it has on one's life. The term transgenerational explains how the experience remains with the survivor, expanding to the future generation, as a newborn will enter this traumatized psychological field and adopt it as their reality.

The trauma from experiences lived by parents was passed down to children even if they did not share the experience personally. One of the narratives describes a second-

generation Holocaust survivor case, a woman of approximately 45 years old in therapy. The researchers witnessed the patient's indescribably painful sobbing from week to week of data collection. It was reported that the testimonies deeply impacted all the ear-witnesses of the events. They would share their feelings in the coffee room of the institution. The woman's therapist was so profoundly concerned and so heavily burdened that he regularly had a break after the sessions. He needed time to recover from this devastating condition. Painful voices, audible from the therapy, affected the ear-witness colleagues in this atmosphere. The drain and alarm impact of unshared transgenerational trauma generates an atmosphere that may extend across the therapeutic milieu.

Lev-Wiesel (2007) conducted a qualitative study to explore the intergenerational transmission of trauma across three generations and three different types of traumas, including surviving the holocaust, being placed in a transit camp transitioning immigration and forced immigration. The concept of intergenerational transmission explains that an individual identity involves many dimensions, such as psychological, philosophical, and interpersonal relations that are intertwined throughout life (Lev-Wiesel, 2007). The exposure to trauma modifies the course of life, and it is contagious, meaning that patterns, symptoms, and values that appear in one generation are likely to impact future ones. Traumatic events experienced throughout life could have effects that last longer after a family has settled (Phipps & Degges-White, 2014).

The results from the exploration with the family of Holocaust survivors, where physical genocide, the psychological warfare was employed to have the entire Jewish people eliminate from the earth, destroying the individual personality and identity of the

population both as Jewish and as a person (Lev-Wiesel, 2007). A grandmother in her 70s who was around nine during the war and survived the war alongside her mother, she married another survivor, they had three children and ten grandchildren who were part of the study. The second family was Arab residents who were forced out of their homes/villages, M, aged 74, is the father of 7 children and has 22 grandchildren. The third family, the grandmother, is 69-years old and has elementary school education. She immigrated from Morocco to Israel at the age of 23 with her husband and six children. The results indicated that trauma was carried out for each family.

The holocaust survivor, both second and third, expressed high levels of empathy and identification with the survivors' suffering, such as post-traumatic stress symptoms, anxious behavior and avoidance behaviors, and the importance of never forgetting (Lev-Wiesel, 2007). The common themes among family members included the value of family and lack of trust in the outside world.

The second family also reported similar traits, the sense of belonging to Ikrit, the struggle to return (third-generation who were never there), and a strong sense of urgency to maintain community cohesion and the final mission to return. The family from the placement in a transit camp showed similar characteristics to value placed on social status and financial struggles that were carried on to future generations. Also, inferiority traits compared to other groups, reverse family roles within the family, and the intense criticism received from others. The sad memories, including the suffering expression with pain was carried, the crying, lack of money, and the long-term effects of living in the transit camp (Lev-Wiesel, 2007).

Overall, the results also indicated that the type of trauma also informed the traumatic experience that was transmitted, and families with a shared mission were closer than those who operated from an individualistic viewpoint. Among holocaust survivor families, symptoms of trauma are transmitted from one generation to the next due to unresolved grief, causing current generation to fail to meet the next generations' emotional needs (Phipps & Degges-White, 2014). Post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms were found almost identical to secondary traumatic stress disorder.

Similarities

Gtatton et al. (2007) conducted a meta-analysis with data from 1880 to 1970 to assess the influence of ethnicity and generation on Mexican, Irish, Swedish, Italian, Polish, and native Caucasian children. The authors used two theories, linear assimilation, and segmented assimilation, to investigate how ethnicity influences the integration of immigrant-origin children into American society. It was noticed that migration is decreased when there are strong family ties among voluntary immigration and that younger and newly married are more likely to leave their homeland behind.

The study began by combining family types across ethnic groups at each census, informing that the percentage of mothers and fathers across the 90 years peaked in the 1960s, an essential role for children. The authors identified a significant rise in single-parent households in the 1979. The data indicated that immigrant children were more likely to live in the single-parent household then native children and more likely to live in a house with three generations, mother, grandparent, and the child. Although the

collective nature of Latino culture has benefits, not all Latino families adhere to traditional cultural values in the same fashion (Leon, 2010).

Another well-known fact was that across all immigrants the decrease of family size was influenced by economic and demographic changes. The likelihood of poverty increased for children of single mothers, which is more common among families in the northeast part of the country, as well as for children living with grandparents. The historical data also illustrated that immigrant families in the past were not so distinct from native ones as immigrants from the 20th century.

Trauma Exposure and Transmission

More challenges on Latino families are that they are susceptible to higher exposure to traumatic events and struggle due to lack of resources among impoverished communities. Loria and Caughy (2018) conducted a meta-analysis with a 2011-2012 National Survey of Children's Health, limited to Latino children in households with an annual income of 200% below the national poverty line. A sample of 22 297 children, 29% (n = 6483) were Latino (9% first generation, 57% second generation, 30% third or higher generation); 25% (n = 1692) all Latino children were exposed to 2 or more adverse childhood experiences.

The original data used the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE). The adverse childhood experiences referred to financial hardship, parent divorce/ separation, parent death, parent imprisonment, domestic violence, neighborhood violence, a household member with mental health illness, household member with a substance abuse problem, and unfair treatment because of race/ethnicity. The financial hardship was high across all

generations, first immigrants, U.S. firstborn generation, and second-born generation. The second-born generation's scores inform the highest number for those children whose parents were U.S. firstborn generations.

Overall, the prevalence of the ACE among Latino immigrant children is higher compared to national numbers, but the more interesting data from this study is referred to the what they called the third-generation immigrants, those are children raised by firstborn U.S. generation. Concurring with the immigrant paradox, despite the adversities of acculturation, presents with characteristics of resilience, while compared with their first, second, third and even higher born generation who were more likely to score higher on the ACE.

The numbers reflecting trauma exposure are higher than those children who were raised by immigrant parents, informing them of the protective effect of immigrant status of their parents. The findings also suggest that immigrant individuals are healthier in general, having fewer exposures to ACE.

Menzies (2007) addressed how intergenerational trauma has individually, familial, communality, and nationally impacts the lives of many and potentially leads to homelessness. Interpreting data from interviews and focus group studies, the authors explored the history behind homelessness among the aboriginal population in Canada's urban, rural communities, and first nation communities. The findings reinforced the importance of avoiding cultural violations based on the removal of aboriginal children from their birth families. Illustration of the long-term impact on generations is yet to

come and raise the number of mental health conditions among future generations of aboriginals.

The author highlights the importance of historical perspective interviewing Natives, accounting for the ongoing violation of their values, and forced cultural assimilation imposed by the federal government. The qualitative study with aboriginal males, ages 18-64, discussed their perception of life events that lead to specific themes of each participant. The themes included personal and family experiences with residential schools and child welfare, life history, connection with birth families and aboriginal cultures, mental health and substance abuse by participants and family members, and the length of time being homeless.

The results indicated that common themes were a lack of belonging and mental health, poverty, low education, and family violence. The emotional estrangement between families has made it difficult for men to seek the support they need from their community; the early separation and violation of their cultural values create what participants identify as an orphan with a family.

Phipps and Degges (2014) discussed the characteristics of trauma, the harsh relationship changes, disruption of connection with support networks, prolonged and adverse financial changes, discrimination and rejection all could potentially constitute traumatic experiences and immigrants endure all three of these traumatic experiences some more severe than others. Considering that the acculturation process is a traumatic experience, the experience can be transferred beyond the immigrant generation, including compromising the lives of their children and especially how the immigration-related

trauma creates a unique subset of mental health concerns for Latino immigrants in North America.

The authors' revision of the unique challenge of immigration from Mexico and South America related to their journey, their legal status, anti-immigrant movements, and the ongoing political and economic circumstances increases vulnerabilities. More on the transmission of trauma and the proliferation of mental illness is the fact that Latino families are close and may also pass the stigma and hesitation, exploring attachment to the mentally ill. For many immigrants, the immigration process brings about a positive impact on many individuals and family's development, such as financial and educational gain, and others experiencing more negative aspects.

Sadly, language barriers, status disparities that place some immigrants in a lower social status compared to the home country, new expectations innate to U.S. individualistic culture, and numerous other factors create challenges for immigrants that negatively affect their psychological health. The challenges surrounding the lives of Latino immigrants and their offspring are endless, although the route between recovery and resilience is a long journey, information is empowerment and the more inform parents and community are the higher are changes of building a healthier society.

Latinos and Self-Worth

Often used interchangeably with self-worth, self-esteem refers to an individual's overall description of their subjective sense of personal worth or value, likes, dislikes, approvals, or disapprovals of themselves (Rosenberg, 1965). Self-esteem may be explained within two dissimilar associations: high self-esteem, where the object self-

perception is of high value, and a distinct one of lower importance, accordant to the individual's standard set for himself (Rosenberg, 1965). A high/healthy self-esteem is defined by people's ability to place themselves in a position of "good enough," nor higher or lower compared to others, but a stage of self-acceptance. On the other hand, lower self-esteem indicates self-rejection, dissatisfaction with oneself, and lacking respect for themselves (Rosenberg, 1965). Moreover, research indicates that in the face of adversities, individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to control the environment, adopting a solution-based approach to problems. In contrast, individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to focus on emotions and adopt a passive-avoidant coping strategy (Dumont & Provost, 1999). Though self-esteem is only one aspect of one's wellbeing, it is a primary component of identity formation. Self-esteem ultimately refers to the individuals' perceptions of their own value within their social group (Rosenberg, 1965).

The concept of self-worth is related to the acculturation process of Latinos. Kapke et al. (2017) used Berry's fourfold acculturation model to understand better the impact of acculturation among 79 self-identified Latino early adolescents. The authors investigated a series of behavioral and cognitive questionnaire aspects of acculturation. Also noted that adolescents, in general, are at higher risk of developing psychopathology that impacts multiple domains of life, and challenges related to acculturation increase the chances of substance abuse, internalization of problems, and low self-esteem (Kapke et al., 2017).

The acculturation stress was conceptualized based on daily routine stressors from the pressure to emerge and maintain the U.S. mainstream cultures and Latino parental

values (Kapke et al., 2017). Acculturation struggle was described as the intergenerational conflict that occurred as Latino youth and their families experienced distinct acculturation intensities. The background research was used to highlight that global self-worth are correlated with mental health. Among the factors that contribute to Latino youth's perception of global self-worth are cultural factors such as risks of acculturation stress, conflict, and perceived ethnic discrimination (Kapke et al., 2017).

The authors hypothesized that higher levels of bicultural orientation and orientation to one's ethnic culture of origin on both behavioral and cognitive measures of acculturation would moderate the relation between acculturation risk factors (i.e., acculturation stress, acculturation conflict, and perceived ethnic discrimination) and early adolescents' global self-worth (Kapke et al., 2017). The cross-sectional research examined how the 79 participants from an urban area related to the development of psychopathology, ages 11 to 17, 37% of participants identified as male (46.8 %), and 42 participants identified as female (53.2 %), 75% of them fully bilingual from families originated in Mexico and Puerto Rico. The authors used the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican-Americans-II (ARSMA-II), and the Anglo orientation [Anglo Orientation Scale (AOS), 13 items] (Kapke et al., 2017).

The results indicated that bicultural orientation on the behavioral and cognitive measures of acculturation was not significantly associated with global self-worth. Complications involving a sense of self-worth were related to the pressure to maintain values of both cultures, increasing internal distress that leads to conflict with others (Kapke et al., 2017). Acculturation risk factors were negatively correlated with global

self-worth, and acculturation stress, acculturation conflict, and perceived ethnic discrimination were significantly and negatively associated with high levels of global self-worth. However, limited adherence to the U.S. mainstream culture, and the culture of origin was found to be a risk factor for adolescents. The participants reporting low levels of U.S. mainstream values may be less likely to endorse cultural values of self-reliance and personal achievement and more likely to experience increased dependence on their family and focus on the family unit's success.

Overall, results of this study highlighted the importance of conceptualizing acculturation and acculturation risks from a bicultural and multidimensional model. Results also called attention to Latino leadership's needs to ensure fairness and genuine integration in the workplace. More research is warranted to understand how U.S. firstborn Latinos' development of self-worth beliefs in the context of their acculturation process (Kapke et al., 2017).

Summary and Conclusions

The Latino community will soon represent 30% of the U.S. total population (Britton, 2014). According to Tran (2010), 13% of the U.S. population, equivalent to 25.2 million people, self-identify as Latino alone, with projections indicating that more than 70 million people will be Latinos by 2040. Understanding the dynamic of this population is crucial, as it will significantly impact the lives of those residing in the U.S. Immigrant communities have played transformative role, reshaping the demographic of many cities and communities in the U.S. Tran (2010) notes that one in eight American residents is foreign-born.

Acculturation can be assessed by considering the extent to which minority groups desire to preserve their culture (i.e., culture maintenance), and engage with members of the majority group (i.e., contact participation). Factors influencing mental health outcomes for Latino youth, as well as acculturation risk factors, reveal some of challenges and difficulties associated with the acculturation process (Kapke et al., 2017).

The process of acculturation continues as this generation becomes new parents and continue refining their parents' practices and perspectives while adjusting to new environments.

It is imperative for educators to embrace multicultural and sensitive approaches to reduce the impact of intergenerational trauma. It is valuable to highlight that literature remains focused on first-generation immigrants and limited resources are available explaining the acculturation process for U.S. firstborn generation Latinos.

Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the rationale and design choice for this study, design and sampling strategies, and population. Methods for data collection are explained, in addition to my role as the researcher and methodology. Finally, ethical considerations are addressed alongside steps that were taken to uphold ethical integrity and address issues of trustworthiness and security of participants in the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this study was to explore how U.S. firstborn generation Latinos experienced growing up between two cultures and how they developed self-worth beliefs in the context of their acculturation process. I aimed to explore how this population negotiated, organized, moved between cultures, and gave meaning to their cultural identity, as well as how they related this acculturation process to development of their self-worth beliefs. Self-worth is one's overall evaluation of worth as a person (Harter, 2012). This study led to understanding how U.S. firstborn generation Latinos handled nuances and challenges of growing up between two cultures, and how they related those challenges to development of their self-worth beliefs. This chapter includes a review of the research design for this study, sampling strategy and data collection protocols, and data analysis. I also address dependability, validity, reliability, and ethical procedures that were adopted to ensure overall trustworthiness, safety, and wellbeing of participants.

Rationale and Research Questions

This qualitative IPA study involved describing how U.S. firstborn Latinos experienced growing up between two cultures. The focus of this study was personal experiences of firstborn Latinos growing up between two cultures, acculturation issues in their lives, their cultural identity, and how they related this acculturation process to development of their self-worth beliefs. Tonsing (2014) indicated firstborn generations, also mistakenly called second-generation immigrants, encounter challenges including perceived discrimination, which negatively impacts access to jobs, housing, and education. I explored experiences of being raised in a Latino household while attending

school, work, and social gatherings in the U.S. I recorded, analyzed, identified, and transcribed information involving experiences of acculturation among U.S. firstborn Latinos. I prioritized participants' wellbeing by explaining the voluntary nature of participation and providing clarity on the interviewing process.

Two main overarching research questions guided this study:

RQ1: How do U.S. firstborn Latinos describe their acculturation process and give meaning to their cultural identity?

RQ2: How do U.S. firstborn Latinos describe the development of their self-worth beliefs in the context of their acculturation process?

Current literature contains information and past research to inform acculturation and guide approaches to address immigrants, however, limited or inexistent data informs the acculturation process for U.S. firstborn generation Latinos.

Design of the Study

I employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis for this study. The IPA method involves delving into participants' perceptions and examining how the host society influences their personal experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2007). IPA researchers make inquiries using flexible approaches, allowing for unexpected topics to arise during interviews, and never attempt to verify or negate hypotheses, but rather expand knowledge on the topic (Smith & Osborn, 2007). IPA was suitable for this study as participants shared their personal experiences involving a phenomenon of identity formation within the acculturation context and their sense of worth in U.S. society.

I conducted interviews to explore participants' childhood memories and gather insights into their experiences of navigating between two cultures, including the strengths and struggles they encountered while growing up. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions that delved into their self-perception as children of immigrant parents and students in the mainstream American school system. Participants shared recollections of returning home after school and described instances of code-switching from interactions with American peers to interactions within their household. Due to the lack of research on the topic, I employed a qualitative approach, which allowed for a nuanced exploration of being a U.S. firstborn immigrant. The qualitative method facilitated data collection and analysis, the refinement of initial questions, and the generation of new research inquiries.

Role of the Researcher

I prepared open-ended questions to guide interviews. It was important to cultivate rapport with participants to allow dialogue to flow naturally. Information must be captured in nonrestricted settings, affording participants the opportunity to introduce possible issues that the researcher may not consider (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The researcher must assure a safe space for participants to share their experiences, and maintain awareness of possible struggles to express what participants are thinking and feeling (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Also, it is essential to consider potentially sensitive topics that participants did not wish to disclose to interpret their mental and emotional state.

Additionally, I addressed through self-awareness my own bias due to indirect but close involvement with the population. As the mother of a U.S. firstborn generation Latino, I experienced firsthand nuances, changes, and challenges involved with acculturation. I made sure to remain conscious of my own reactions and biases. To achieve this, I used bracketing and set time between interviews to address my own experiences and judgements in order to get a fresh perspective of the phenomenon. Bracketing is a process in which researchers bracket out information about their own experiences as much as possible to allow unbiased meaning of the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell., 2018).

Methodology

Participant Selection

Target participants for this research were U.S. firstborn generation Latinos who were 18 or older and had parents who were immigrants from Central or South America, and self-identified as bilingual and bicultural. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), criterion sampling is the most appropriate method to ensure participants meet criteria for studies that are specific to a determinate population.

Sample and Sampling Strategy

I used criterion sampling, a sampling that is frequently used assuring quality. Cases were chosen based on richness of information and content in need of improvement and clarification (Patton, 2001). Interviewing these cases offered information related to aspects of the cultural identity formation. Furthermore, snowball sampling was also utilized, where participants referred other participants (Farrugia, 2019). Specific criteria

for participating includes that participants were fully bilingual, Spanish and English, have attended main stream American schools where English was the primary language. The participants' parents came from a Latino country, while the participants themselves were born and raised in the United States. Participants had experienced typical Latin American culture at home and the American culture in larger settings such as school and after school activities (i.e., practicing American sports and other related activities). Participants were 18 y/o or older. In the event a participant came from a mix family setting (one American-born parent) were excluded from the study.

Lastly, I selected participants who are fully emerged in both cultures such as speaking both English and their parent's primary language, however participants were not excluded should they only speak English or more English than Spanish.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I requested the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for permission to conduct the research, furnishing IRB with details information on data collection, analysis and all the measures to assure ethical standards and participants security. IRB approval was granted, approval number 12-13-21-0656919, a permission from the clinical director of two identified centers of potential participants was obtained. Both centers specialized in providing psychological treatment to Latino families. The centers were located respectively at the lower east side of Manhattan and the second one in Harlem. The centers received a letter explaining the study details, the target population was staff members, the purpose and how the respondents were involved in the research. The

participants referred other participants such as friends or acquaintances other than patients from the clinic.

I began the recruitment process by reaching out to the administrative department once permission was granted from the director, asking them to distribute the flyers with my contact information. The flyers were distributed via staff group emailing, along with the email and telephone number so interested parts began to reach out. The potential participants willing to participate reached out to me via phone or email with the information available in the flyer. The participants responded to the announcement willing to participate, they were contacted by phone for a 15 minutes screening assuring for fitting in the study.

The participants fitting the criteria received via email a consent form. The interviews took place virtually via video conference through the Zoom platform. The interviews were recorded, their voice in a separate voice recorder app, stored with protected password. The voice recorded was later transcribed manually and stored with protected password. The interviews were guided by a semi-structured questionnaire, including the demographic information (Appendix: A).

Number of Participants and Rationale

The IPA is best suitable with smaller samples, affording researchers to conduct a detailed analysis (Smith, 2004). The goal was to recruit, select, and interview 10-15 participants for the study. Saturation was achieved with 10 participants. The initial plan was to contact approximately 40 participants, select the first 10-15 participants, and prepare a waiting list of six participants, should any participants from the initial pool

withdraw. One participant out of the initial pool of participants was not used, as in not interviewed at all and the information regarding pre-qualification was disposed.

Relationship Between Saturation and Sample Size

The literature indicates that saturation occurs with a sample size of 10 participants (Guest et al., 2006). While IPA studies contain 5-10 participants (Smith, 2004), I aimed for a larger number (10) to ensure a diverse pool of Latinos. The selection of 10 individuals assured substantial data for the study, and follow the recommended sample size when working with semi-structured guided interview (Guest et al, 2006). Although a difference in the codes is noticed between the first and the twelfth interview, IPA recommends a sample between five and 10 participants (Guest et al, 2006; Smith 2004). In general, phenomenological studies have a tendency to work with samples as small as three participants and a maximum of ten (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Following the above recommendation, saturation was achieved at 10 participants. Saturation pertains to the stage when new themes are exhausted from a homogenous sample of participant bringing about the necessary information to answer the research questions (Mason, 2010).

Instrumentation

Demographic Questions

Participants were interviewed for roughly 60 minutes; however, I scheduled two hours per interview and informed participants that should there be a need for additional time they may proceed or an additional interview may be scheduled. The additional measure assured accuracy and completion of needed information. Previously to inquiring

the participants, any questions related to the research study and the specific interview guide, the participants answered a customary set of demographic questions to obtain a precise data of my participants and their context, and benefit from rapport that was essential when discussion sensitive topics.

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

I conducted a semi-structured interview with open-ended interview questions. Smith (2004) suggested the most efficient data collection with IPA studies is semi-structured interviews. The interview comprised of open-ended questions, assuring that participants could openly speak about their experiences without being led to a certain direction (see Smith, 2004). Participants shared their experiences of growing up in between two cultures and reflections on their own unique experiences. The semi-structured interview covered topics related to the experiences of growing up between two cultures, memories from childhood in their household, school and the adaptation to and from the environments. The participants described their social and interpersonal experiences while navigating between the two cultures, their preferences related to social, romantic interaction and how they give meaning to their cultural identity.

I audio-recorded with a recorder and a voice recorder app as well as wrote notes on body language response and any additional information during the interview. The use of writing notes with pencil and paper ensured the documentation of details not captured via audio recording. Also, participants had the option of a video call, where only their voice responses were recorded, later I produced a transcript and encrypted the document for confidentiality reasons. I planned to address the possibility of too few participants by

reaching out to other non-profit organizations that also employ Latin American bilingual

staff, community colleges, and worship places in New York City, which was not

necessary.

Data Analysis Plan

Thematic analysis is the foundation method of analysis for qualitative studies,

given its flexibility and thematizing meanings as one of the shared generic facets across

qualitative analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Also, thematic analysis does not interfere

with the theory and epistemological approach, comparable with both essentialist and

constructionist paradigms (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis method

identifies, analyzes, and reports themes as well as helps organize the information

participants provide (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

After gathering and organizing the data as a first step to this six-stage process, the

researcher generates codes for the research questions in the second stage, interprets the

data and searches for themes in the third stage (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The fourth stage

reviews the themes in relation to the codes extracted, analyzing the themes; then, in the

fifth stage, the researcher determines what each theme is about (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Finally, in stage six, the researcher reiterates the story of the participants with clarity and

precision (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The write up demonstrated the essence of the data,

illustrating the core experiences of U.S. firstborn Latinos.

Plan for Discrepancies During Data Analysis

Discrepancies in research findings are possible. The researcher must document

and report all data, affording the reader accurate information regarding the phenomenon

under study (Creswell, 2013). Reporting conflicting information not only adds credibility to the study, but it also may benefit future studies.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Although criticism involving trustworthiness of qualitative studies remains present in the light of science there are four criteria used to address researchers aiming to present respected and academic sounded results (Shenton, 2004). The inquires of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity are insured by credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability securing the impartiality of researchers (Creswell, 2013; Shenton, 2004). Following are the description and applicability of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility has three main levels: heuristic, concerning value judgment of the information in diverse settings; interaction, referring to the source, content, clues, and peripheral information; and authenticity, which is believability and reliability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I secure that participants feel comfortable to participate and that they are willing and able to provide accurate responses to the best of their ability. The participants were offered and provided with a verbatim transcript of their interview. Changes if necessary were completed, and the process repeated until data was clearly and accurately documented. I utilized peer consultation, advice and guidance from chair and committee members during data collection and analysis, welcoming feedback with an open mind. I used bracketing (Creswell, 2013) to avoid my own experiences and judgements interfere with data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Transferability

Lyle (2018) suggested that a gap in transferability of cutting-edge research is due to the lack of details in the process of completion. Although Creswell and Creswell (2018) discussed that the qualitative research is not designed to be generalized across any other population other than ones under investigation differences and similarities are practically intertwined. The generalizability potential of this study is high, considering that the U.S., and in particular, NYC, is a diverse place, with several nationalities from across the globe. To enable readers to transfer information to other settings, original studies must provide instructions on the procedure and a description of the population, setting, the case, and the theme. Readers benefit from the findings when they have a rich description of the setting, participants, and data, facilitating transferability of the study.

Dependability

Funder et al. (2014) reported that a large part of the problems in the behavioral and social science research lies in the dependability and replicability of a study. To assure dependability, I maintained an audit log to report feelings and thoughts throughout the process, the chair informed, documenting and keeping the comparisons from the interviews to identify discrepancies and similarities (see Creswell, 2013). After all, dependability of qualitative research relies heavily on consistence (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and analysis and review of my own work was efficient guaranteeing a systematic approach. The analysis from the audio recordings were frequently reviewed, affording reflection on findings and filtering bias. I listened to records at least three times in different times of the day. Throughout this process I reached out to my chair for

assistance when in doubt reviewing the first three interviews in details, improving where there was room for improvement and keeping the large portion that was coming to fruition as planned during the proposal stage of this project.

Confirmability

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative studies do not operate from a methodological blueprint as it is unique in every new study (Ellis, 2019). Confirmability builds during the process and relates to the confidence and professionalism of the researcher. The quality of the study is based on accuracy of data collection and honest reporting of the findings (Ellis, 2019).

I remained aware of personal position in the community, the personal involvement with the population, and frequently reflect on demeanor, choices of words, and when necessary, consulted with a peer or committee member. During the interview I created a separate document from participants 1 though 10 where I would later begin to work on the transcript and record details of that particular interview, the study, the participant's responses, and my own feelings throughout the entire process.

<div align="center">

Ethical Procedures

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Access and Permission

An essential part of research is to recognize the importance of collecting data from people, about people (Creswell, 2013) based on the principles of better serving participants, their families, and future generations; the well-being of the participants was my highest priority. I requested permission from the director of centers in New York City to contact their bilingual employees to identify participants for the study. I kept all their

identities protected, assigned a number for each participant and from interview to transcription and delivery of information as a number. I identify myself as a doctoral student from Walden University, assured qualification to conduct the interviews with appropriate supervision from the dissertation committee and provided IRB authorization (12-13-21-0656919) throughout consent form as well as verbal during interactions with each participant. The participants were also informed via email, prior and during the interview verbally that they could withdraw from the interview at any time, and no questions would be asked.

I informed participants of the qualification of the institution as an accredited university by the Office of Higher Education. I also included a pre- screening form and an informed consent form in the email sent to participants. The informed consent form identified the purpose of the study. Should participants access memories that are traumatic, they received an additional hour in the time of the interview to process the event. I shared available crisis information and additional mental health resources to refer participants in the event participants need further evaluation and intended to report immediately via email to the chair. There was no emergency reported and the use of additional support was not necessary throughout the duration of interviews nor later.

The informed consent document clarified once more to participants of their rights to withdraw from the study at any time and without penalty. The participants were kindly reminded of their right to withdraw before the beginning of interview, and that information would have been destroyed should had been the case. If a participant withdraws, I would have disposed safely the information immediately after notifying the

committee. The measure was not used as all the participants were engaged from the beginning to end of interview. The researcher stored information from the study on a personal desktop, a protected USB drive, and paper notes in a key-protected safe box. The participant's data will be identified as subject 1 – 10. The information will be kept for a period of five years and participants were made aware of the scientific requirement.

While it was not necessary should have any participants withdraw from the study and the sample became smaller than 10, I would select a new participant from the waiting list. The participants would have been an assigned a new number and the withdraw individual would have been reported as per their number. I assured that respecting the participants was main priority, addressed them according to their preferred gender pronouns, titles, or names. I completed the required modules for certification with the Collaborative Institutional Training: CITI and obtained Institute Review Board (IRB) approval from Walden University to conduct the research. The interview took place online via Zoom, at the participants discretion.

Summary

I used the qualitative approach to gather and analyze data, refine questions, and generate new questions. The qualitative method and IPA were used to address details involving challenges and benefits of living between two cultures. Participation in the study was voluntary. The population was 10 U.S. firstborn Latinos who were 18 or older and initially recruited from nonprofit organizations that employ bilingual staff, while that was not a condition to participate in the study, it was a good indicator that they would come from Latino families. Both parents of participants were born and raised in South or

Central America. I protected participants' identity and information by keeping a

password-protected USB drive in a safe, and will continue for the following 5 years. I

upheld integrity, dependability, credibility, and transferability of the proposed study. I

employed numerous strategies to check against bias, by journaling, self-reflection, and

peer consultation.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how U.S. firstborn Latinos experience growing up between two cultures and how they developed self-worth beliefs in the context of their acculturation process. I explored how this population negotiates, organizes, moves between cultures, and gives meaning to their cultural identity. Additionally, I investigated how they connect this acculturation process to development of their self-worth beliefs. Ten firstborn generation Latinos, over the age of 18, participated in semi-structured interviews. I used data from interviews to answer the following RQs:

RQ1: How do U.S. firstborn Latinos describe their acculturation process and give meaning to their cultural identity?

RQ2: How do U.S. firstborn Latinos describe development of their self-worth beliefs in the context of their acculturation process?

In Chapter 4, I describe the research setting and participants, discuss data collection and analysis, present results, and verify their trustworthiness.

Setting

After being notified of Walden University IRB approval (#12-13-21-0656919 with an expiration date of December 12, 2022), I contacted target communities and received confirmation from leadership of two organizations. These centers provide mental health services for Latino families, and their staff members, the target population, are bilingual, offering services in both languages. They received a letter explaining study details, target population, purpose, and how participants would be involved in research.

I initiated the recruitment process by reaching out to administrative departments of mental health centers to request distribution of flyers with my contact information. Flyers were distributed via staff meetings and email and contained my email address and telephone number, enabling interested individuals to reach out to me. Participants were also encouraged to refer other potential participants, such as friends or acquaintances, after completing interviews. I conducted phone screenings of potential participants, and interviews were scheduled with individuals who met inclusion criteria.

A total of 13 prospective participants initially reached out; one did not meet criteria, and two did not attend scheduled interviews. The final sample size was 10 participants. Interviews were conducted via Zoom after participants provided their consent via email. These interviews were audio recorded and ranged in duration from 37 to 83 minutes. I employed a semi-structured questionnaire, the first section of which contained demographic questions. To assure confidentiality, I deidentified data and assigned participants the codes P1 through P10.

Demographics

A total of 10 U.S. firstborn generation Latinos participated in this investigation. Participants' ages ranged from 29 to 38. The average age of participants was 32.8 ($SD =$ 3.01). The sample included three men and seven women whose parents were from Mexico ($n = 1$), Chile ($n = 1$), the Dominican Republic ($n = 4$), Honduras ($n = 3$) and Peru ($n = 1$). All participants were bilingual in Spanish and English, and demonstrated proficiency in reading, writing, and understanding both languages. P1, P5, P6, and P8 reported that their primary language was Spanish, and P2, P3, P4, P7, P9, and P10

reported they spoke English as their first language. To maintain confidentiality, names and potentially identifying information was removed from annotations and audio recordings.

Data Collection

The average interview time was 45 minutes. At the beginning of each interview, I requested participants provide demographic data and some background information. This approach helped establish rapport, which was essential when discussing sensitive topics (see Appendix A).. I conducted semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. Smith (2004) suggested that the most efficient data collection method for IPA studies is semi-structured interviews. Interviews consisted exclusively of open-ended questions, ensuring that participants could speak about their experiences without being led in any direction. Semi-structured interviews were used to address research questions and topics related to the experience of growing up between two cultures, including childhood memories within households and schools, interactions with peers compared to family and enclave members, and adaptation to and from home and school.

I audio-recorded, transcribed, and subsequently reviewed all 10 interviews. The same interview guide was consistently used across all interviews. Participants shared their experiences involving growing up between two cultures and reflected on their unique experiences. They also described their social and interpersonal experiences while navigating between these two cultures, as well as preferences related to social and romantic interactions. Additionally, they discussed how they assigned meaning to their cultural identity and developed beliefs of self-worth.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is the foundational method of analysis for qualitative studies, given its flexibility and ability to thematize meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I used this approach to analyze collected data and adhered to principles of IPA. By using the thematic analysis method, researchers can identify, analyze, and report themes while organizing information provided by participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Fundamentals of IPA analysis were -maintained during this study. Both thematic and IPA analyses involve analysis of patterns of meaning throughout a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Smith et al., 2009).

After I collected data, I organized it using both IPA and thematic analysis approaches. I generated codes, used a codebook to map the developing analysis, and also noted similarities and emerging themes across data. The third stage involved interpreting data and searching for themes (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). I then reviewed themes in relation to extracted codes and analyzed them to gain a deeper understanding of each theme (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). Development of a codebook explaining the meaning of each code within the context of this study was necessary to enhance comprehension of additional themes that emerged in connection with prior codes (see Table 1).

Table 1

Example of Coding System

Transcription	Line by line coding	Family of codes	Codes	Final codes and subthemes
P1: I speak English, some Spanish, and unfortunately, I don't speak …Honduras dialect which is Garifuna	I don't speak any of the Honduras dialect which is Garifuna	1-The use of Bilingualism	CRITICISM FOR NOT SPEAKING DIALECT	CHALLENGES WITH FLUENCY IN A LANGUAGE Criticism For Not Speaking Dialect
P1: Hum … it is interesting, I always find it that event though I am 32 I always find it cool that I am fortunate enough that I know a second language, Spanish	I am fortunate enough that I know a second language, Spanish	2-Strength based Character building	GRATITUDE FOR BEING BILINGUAL/BICULTURAL	PARENTAL GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT Gratitude For Being Bilingual/ Bicultural
P1: their traditions are different than mine you know… Honduras some of the things… they do here in America. They … understand and we are trying to learn how … in their ways she was raised in Honduras you know	their traditions are different than mine you know them coming here from Honduras some of the things that they do here in America	3-The development of the social circle with the "Latino Character"	CLASH OF TRADITIONS BETWEEN THE US AND LATINO/ CONFUSION	CLASH OF TRADITIONS BETWEEN THE US AND LATINO/ CONFUSION Collectivism Of Latinos Self-Justification Of Ethnic Self-Description
P1: I see what you mean now, no I don't think so, … it bothers me when people don't like me for whatever reason.	it bothers me when people don't like me for whatever reason	4-Obstacles to overcome	LOW SELF ESTEEM	CHALLENGES OF OUTSIDERS Differences/Inferiority Limitations awareness Low self esteem Marginalized Moments Regrets Assimilation BALANCE BETWEEN TWO CULTURES

After data were collected, I transcribed the interviews, coded each interview line by line, and began developing patterns. I created a section called "Processing and Codebook" to document my thoughts and insights regarding the interviews and the participant's experiences. Then, I started to create the codebook. The definition of the codes was entirely based on the participant's answers, an inductive approach that gradually gained content and organization based on comparison across participants' data. After I defined all the codes, the second stage of the process focused on organization, primarily based on themes. This approach enabled me to create a more comprehensive list of themes, followed by the identification of subthemes.

The codebook functioned efficiently as a reference tool after the third interview. This allowed me to consider which codes and themes appeared to be most meaningful to each participant. The creation of a codebook facilitated the organization of data to address research questions. There were still numerous experiences that were unique to individual participants as expected since the participants were Latinos from different countries and unique individuals themselves. For example, the dialect Garifuna characteristic of participants from Honduras was addressed in the code *Criticism for Not Speaking Dialect*. This code referred to the participant's regret for not being able to speak Garifuna, a dialect used in Honduras, her mother's place of origin. Data were individually analyzed for each of the 10 participants and subsequently combined into significant coded units. This approach allowed for comparisons across participants, informing the themes related to the research questions.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The safekeeping of trustworthiness followed the planned steps presented in Chapter 3. There are four criteria qualitative researchers should use to ensure quality and to present respected and academic sounded results (Shenton, 2004). Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are considered parallel forms of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity used in quantitative research (Creswell, 2009; Shenton, 2004). Following are the description and applicability of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in this study.

Credibility

Creswell (2018) identified three main levels of credibility: (a) heuristic, concerning value judgment of the information in diverse settings; (b) interaction, referring to the source, content, clues, and peripheral information; and (c) authenticity, which is believability and reliability. I ensured that participants felt comfortable participating and that they were willing and able to provide accurate responses to the best of their ability at the time of the interview. The participants were provided with a verbatim transcript of their interview. Although it was not necessary, participants were aware that changes were possible, until the interview guide was adequate. I consulted with my chair seeking advice and guidance during data collection and analysis, following the recommendation. I used bracketing to avoid my own experiences and judgements interfering with data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Transferability

Lyle (2018) suggested that a gap in the transferability of cutting-edge research is due to the lack of details in the process of completion. The generalizability of this study is high, considering that the U.S., and in particular, NYC, is a diverse place, with individuals from several nationalities across the world. To enhance readers' ability to transfer information to other settings and population, I am including detailed instructions on the procedure, along with a description of the population, setting, case, and theme, all aimed at ensuring the participants' privacy. Readers benefit from the findings when they are presented with a comprehensive description of the setting, participants, and data. This rich description facilitates the transferability of the study findings to other groups.

Dependability

Funder et al. (2014) reported that a significant problem in behavioral and social science research lies in the dependability and replicability of a study. To assure dependability, I maintained an audit log to report feelings and thoughts throughout the process. I also kept the committee informed, documented and saved the comparisons from the interviews to identify discrepancies and similarities (see Creswell, 2018). The analysis of the audio recordings was subjected to several reviews, a process facilitated by manual transcription. This method allowed for extended reflection on findings and helped me filter out any potential bias. I listened to each recording at least seven times in different times of the day. There was a question concerning the transcription of Spanglish to which the chair promptly responded, ensuring the highest possible in presenting the findings.

Confirmability

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative studies do not operate from a methodological blueprint as every new study is unique (Ellis, 2019). Confirmability builds during the process and relates to the confidence and professionalism of the researcher. The quality of the study is based on the accuracy of data collection and the honest reporting of findings (Ellis, 2019). These measures inform the reader that any other investigator could arrive with similar results.

I remained aware of my personal position in the community and my personal involvement with the population. I frequently reflected on my demeanor and choices of words. When necessary, I consulted with my chair. Additionally, I created a document to record details of the study, including my thoughts, feelings, and reactions elicited by each participants' comments and views.

Results

Four main themes developed from the data analysis: bilingualism, strength-based character building, social circle with the Latino character, and obstacles to overcome (see Table 2).

Table 2

Themes and Subthemes

Theme	Subthemes
1. The use of bilingualism	Languages spoken at home Switching languages Challenges with fluency in a language High Expectations
2. Strength based character building	Resilience Accomplishments (Grades/Work/Title)

		Parental guidance and support
		Multiculturalism and Biculturalism
3.	The development of the social circle with the Latino character	Learning parents' culture
		Separation
		Clash of traditions
		Collectivism of Latinos
4.	Obstacles to overcome	Feelings of Inferiority and Low self-esteem
		Challenges of outsiders
		Assimilation
		Balance between two cultures

Theme One: Use of Bilingualism

This theme describes how the participants learned and used both languages daily. The theme relates to how participants learned English and Spanish at home, the family's language choices within the household, the participants' language acquisition process, and the context in which each language was used. The participants described the environmental influences, among other indicators, leading to their choice of language. The three subthemes related to this theme by the participants were: languages spoken at home, switching languages, and language fluency challenges alongside high expectations.

Languages Spoken at Home

The language spoken at home described how participants explained communication among family members. The majority of participants identified that the first language they learned was Spanish. During childhood, language use focused on expressing and understanding basic needs, greetings, and permission to play or go outside; reading and writing were not introduced in the earlier years. Most participants reported that they did not learn to read and write in Spanish until they began school, alongside their English literacy. Although participants grew beyond the limits of their

households, the rules in the Latino home were clear, and for many of the participants, their parents would strongly recommend that among family members, Spanish was the only language allowed. P1 said:

> Basically, with my aunts who came here with mom, they speak English to me and my siblings and their children; but when my other aunts who just migrate here a couple of years ago are around, they speak Spanish. So, I kind of just read the room that way and respond to them in English or just respond to her and my other aunt in Spanish and some of my cousins also just migrated here last year so just depend on who is in the room for me to think ok so what language am I speaking today.

> P9 said, "the only time that we spoke in English was to interpret for doctors/ to the grocery store, we would only be able to speak English that way."

Unanimously, the participants reported that they were exposed to English when attending school and extracurricular activities. Later, English became the primary language among siblings and peers, an inevitable occurrence as it was easier for the children to immerse in the mainstream language. The participants reported that when unsupervised, they communicated in English with friends and younger siblings because that was how all the other children communicated. While most participants reported that parents valued keeping Spanish alive in the home, the children's needs in school also influenced their choices. The development of participants' bilingualism skills was influenced by their immediate needs. Sometimes, they used bilingualism to blend into their communities, while at other times, it was essential for their academic progress. In

one household, parents observed that their children's limited use of English was causing delays in vocabulary acquisition. This led to a collective decision to encourage English usage. P1 said:

My elder sister had gotten held back because she was only speaking Spanish. My older sister wasn't speaking any English, mom started speaking English to us so than our primary language change.

P3 said:

I speak English because, as for me Spanish was only spoken in my house and my parents tried to learn as much the language as they could possibly so at the same time even in the house it was just English. I manage to speak Spanish from hearing and it is not structured.

P5 said, "I learn English in the second grade that is when I got put into English only classes because I was ESL first."

Switching Languages

The subtheme switching languages was characterized by the participant's need to assess the context and choose which language to use. For example, Spanish was spoken among older Latinos within the enclave environment. Participants frequently described the ongoing need to monitor the environment (or context) in order to decide whether to speak English or Spanish, effectively maintaining their bilingual skills. P5 stated:

I speak Spanish all day at the bodega, obviously all the workers and most of the costumers it is not like I am thinking about it. I do therapy in Spanish but when I

am with my coworker, I communicate in English. I don't think I have to say like

ok, now I have to speak Spanish.

Many participants also highlighted the uniqueness of certain words in Spanish that held

deeper significance for them and provided a more profound means of expressing their

emotions. They often noted how these words carried cultural nuances, memories, and a

sense of identity that could not be fully captured in English. This unique connection to

their native language allowed them to convey emotions and sentiments with a level of

richness and authenticity that they found difficult to replicate when communicating in

English. These words, often steeped in cultural and familial traditions, served as a bridge

connecting them to their heritage and reinforcing their cultural identity. P9 stated:

There is just something about the Spanish language that is so rich and colorful

that sometimes you don't have those words in English.

P5 also stated:

I intentionally look for someone who speaks both, because sometimes I speak in

both and things are differently and it doesn't communicate, you know, just one

way … yo a veces me quiero expresar de una manera, como una manera que

tiene, como una emoción que I feel it in Spanish, right?

Language Fluency Challenges

Language fluency challenges reflected the pressure participants experienced to

improve their fluency when communicating in Spanish or in English. The participants

expressed feelings of frustration and ongoing pressure regarding their fluency. During

childhood, the participants reported experiencing pressure to belong in the enclave. Later

in life, the participants experienced similar challenges coming from both the enclave and school or work settings. Interactions with cousins and friends featured an ongoing demand to be more Latino while around other Latinos. At other times, the participants expressed internal pressure to be more American, leaving interpersonal values behind for the prize of increasing their chances to belong.

Another challenge reported by the participants was the criticism about fluency, both in the enclave and the host culture when they could not speak a particular dialect or did not speak enough of either English or Spanish. A participant from Honduras reported that Garifuna, a dialect used by many previous generations before Spanish, is still a helpful language among natives in Honduras. One of the participants expressed regret for not keeping the language fully alive, as it would further impair the ability to pass it along to future generations. P4 stated:

> When I went to Honduras, some of the family members first language was Garifuna so they did not understand Spanish, so it was Garifuna so I would have to try to say some words, certain things I kind of work my way around so it was not something, like an everyday language to us, I wish there was but you know … my mom, she would speak Garifuna fluently … but we don't.

> P3 also stated:

> I manage to speak Spanish from hearing and it is not structured, it's not perfect but I'm able to understand it, I can do all of that (speak, understand and write in Spanish), it's not perfect but I'm able to I understand.

P10 said, in high school we have English classes and I would tell my mom, oh I

am failing this class, it is an English class and she would be like: why are you

failing this class? You speak English. She didn't understand, I am getting

emotional over that

High Expectations

This subtheme refers to the participants' perception of what parents and society

expected of them based on the opportunities afforded to them when born in the United

States and having Latino parents. The participants discussed expectations unique to

Latino culture and their families of never being good enough and, in their perception,

being robbed of the right to make mistakes. The participants shared ongoing battles to

accomplish tasks that compete with one another and described examples of high-

expectation approaches imposed by both groups, the enclave, and the host community,

such as speaking English because they were born in the U.S. or speaking Spanish because

they are Latinos.

The participants also described a lack of understanding from parents, who, in

multiple examples provided by the participants, expected that being born in the United

States was equivalent to being fully American, which included knowing the language and

customs and easily understanding academic knowledge. The participants reported that

their parents did not understand the complexity of learning English at an academic level

or the differences between knowing English literature and being able to read in English.

According to the participants' responses, their parents assumed that being able to read

English was sufficient for good grades and thought that lower grades were a sign of laziness or unwilling to do the work. P10 stated:

> It is more like literature and yeah … that kind of stuff and I think it is because she didn't really understand and she wasn't open to understand it because I think all she saw was, oh you are getting a bad grade on this and you should get better, yeah you do speak English you should get better, she didn't really think about reading a book or anything like that so it was weird … I tried to do my work at school more when I could, at home it was a little stressful, because my mom at the time."

> P5 said, I can think of so many things but yeah, I absolutely had experienced so many stressors related to my culture, being Latino speaking Spanish in public spaces, you know other feeling uncomfortable with it … you know … and there are the other things, just being a son of an immigrant, it is not really connected though the Dominican culture but the expectations and staff like those being the first born in the family, it is like kind of screwed up … [Laugh] I think that there is a lot of expectation and them the expectations aren't so clear which makes it even more confusing so there are very high expectations, they were broad and unclear so you are not necessarily getting a good you know a good plan and a good picture of what you are supposed to do, it is almost like you have to succeed.

Theme Two: Strength-Based Character Building

This theme describes how participants perceived life events and interactions with family and outsiders that contributed to their identity formation process in a positive way.

This includes how participants developed the capacity to successfully face challenges, adjust, and readjust to their environments. Theme two illustrates how the participants used challenges to their advantage, valuing their unique traits that began shaping their cultural identity. Self-focus and self-reliance were key attributes that helped them attain individual goals, leading to the development of a sense of importance and value. Key topics related to this theme included resilience, accomplishments, parental guidance and support, protective factors, multiculturalism, and biculturalism.

Resilience

Resilience was a key topic generated as part of this theme and refers to one's ability to recover and bounce back from adversities or changes (Hacker, 2011). Resilience relates to how participants described difficult moments in life and how these events made them emotionally stronger. The participants described the challenges of life that made them who they are, enabling them to face obstacles. Among these challenges were the extra work the participants endured, including taking extra classes in English as a second language, having working parents who were rarely available for extracurricular activities, and not sharing a vacation schedule with other parents or taking vacations at all. The participants reported that their parents were in the United States only to work. As hard as this was, it taught the participants to keep moving, bouncing back from the challenges. P5 stated:

> You can't complaint you got no time to complaint you can't, you can't complaint
> you are being raised in America, what do you have to complaint about it, hum but

part of me and I don't know if it has to be other struggles, in the face of struggle I

have sort of giving up on things in my life … I have, but I always had a hold on to

the mentality that I am going to come back; my partner told me something

recently, she was like: look (P5) you are the comeback kid.

P7 also stated:

When you go to the mainstream, the American setting, I definitely notice you

know, how other people might be more successful than me because we grew up

differently, specially like financially where Americans or like white people; a lot

of people come from money so maybe accomplishing certain goals for them was

easier and continue to be easier or like because of their ethnicity, so, you know,

open certain doors, going to certain rooms. [Metaphorically] I had to shrink

myself to fit in anyone's box and I feel like when I went to college and I

experienced the things that I experienced, that just built up my self-worth and

self-confidence. I don't have to change who I am just to please you.

Most of the participants described their exposure to two cultures as a strength

rather than a weakness. They believed that their exposure to two cultures provided them

with a unique biracial background that strengthened their individuality, including the

ability to speak another language and understand a different cultural context. The

participants reported using the traits and unique aspects of their biracial background for

individual gain, particularly in understanding another language, while their American

peers could only speak and understand English and American culture. During their

childhood, the participants recognized that knowing another language was a useful tool

for communicating among themselves without others being privy to their discussions. As they matured, having a biracial background became a distinguishing factor in the workforce. Participants in this study provided services to Latinos and immigrants from various backgrounds, and their bicultural and bilingual perspectives helped them establish rapport. They could connect through their personal experiences with the individuals they served. Additionally, with their bilingual clients, participants had the ability to switch languages to convey content that is more meaningfully expressed in the clients' native language.

While being bicultural and bilingual facilitated integration and interconnectedness among people, and all the participants shared the experience of bicultural ethnic stress. The participants described interactions in which other individuals stereotyped the appearance of Latinos. Others failed to identify the participants' language skills. They reported that expectations at home also featured flawed assumptions. For example, some parents expected their children who were born in the United States to naturally learn English and to not experience additional language or academic challenges. P4 stated:

> Because she doesn't tell us oh it is ok, no she tells us you guys are Americans. [participant referring to the lack of support from the parent when not accomplishing a desired grade in an English course]

Although it was more common to experience stereotyping and racism coming from outside, the participants reported these challenges were also present at home. Overall, participants indicated that their parents were overprotective and lacked trust in the American settings. While this was often done with the good intention of protecting

their children, it sometimes resulted in communication differences that led to feelings of isolation. P5 said:

> Latinos sort of separated, isolated themselves, and it is like you know they wouldn't accept my friends all the time/ tu va correr mal el camino, he is hanging out with los tigres en la calle. [parent making reference to blacks as a bad influence]

> When describing Self-Focus/Self-reliance, the participants stressed the importance of knowing their goals and moving with purpose towards accomplishing them. They also emphasized the need to avoid diversions or peer pressure that could potentially change their trajectory and interfere with their ultimate goals. The participants discussed the importance of self-motivation and reinforcing their skills. The participants reported that when they encountered discrimination, or found themselves in the position of accommodating to fit into a crowd, it was important to remain loyal to their original beliefs. Reinforcing the participants reported beliefs that self-focus and self-reliance was key to their success. The participants reported interactions with Americans that might seemed insignificant but were, in fact, small ways of marginalizing individuals, such as how others pronounced their names.

A participant disclosed that it was not uncommon to hear foreigners inquire about the English version of a proper name, and it was their personal responsibility to insist that a proper name should not be altered. The participants described the importance of focusing on key aspects of themselves and self-reliance to maintain their Latino

attributes. This includes the importance of trusting themselves to overcome obstacles and problem-solving when facing life's ongoing challenges. P5 stated:

So I really don't negotiate as much as I did , now there are space that I work on, specially like in white spaces I am still struggling with that, Like with my identity in white spaces the ways that I am seeing and that I present myself in those spaces pero [but] I don't do it as much today, today I present myself as [participant's name as it is pronounced in Spanish] and if you don't know how to pronounce it, figure it out you know what I mean and that is who I am and if hearing someone speaking Spanish makes you uncomfortable you should go speak to someone about that, you know I am much less apologetic about it, it is my existence this is who I am, and these are parts of my identity I don't feel like I need to be negotiating them now it is taking me a lot of work I am 38 y/o and in that stage of my life I am still working on. I am still growing I am still working out these things I am still figuring out where they come from and how they affected me hum … how to change the things that I need to change so I can continue to grow, but I recognize that there is space that I am still working on.

The participants emphasized the importance of simultaneously filtering influences, rejections, and objections from both the enclave and members of the host culture. These challenges could act as deterrents, underscoring the significance of staying focused on their goal of successfully embracing both their Latino and American identities. They stressed the value of harnessing their strength to reach their full potential, finding satisfaction in self-sufficiency, and maintaining the ongoing assurance of their

values within the community, especially in being accountable for their own happiness. The participants reported that these attributes were essential for continuing to progress toward their ultimate goals, which varied from person to person and included achievements such as promotions, degrees, and their own definitions of success – all of which bring pride to both their families and themselves. P7 stated:

> I try to find the positive in everything, my friends laugh because if something negative happens I am always saying oh well at least, it wasn't this or that. I don't know I feel like I learned that when I was younger, that, even if something is going on, there is someone going to something worse we often fall into the rabbit role of believing that what is happening to me is the end of the world and you hear what other people might be facing and you are like wow!!! I am glad I am not going through that, so yeah when facing disappointment, I just attribute to having a bad day and move along.

> P6 said, I just moved out of my mom's house, so being independent and being able to do things and know that, like all, you are able to do things you don't need others being around, that recently made me feel good about myself. To know that I don't always need people to be around to be happy, I don't.

Another topic of great significance to many of the participants was their deep sense of pride in their consistent ability to display flexibility and adaptability in the face of various challenges. They shared their reflections and experiences regarding how adapting to the ever-changing environment had not only become a valuable trait but also a fundamental and indispensable skill. P2 stated:

When I was a child did not choose my own school, they did not make sure that

there was a population of my people I don't have control over that it was the

environment that my mom put me in, so I just had to adapt so that would be the

difference, having choice of embracing the culture.

P8 also stated:

Hum, yea growing up it felt like if you were on the wrong side of the people …

like for example if you were on the side hanging out with the Spanish people and

you were spending time talking in English, it would be like, no no ok, why are

you doing this? It would be like are you trying to ditch us and if you were with the

English crew and you start to speak Spanish, it would be like, if you want to hang

out with Spanish crew so badly just go over there, so you know, that would

become a problem trying to be yourself in between those specific groups and

those specific settings. Growing up it was more of stress because you don't want

to have to choose, but when you are young you have to choose, because you

couldn't have it both ways, you had to constantly accommodate things and

people.

Accomplishments (Grades/Work/Title)

This subtheme relates to the participants' achievements or successes that they

considered meaningful and significant, such as grades in school, accomplishments at

work, professional growth, and the stable presence of a support system. The participants

reported that their experiences working toward their individual goals involved stress and

pressure. They reported that in the enclave, it was viewed as a collective accomplishment,

while in the broader American culture, it was simply seen as another step in their lives. The participants also expressed the importance of having their immediate and extended families present in their lives, which maintains the collectivistic dynamic of Latino culture. They also emphasized the significance of maintaining stable professional relationships, advancing within the work environment, and sustaining close ties with family as major accomplishments. Additionally, they highlighted their capacity to continually expand these support systems. P2 stated:

> When you are blessed with so much and you are able to identify all the good things that have happened / it shows how much hard work I had put into my life that makes my self-esteem goes skyrocket the amount of support that I have. I have plenty of people to turn to if I need no one take it away from me but God.

> Accomplishments were closely linked to the participants' sense of self-esteem, their belief in their self-worth, and their perceived impact on the overall perception of their communities. Additionally, their ability to be authentic and to both receive and give respect among family, friends, and coworkers played a significant role. P1 stated:

> I won't ever scooped down to someone or try to accommodate for someone who don't respect me, like if you don't respect me that is grounds for well, you don't respect me I can't really have in my life because I deserve respect I am someone who is worthy of respect specially if I never disrespect you, my biggest achievement in life, since you know, I can remember just the way I am able to carry myself in front people professionally with friends and I guess just for the person that I become or the person that I am you know self, sorry, carrying

individual whom always consider other people feelings before making

assumptions to why they behave the way they do.

P3 also stated:

Sometimes in the value that you bring to people right, so just I'm naturally a hard

worker and sometimes that you were getting compliments for the work that you

do that increases my self-esteem or just getting a random compliment is

something that helps a lot, also being in the Hispanic culture we are very touch

very physical though and very loving so also having that family aspect all of that

helps me.

Parental Guidance and Support

The participants conveyed that their parent's participation was identified as a

critical factor leading to success. Participants described what they learned from parents

and older Latino members in their community. The influence of parents related to an

arduous process that originated in their home country. Participants shared that their

parents often describe their journey as one marked by fear, social change, and sacrifices -

a legacy that was passed on to future generations. The participants expressed gratitude for

their parents, acknowledging the valuable advice they received and the role their parents

played as models of independence. The strong work ethics and adherence to their parents'

family traditions were reported as instrumental in preserving the Latino culture. P1

stated:

I guess it would go back to my mom you know she, as far as self-worth she

always raised me being in that I was raised by a single mother she always raised

me to not depend on anybody to always do things for myself and not to really

trust that anyone else was going to do it if I wasn't able to do it for myself … so

with that, that is just like where it goes, as far as self-esteem I think also from my

mother to an extent and just from the people around me also you known, the field

that I chose to go into because you know if you don't as my mother said, she

always raised me to not to depend on anybody to always do things for myself I

have to set that self-esteem and self-worth for yourself and those standards for

yourself. How is that anyone else is going to have it for you so it goes into what

my mom has taught me just never letting anyone to pick your future.

Parental protection and involvement significantly differed in school achievements

among children from immigrant families (Nguyen & Hale, 2017). Most of the

participants described the importance of having at least one parent motivating and

holding them accountable for good grades. Many of the participants reported being

overprotected by their parents, and thus, not knowing of the difficulties waiting for them

outside. The participants reported that, at the time, they viewed this protection as

unpleasant. However, the perspective they shared during the interviews identified it as a

benefit of remaining unaware of some challenges at a young age. This protection served

as a shield from a world of differences. The participants reported that during childhood,

they were just kids. They played with siblings and cousins and were not aware of the

differences. Although they were not prepared for the upcoming challenges, the

participants were still able to enjoy their childhood. P7 stated:

Growing up I don't think I felt that way, because growing up I was with family

and my cultural background, I spend time and went to school and everything with

people that were like me, Latinos. I feel like stressors came up as I grew up

specially when I went to college where majority of the people didn't look like me,

majority of the people were white and also in the professional world so now I feel

like stressors are the fact that I speak a different language, my skin is darker I feel

like those a stressor that are related to my cultural background.

Most participants disclosed their experiences of inclusion within the immediate

community and the diverse school system. Although the other children came from

various backgrounds, they all shared the commonality of being different and were open to

diversity. The participants discussed how their differences did not deter their peers from

welcoming them into the group. They seized the opportunity to foster inclusion and

promote acculturation. The support they received from other culturally diverse groups

and members of the host culture was essential to their process of acculturation and full

integration into society. P2 stated:

I just adjusted the best way that I could and the people that did accepted me a

little bit or hum … not even a little bit let me not say that, the few friends that I

had, did accepted me for who I was they taught me their culture you know,

essentially I asked questions and they supported me in which way that they could

until today one of them still a very close friend of mine and she helped me out,

she taught me how to talk and told me you have to do this way and talk this way,

you know and that is what help me navigate through was that I had the support at

least from you know two people that did accepted who I was and I am not saying

that they tried to change me they helped me with that navigation part of trying to

fit in and so that I felt comfortable.

The participants drew attention to the significance of having at least one secure

attachment in each cultural setting. For many of them, it was their mother or parent who

provided unconditional support and encouragement; for others, it was someone within the

community who taught them the value of their Latino heritage. Equally important was

forming a similar connection with someone from the host culture, as it served as a major

protective factor during the process, strengthening identity formation.

Multiculturalism and Biculturalism

This key subtheme describes participants' experiences related to opportunities for

embracing values beyond the emerging host culture and interacting with immigrants from

various countries. Maintaining home culture while adopting new habits adds value

(Berry, 1997) and increases the probability for a diverse support system. Participants

expressed that receiving support and inclusion from other groups, even if they did not

share their culture fully but had similarities, was reassuring. The integration of values is a

predictor of best acculturation outcomes and individual adjustment, a vital element of

multicultural societies (Berry, 1997). However, navigating the complexities of building

one's identity involves a multitude of variables that extend beyond the mere combination

of two languages. While the American culture values privacy and individual

accomplishments, such as developing personal social support, Latino culture holds the

belief that "La familia es todo," meaning the family is everything. P6 stated:

Hum, growing up I think it was frustrating for 13, 10, 9 or 6 y/o me, because I

think about, I went to catholic and public schools, and a lot of the schools that

went to were with other Latin children but it was also white children Afro

American children and we did not have the same culture, I guess the same

responsibilities, when you talk to them, like when growing up I could not go to

sleep overs, I couldn't stay out late, I had a curfew when I was in high school, I

had curfew to be on the phone, the computer had to be on living room where

everyone can see what you were doing, like I feel like my parents were so much

more strict than other kids parents.

The participants shared instances where the need to accommodate values from

both cultures created barriers between them. For example, sleepovers are an ordinary

activity among Caucasian Americans, fostering bonding between friends, while they are

viewed as an entirely unacceptable practice in Latino culture. Another difference reported

by the participants was related to eating habits, and socialization around food. They noted

that Latino cuisine tends to be richer, and people are more inclined to gather together

during meals. They recognized that Latinos from various parts of Central and South

America exhibit cultural variations within the broader Latino culture. However, these

variations are comparable, and they share commonalities that distinguish them from the

dominant culture. P3 stated:

I think it happens to some family, it happens to mine because we live in New

York City, so I live in NY I think we have some many Spanish cultures that it just

gets blended in, So even though I love my family and it is Peruvian, my mom

would eventually cook Dominican food and even this other type of Spanish food

even the language in the lingo becomes from different Spanish countries.

Americans, they eat fast food they're ready to know yet is Independence Day big

football game, I forgot what it is called I think la copa Yeah/ American culture

kind of like blends in with the Hispanic culture.

P6 also stated:

The food we aet the way my parents raised us was very different than some of my

friends that were non-Spanish speakers. Just like What we did on Saturdays

morning, how we had to go to church on Sundays, some of the expectations that

my mom had from us was very different from the expectations that other parents

had for their children growing up and I now see that it is more cultural when I

speak to other people that are also Dominican or Puerto Ricans and other Spanish

speaking countries it was more of a cultural thing other than just my mom.

Overall, social gatherings are a driving force of multiculturalism within Latino

communities, and an emerging one when it comes to blending cultures in general. These

gatherings allow participants to selectively incorporate aspects of one culture they value

into different areas of their lives as they progress in defining their individual identity.

The theme of strength-based character building in the lives of U.S. first-

generation Latinos primarily highlights four essential subthemes. Parental guidance and

support illustrated how the participants were provided with a strong foundation and

nurturing environment, fostering responsive and ethical development. Multiculturalism

led the participants to a higher understanding of diverse perspectives, promoting empathy

and flexibility across various scenarios. Accomplishments served as measurable evidence to their potential, symbolizing primary steps in nurturing self-esteem and positive self-worth beliefs, reinforcing the foundation for resilience. Lastly, participants shared experiences that contributed to resilience, illustrating their ability to recover from life's adversities. These adversities taught them diligence and determination, building a character of high value in society.

Theme Three: Development of the Social Circle with the Latino Character

The third theme developed organically throughout the participant's disclosures about their lives that inherently illustrated the link with the Latino culture. The participants spoke about challenges, customs, and beliefs they learned about from their parents. The theme highlighted different aspects unique to Latino culture. It described how these cultural elements continue to shape the participant's identity and their surroundings. The theme revealed the reasons behind both controlled and uncontrolled factors that brought them closer to their communities and the support systems for both the present and the future. Confirming Berry's (1997) assessments that integration is the most successful style of acculturation, which is contingent upon the acceptance and welcoming aspects of the larger group. The participant's responses indicate that maintaining contact with traditions was essential for the foundation of one's cultural identity. The collective nature of the community was needed to carry on the Latino habits and traditions. The key topics informing this theme includes the participant's learnings from their parents' culture, the clash of traditions between the U.S. and the Latino culture, confusion and impact of immigration in layers.

Learning about Parents' Culture, Marianism, and Respect Based on Age

This subtheme pertains to the participant's view on some culturally inherited values. A belief system that was passed down from one generation to the next by their parents and older relatives from the home country. The participants discussed differences in parental styles, household commitments, and times when their parents faced limitations related to their own acculturation process. The collective nature of Latino culture was initially transmitted through modeling, where participants observed their parents and the dynamics within the Latino community. The participants observed how the sense of belonging grew within their families, contributing to the development of their character independently from their parents. However, the participants still carry traits, such as an admiration for the togetherness of Latino people. P5 stated:

> I did like you know one thing that I feel I always attribute to my Dominican side right that side of my culture is that it was always full of family, I definitely love, like the family that I grew up it was always big, I grew up close to my cousins, it was always very family oriented, always like parties, just the togetherness and our family was much part of our culture, it was not even just our family it was extended family, people that my parents grew up with also migrated to NY they were the community and almost like an extension of our family like, so that is something that I always appreciate, and that unique to that side of my culture.

Participants identified aspects of Latino culture where change was needed based on life situations or habits that could better suit their current needs. These aspects included concepts like gender roles and the common collectivistic cultural principles of

Marianismo and Machismo. While the strength-based approach is favorable and in alignment with Latino culture (Acevedo et al., 2020), behaviors considered maladaptive by their community underwent changes (Leon, 2010), which were welcomed by the participants. Marianismo, often discussed alongside Machismo, illustrates coexisting constructs that depict socially acceptable norms and beliefs supporting men and women in traditional gender roles, emphasizing a patriarchal power structure (Nunez et al., 2015). The participants referred to a perception of predominant gender roles in Latino culture, where females often assist males with domestic tasks, including cooking, serving food, and taking care of the house. P6 stated:

When you speak to other people and particular matters that we had, particular ways like now, when me and my boyfriend go over for dinner, she [the mother] expects me to make him a plate because that is what we are supposed to do, or like if my mother or my grandmother need me for something I suppose to do because that is what I am supposed to do as the daughter as the granddaughter. [The role of the oldest daughter is to be a caregiver]

P4 also stated:

In Honduras oppose to the freedom in American, you know over there and any country outside of America, you know women have strict rules, women are like, it is hard for them, so when they came over here and have children, they are like 10x harder.[in reference to working outside that house and still having to do all the tasks that takes for a household to run, such as cooking, cleaning in addition to raising kids, tasks that in Latino culture are automatically assigned to females].

In addition, participants described the formal treatment and added respect when interacting with elderly members of the community and authority figures in general. In Latino culture, respect in Latino culture was not earned within that a particular relationship but inherently established by age or position in the community. The participant also noted that their demeanor in school, when addressing professors and mentors, was significantly different from their American peers. In a cross-sectional survey, Acevedo et al. (2020) observed that Latino Navy recruits were more positive traits, such as showing respect to an individual who was older or held higher rank. The participants expressed they were surprised when they witnessed how American views and treatment of professors were different from Latino culture. The participants shared that they learned to respect professors at a young age due to the authority their titles represent and the elderly community based on the wisdom accumulated throughout their lifetime. P9 stated:

> I just remember feeling uncomfortable in the classroom because I look different, I dressed different I dressed very urban and I was in a class, I sat in the back I felt so awkward and it was interesting cause most Latinos sad in the back and white kids would seat in the front but it was just weird, they had different way of speaking, they were sassy with they speak with the professors. And all mam I would be dammed if was sassy to a teacher. I saw how some of my classmates got aways with certain things, I didn't need to get away with things because I was good with things, I was a good student or whatever and the professors seem pretty fair all the time, but I just remember that the class had so much privilege. I

remember just like in general the girls they were like Italian or Irish and they just

came out so like they were intitled to, they come to the professors and say things

like you need to change my grade, and I was like what?

P1 also stated:

I did see a lot of kids talking back to their teachers and my mom always taught us

to never talk back to your elderlies and respect them so a lot of that kids not really

listening or following the rules that was unspoken rule in my home so if you

brought it to school and you brought it home and you're probably in trouble.

A sense of togetherness and music are two of the many pivotal points of Latino

culture and central features of collectivistic communities that unite people. Participants

discussed their deep appreciation for these elements, which often lead to gatherings and

social bonds marked by physical proximity during events and a strong sense of belonging

at parties and celebrations. Togetherness, music, and cultural traditions embellish the

participants' experiences with family, friends, and the Latino community. They also noted

that their emotional distance or closeness to loved ones could vary when their bicultural

identity manifested in contrasting themes. Participants highlighted the community aspects

that promoted mutual support during good and challenging times. The participants

reported that the Latino tradition of welcoming new members with food, music, and

dance played a significant role in creating a profound sense of belonging among

immigrants. Knowing or being related to someone from the community often serves as a

metaphorical pass to becoming a member of the family. P2 stated:

From the Garifuna culture I like the music I love the unity that the Latino culture

has I think that's what I like most Because although I don't know if you ever

heard this but although technically you know we are not related by blood, but the

second you know all this person is Honduran, all this person is Guatemalan and

you will hear things like that is you cousin, uncle, or that is your relative and you

know that is not really my cousin nor my uncle it is just you know when my mom

was growing up this person supported her so out of respect that becomes you "tio"

ella e tu prima or this or the other hum that's what I like you know it's not about

blood relation it's about the support, whoever is there to support you is family it's

not about hey who is your sister or your uncle if someone was able to support at

anyway shape or form that is your family.

While music bringing people together is not unique to Latinos, the unifying power

of music is widely observed during Latino celebrations (O'Hagin & Harnish, 2006). The

participants emphasized the powerful impact of music in uniting people and preserving

the community's history. They described dance as more than just physical body

movement; it is a reflection of their heritage, a part of history that reflects their people.

By dancing and singing, they are able to keep the culture alive. P2 stated:

By the time I got to college of course I was in the social work field you know the

people that I was around and they were all from different back ground so they

were more open, to hear about my culture getting to wanting to know and learn

about it I get so many people that as an adult it's just became so much more

known you know we bring anyone around and even at celebrations oh you know

let's dance Punta, they are more interested about the culture so I am a lot more comfortable as the years has passed by I became a lot more comfortable because not only society knows more about the culture.

Separation

This subtheme explored how the acculturation process of parents influenced U.S. firstborn generation identity formation as participants adhered to Latino values and customs. The fourfold acculturation theory, as described by Berry (1990), involves separation or segregation, which entails distancing from the larger society while maintaining ethnic identity and traditions from the home country. The participants described their interactions between home and the host settings, where U.S. culture often took precedence. The participants reinforced the importance of the lessons they learned from their parents in achieving positive outcomes. For many participants, their Latino culture provided a sense of security, particularly in terms of their identity, even more during moments when they rejected some aspects of American culture. Despite many of the participants' parents completing the naturalization process and becoming legal American citizens, they retained their Latino identity. P2 stated:

> My mom 100% Garifuna you know she did learn the English language of course to make it, to get around in the US obviously to help us with homework she had kids that were American so she had to learn American culture but outside of that she still goes back to Honduras she still cooks the traditional food she still follows the traditions for Honduras I would say 100%.
>
> P9 stated:

They are chilenos, through and through, the way that I would describe is, she is a

disgruntled citizen of the U.S., she was brought to the US when she was a teen,

and the reason I say that is that she often share that she was brought over against

her will, her father was here as a Marine, established, he immigrated here and

after established he claim my mother and my grandmother but my mother never

wanted to leave, she had her friends, her family everyone was there, nobody was

here in NY, so through the years I always heard this disgruntled ness, this anger,

this wasn't my choice I didn't wanted to be here, but if I wasn't here I would

haven't met your father and would never have had you guys, but that is the only

good thing that comes out of the U.S. I would describe her as a disgruntled

American citizen she just wants to go back to Chile and live there forever.

Clash of Traditions

This subtheme highlighted the complexity of co-occurring and contradictory

aspects of participants' Latino cultural and ethnic identity and the U.S. mainstream

culture. The participants described the processes charged with stress and confusion when

navigating both cultures. Although biculturalism is associated with lower acculturative

stress, while marginalization is linked to higher stress and depressive symptoms (Capielo

& Dillon, 2019), participants described key moments when one culture conflicted with

the values of another. For example, they explained instances where fashion served as a

means of developing and asserting one's identity in American culture but was viewed as a

symbol of rebellion in Latino culture. P10 stated:

I was definitely that kind of girl that wanted to dye my hair blond at one point lol

yeah … I wanted to have my car and I wanted to have everything that was

portraited on TV in the American lifestyle and my mom would be like no no no,

she would rumble us basically, she would be like pump the breaks lol so she was

like, no we don't have the money for that and it is this way for now, whenever

you get older you can buy everything that you want for yourself but for now this

is how it is here, and I was like ok.

P10 stated:

I did find myself Hispanic friends but not a lot, mainly all them were just English

speakers, because that mind set when I was younger was put in me basically that I

had to fit in to that crowed. Back then it was tuff mentally, because of course, I

wanted to I mean, my mom was like ok this is how home life is like, and I wanted

to bring that American lifestyle into my mom's lifestyle and have a little bit more

of that, but she would not let that hum … whereas like in school … it was easier

in school maybe … Or not it was hard in both now that I think about it, now wait

… thinking about it was both kind of hard.

The participants discussed the challenges they faced while growing up and not

understanding why things in their homes were different, including customs, beliefs, and

traditions that their parents had brought from their home country. At the time, they

encountered values that seemed outdated and posed a threat to their inclusion with their

peers in the United States. Participants shared childhood memories of seemingly simple

activities their friends could enjoy at school, such as sleepovers, extended playdates at a

friend's house, or having a higher degree of freedom – all of which their parents did not allow. These experiences were puzzling to them in the context of their parents' strong opposition to such practices. The participants' disclosure underscores the significant role of parents in preserving the Latino culture as an integral part of their identity.

Collectivism of Latinos

The participants described various aspects of Latino culture that influence their identity construct, including both positive and negative feedback received throughout their lives. They described the enclave as intrusive and aggressive, using the term 'bochinche' to describe a form of gossip where one person's business appears to impact the entire family. Participants reported that in the Latino enclave, people openly share their unsolicited feedback and spread messages throughout the community. They also discussed the negative impact of constant pressure to be perfect, with the community having something to say about nearly everything, including clothing choices, marital status, weight fluctuation, and virtually every facet of their lives. P6 stated:

> What other people think most of the time and I think that I believe that it is not high all the time because living in a household with Spanish people everything is critique, you too fat, you are too skinny, that is too tie, that is too lose, whey don't to wear ear rings, you look like a boy, your hair needs to be done all the time. Those are sentences literally out of my mother's mouth, all the time, so I think that in Spanish culture, before they lift you up, they break you down first. Versus, in an American culture where you are applauded for everything that you do. There is no moment where you are not the greatest kid in the world. But in the Spanish

culture all of your flows are put out for everyone to see it, anywhere within

family."

On a more positive note, Latinos come together to collectively support and

celebrate the success of a member. The achievement of an individual symbolizes the

success of their entire family and enclave. However, this community perspective also

places a sense of pressure and responsibility on the individual to succeed in life and make

their loved ones proud. The structured expectations, though symbolically delineated with

lines of judgment, help keep participants loyal to their Latino roots. P8 stated:

> About the Hispanic culture I would say that I did not like that, if things are not
>
> done with a specific standard, it is like you are not even trying, that is about it,
>
> like for Semana Santa (Holly week) you are eating meat because you felt like not
>
> dealing with the whole situation, you just doing it wrong, it is very judgmental,
>
> that is what it is, it could be very judgmental.

The strength or salience of ethnic identity varies according to the individual's

experiences with the socially constructed expectations, values, and belief system to which

they belong (Rinderle & Montoya, 2008). The high standards and significant

responsibility placed on individuals at an early age could sometimes lead them to drift

away from their support system.

An essential aspect of preserving the Latino culture was the arrival of new

immigrants into the enclave, with members of the family immigrating in layers. The

initial immigrants worked diligently, gathering resources and preparing for the arrival of

their families. Participants described how their families gradually reunited in the United

States over the years, assisting with the immigration process for relatives who joined one by one until they were all united. P4 stated:

> A lot of people from Honduras them came over here and my mom actually brought a lot her sister home when she came over here, my mom is very cultural she definitely represents Honduras to the fullest, you know she started from nothing over there and you know she made her way over here and brought her siblings over here and so everyone was good, she was the first one, out of her siblings, she was the one helping her brothers, sisters and cousins. She was always about helping people like I am going to come here and I am going to bring my family with me.

The extent to which an individual maintained contact with their home culture has a direct impact on their ability to retain fluency in the language and cultural traditions. For many, staying in close contact with relatives who had recently arrived was not just a choice but a necessity. This exposure compelled the U.S. firstborn generation Latinos to actively practice their Latino habits and reinforce their cultural traditions. When a new family member joined the community from the home country, it created an immersive environment where the language and traditions were not only preserved but also passed down to subsequent generations. Children, in particular, had no option but to engage with their Latino heritage as they interacted with these relatives, fostering a strong connection to their cultural roots. Thus, maintaining contact with the home culture became a vital means of preserving language fluency and cultural identity within future generations.

Theme Four: Obstacles to Overcome

The fourth theme explores how the participants described the obstacles they

needed to overcome as first-generation Latinos. Acculturation is a chronological and

attitudinal process faced by migrants and their families (Berry, 1997). The participants

described facing several barriers from early childhood to adulthood, even when raising

their own children. In this final section, I present the participants' accounts of the

challenges they faced as outsiders, including differences, feelings of inferiority,

limitations, and their awareness of these difficulties. These challenges encompass

stressors that may result in low self-esteem, moments of marginalization, feelings of

regret, and the process of assimilation.

Feelings of Inferiority and Low Self-Esteem

In this subtheme, the participants described their experiences growing up, where

the absence of resources and emotional support communicated differences, inferiority,

and limitations, reinforcing the importance of awareness. The participants discussed their

impressions and beliefs that members of the minority Latino community were often

perceived as inferior to individuals from the larger setting. They recalled instances where

they felt different from their peers, which, although seemingly insignificant, left a lasting

impact. These instances included bringing homemade lunches to school, having curly

hair, and wearing colorful clothes. All of these instances contributed to their sense of

being different. P7 stated:

In college it was different because you know people were like, oh my gosh where

are you from, you speak Spanish, you have curly hair can I touch it, [laugh] just

those type of encounters or just people being very negative, saying no you cannot come in here, because you are not white, I definitely experienced those things in college I even experienced comments from professors, I remember one a professor told me, wow, you are articulated I didn't expect that.

The participants shared a range of experiences, including their attempts to adjust their appearance to conform more closely to American norms. Over time, these efforts created additional challenges, distancing them from the core characteristics of their Latino identity that had previously been integral to their sense of self. As they progressed in life, this distancing from their Latino identity sometimes led to its neglect or even self-silencing.

An example of this self-silencing extended beyond cultural differences; it encompassed behaviors like refraining from asking questions in school, which were not necessarily tied to their Latino identity but were driven by a desire to avoid drawing attention. This desire often took precedence over their aspirations for personal growth and learning. This approach persisted throughout their lives and may have negatively impacted their individual potential, perhaps reinforcing natural barriers to pursuing their own dreams while feeling compelled to fulfill their parents' or community's expectations. P5 stated:

There were periods that I felt like dam, am I pursuing this because I want to do it or am I doing this for someone else, or I am just still trying to fulfil someone else's expectations or am I just functioning and working hard just because my parent taught me that I have to do so I don't know, it is a very complicated

question and it has gone up and down hum in the past I have from being confident

and to be honest with you as an adult that is where I have questioned myself like

at this stage of my life is when I have questioned myself the most, I have asked

myself why have I made the decisions that I made, did I made them for me or did

I made them for my parents or for other people because that is what I was taught

you get to put your head down and you get to keep moving forward hum so in

moments like this that you is probably I think that I felt more confident as child

than I feel as an adult, I jump out of high school at 17 and felt more confident as a

high school dropout in life than I did as an adult with a master's degree.

At various points in their lives, many participants reported experiencing low self-

esteem and doubting their own worth, which sometimes made them feel less valuable

than their American peers. Over time, these feelings led them to approach life with

specific challenges, patterns, and behavior that reinforced their self-perceived inferiority.

Many participants described how these experiences eroded their self-trust, often

prioritizing their happiness as secondary and, in some cases, contributing to

psychological distress. P3 stated:

My self-esteem use to fluctuate a lot, because I think and also with me just

because I had like a lot of struggle with a like self-doubts even though I was My

parents put me in the best position possible I never understand why about the

struggle I just have doubts with why … like how am I going to complete this goal

or can I complete this goal it was just like something psychological just like it put

like a stop in me, but eventually I am able to overcome.

P5 stated:

I struggled in that area, my self-esteem is something that has fluctuated, today at

this moment of my life I think I am more intentional on working on and being

honest with myself, about how I value myself right, and learning to be myself for

the things that matter to me. So, I think that for a long time I had a low self-

esteem, I never perceived that way, I was constantly feeding in that monster I was

valuing myself with people's sort of happiness being sort of, like being a provider

was such a big part of my identity, like what I can do for others but never feeling

fulfilled myself, my own needs, or even asking myself what I needed, people

would. Myself? what I needed and I would be like hum … that was such a wild

idea because I was always so consumed with pleasing others.

Many participants reported they frequently equated their value with what they

could contribute to their families while in the enclave, potentially at the expense of

achieving personal goals or even identifying what might have been their personal

fulfillment. In some cases, acculturative challenges can undermine one's life

opportunities, potentially leading to marginalization (Berry, 1997). While some groups

within the American setting embrace cultural diversity and promote a positive

multicultural ideology, it is important to note that acceptance varies and can be

influenced by preferences for specific cultural, racial, and religious groups (Berry, 1997).

Challenges of Outsiders

This subtheme describes financial, cultural, and emotional challenges that U.S.

firstborn-generation Latinos faced throughout their lives. Participants shared their

experiences of feeling like outsiders in both the enclave and the larger American setting, where they had to navigate the need to be "more" American in school and being "more" Latino at home. These life aspects created constant barriers, leading to feelings of separation and negatively impacting the participants' pride in their dual identity as Latinos and Americans. They discussed a lack of interest in both settings when it came to the other side of their identity. At home, parents could not relate to or express deep interest in their experiences from school, while in school, their American peers showed no interest in experiences that are deeply important and significant milestones in life, integral to the Latino culture. P8 stated:

> I found to be something special, or I found to be something worth sharing it was treated like that is not that serious, or when the teachers would be like, how your guy's weekend was? And we all would talk about it, what we all Hispanics were doing it was not relevant compared to anybody else, it was treated different, not everybody celebrated or did that. Like there was an instance that I had my first baptism, I decided to bring my teacher that little statue that they give it and give it to everybody, she treated like trash, it was irrelevant, that scar me for life. From that day on I decided to never share anything that has meaning and that was none American, never shared it again.

The participants discussed the importance of knowing both cultures. For example, P8 learned the indisputable value of religion and symbolism in Latino culture, a sacred moment that held no meaning among some American peers. Education, for instance, a top priority in American culture and second only to marriage in Latino culture, presented

a significant challenge for many of the participants within the enclave. The aspects highly valued in one setting but not in the other reinforce the importance of self-awareness. Participants must recognize both their imperfections and strengths, what is imposed by their environment versus what comes from within, in order to strive for self-improvement. P8 shared a personal experience where cousins in the enclave were preoccupied with appearance at a night club, while the participant was focused on achieving academic success. This scenario illustrated the differences within their enclave and undervalued the importance of individuality. P8 stated:

> Every time that I was around, my goals to be where I am at now were irrelevant, they were like why do you want to do that? Why do you care about school so much, why do you want to be around these English-speaking people? Why do you want to work in a job that people are going to look at you funny? Yeah, I didn't want to be there, but being in there was going to help get to where I actually wanted to get. So, something being in that Hispanic, the Dominican community it would be like, while you are busy worrying about what you are going to wear to go clubbing that night, I was busy worrying about what tha hell am I going to do with my life later. You know that night wasn't just all that night. There were more of living in the moment than thinking in the future.

The availability or lack of resources, both material and emotional, affected the ability of U.S. firstborn-generation Latinos to accomplish their goals, whether those goals involved working within a limited budget or managing their emotions. The continuous struggle for resources was an inherent part of the challenges that these individuals had to

overcome throughout their lives. Participants often expressed uncertainties about their capacity to defend themselves, achieve their academic goals, and even rely on their parents to advocate for them. These challenges and the lack of clarity surrounding the American dream faced by many immigrant parents were present in many aspects of the participants' lives. This sense of uncertainty sometimes communicated an assumed superiority of the larger group—a form of dysfunctional thinking that may have unconsciously originated within their own homes, inadvertently reinforcing the perceived inferiority of their own group. P3 stated:

> I would remain quiet, especially if there are talking bad about Hispanics, I think I most, I am the point where I am learning boundaries, like when to speak and not to, for the majority of my life when the American would be talking negatively, I would just stay quiet, because I wouldn't want the attention on me and somehow it makes me feel less, although even though I know that we are all equal, I would be just like, in the back of my mind I would be just like ok you guys are American they are going to team up on me, minorities, and some of those things they say, can sometimes just come up in the back if my mind. P5 stated:

> If you are not someone with like a lot of strengths personal strengths you can really become lost and sort of crumble into that pressure and really, that can be a really heavy weigh, because you can't always depend on immigrant parents having the quality or strengths to know how to parent in this situation, they come here with this idea that, I am going to provide to you the way that I was provided for, and you can't complaint, you have a roof over your head, food on the table

and what more do you want? And that more, the more that you would want if you knew better, to ask for, it would be, I need you to be like a guide help me develop emotionally so I know how to handle this pressure.

Berry (1997) described marginalization as a state in which an individual sheds cultural values without adopting new ones, resulting in a disenfranchised person who rejects both Latino and American culture. Most participants identified moments in life when events and social interaction suggested that they did not fully belong to either the American or Latino groups. P8 stated:

Growing up it felt like if you were on the wrong side of the people … like for example if you were on the side hanging out with the Spanish people and you were spending time talking in English, it would be like, no no ok, why are you doing this? It would be like are you trying to ditch us and if you were with the English crew and you start to speak Spanish, it would be like, if you want to hang out with Spanish crew so badly just go over there, so you know, that would become a problem trying to be yourself in between those specific groups and those specific settings.

The persistent feeling of not belonging to either group, at times rejected by members of the group, and at times by their own introspection and understanding of belonging, dominates the participants' experiences. Participants described experiences in which Latino friends and family rejected them for being American, often unaware that within the Latino group, U.S. first-generation Latinos were seen and treated as Latinos by Americans. The constant shifting in behavior in their lives is characteristic of high stress

and is responsible for adverse effects, such as personal crises, anxiety, and depression (Berry, 1997).

P9 stated:

When I am in Chile, I did experience like coming from the terminal we had a bag in the trunk and the people who packed and help us with our bags were the same people that took off with our bags when we drove off, so I those experiences and I had family members who stolen from us. But again, I am thinking about the drivers, I wonder if it was because we are visiting from the US. But that is the one thing, I did hear from other Chilenos that would say that chilenos are "tios" (dishonest) and we don't like that about ourselves, that is that. About the US, like I said it is very racist, we are a very racist country and I am a person of color, I may be white passing but as soon as I open my mouth I am not white and I have a husband who is not white, he is Puerto Rican, was born and raised here but from Puerto Rican parents and looks middle eastern, he had a lot of experiences, he had been punched in the face because someone thought he was Afghanistan, people had told him racial slurs by other people, so I wish that we didn't live in a country that was so racist and I have children right, my second child is the darkest so I worry about him all the time, I perhaps don't have to worry as much as black mothers I do worry that he is dark, but I love that he has melanin, I love it, it is rich it is beautiful, it is chileno because chilenos are a little darker.

Assimilation

This subtheme relates to the participants' experiences where embracing the host culture was not a deliberate decision, but rather a response to survival instincts. It was driven by the need to do whatever it took to fit in and was influenced by both their parents and peers. Participants discussed instances when their environment forced them to depart from their parents' home culture. For example, some participants intentionally stopped speaking Spanish in an effort to rapidly improve their English-speaking abilities. These shifts between Spanish and English were supported by their parents to aid academic success. Some participants had the impression that Hispanic culture was seen as wrong, while American culture was considered right to adopt. The participants described that experiencing discrimination for being Latino was, at times, a powerful motivator for assimilating into American culture. P10 stated:

> Yes, a lot a lot in high school until this day I still get a lot of weird looks, or OMG you are like one of our unicorns, you speak Spanish, and I am like, ok?! I have been told that before and I am like, ok???!!! So being Mexican, Hispanic I think that would be the proper word … I was forced not by my parents; I was forced to use English to fit into the American lifestyle.

> P3 stated:

> I think my parents Try to make installed American dream for me and my brother so they try to keep some Spanish culture that they had installing in me but they try to make me focused basically they try to have me do everything that an American would do which means do excellent in school, play other sports, naturally is I think they didn't know what to do but I think they just kind of mimic the

American culture hum.. there were times were like we will celebrate like international day and that is part of Hispanic come out best for us my mom and my daddy had it really hard, and that is not say that Hispanic do not work hard but it is like They just had this perception that the American ways is the way that their kids should be going.

Balance Between Two Cultures and Biculturalism

This subtheme explores the participants' experiences of inhabiting an intermediary space between two worlds, each characterized by its unique set of values and daily habits. The balance between these two worlds can be described as an ongoing oscillation between cultures, effectively creating a distinct hybrid culture. Participants described navigating life between these two cultures as occasionally stressful. They reported that, at times, they lacked the capacity or willingness to choose when the combination was not permissible. For instance, they faced challenges reconciling the togetherness of Latino culture with the independence of American life. P8 stated:

> It would be like are you trying to ditch us and if you were with the English crew and you start to speak Spanish, it would be like, if you want to hang out with Spanish crew so badly just go over there, so you know, that would become a problem trying to be yourself in between those specific groups and those specific settings. Growing up it was more of stress because you don't want to have to choose, but when you are young you have to choose, because you couldn't have it both ways.

Biculturalism refers to the participants' active efforts to merge values and resources that can complement each other in the context of identity formation. Participants described experiencing the freedom to embrace their Latino identity in America, an appreciation for the cultural diversity of the United States, and a sense of inclusion in certain settings and neighborhoods. Biculturalism becomes evident in moments when there is a need to simultaneously accommodate values from both cultures, such as celebrating the Fourth of July with Latino food and music. This bidimensional form of acculturation incorporates the heritage and host cultures (Capielo & Dillon, 2009). The opportunity to blend these values was described with joy and pride, from merging languages to enjoying Latino cuisine while celebrating an American holiday. P9 stated:

> In my community though I don't experience that that often, I live in a very colorful community, it is nice mixing pot of African people, people from the middle east, India, Asia everywhere it is just … I love it here.

> P10 stated:

> I am American and I am proud but I am not PROUD LOL I am proud to be Mexican too and but yeah … just be me and he has a different background as well so we mash them all together basically.

The participants pointed out that, like most things in life, being caught between two cultures and practicing biculturalism has disadvantages that were not acknowledged by others. For the most part, the ability to appreciate the positive aspects of this experience did not develop until adulthood.

Cross-cultural exposure serves as a source of stress, heightening the risk of experiencing cultural challenges. This social conundrum places individuals in a state of feeling disenfranchised in a cultural limbo (Capiello & Dillon, 2009), with the best-case scenario being that they function as a bridge between their parents and American culture. While the importance of language proficiency for children's integration and academic development is indisputable, family inclusion must be approached with careful consideration (Cavicchiolo et al., 2023). Some participants revealed moments when they perceived being a firstborn-generation Latino as a disadvantage and an additional challenge. For instance, they often found themselves in the role of translators for family members, a not uncommon practice among immigrant parents. Using children as translators can create a power differential in which the child has the final say, adding to the stressors faced by children whose vocabulary is limited by their age. P6 stated:

> So growing up, my mom most of the time raised me and as I am the oldest, forever and even now even though she understands English I have been her translator for everything, so from a very young age, once began to speak or learn to read and write from a very young age I became my mother's personal assistance, and that is stressful because if she didn't understand something that both of us didn't understand and I felt guilty for not know how to explain, what the other person meant or what I was reading to her, a mail, but since I can remember I have been my mother's personal assistance and my grandmother's too.

While most participants reported that stress was more prevalent within the enclave, they also disclosed experiencing similar situations in the American setting. For example, they mentioned being placed in higher-level Spanish classes due to the teacher's assumptions about their fluency. Some participants also identified biculturalism as a justification for discrimination, which prevented them from participating in activities with individuals who felt uncomfortable simply because of their skin color and voice projection. The desire to engage in activities aligned with American culture was often met with resistance, representing a challenge to their biculturalism and, ultimately, to their ability to be themselves authentically. P9 stated:

> I went to Maine with my family for 2 weeks and stayed in an Airbnb the folks who were there, the white couple that was down the road heard us playing Marc Anthony in the morning and they were concern and they ended up entering our Airbnb to see what was happening, why are you guys here? Do you know who owns this home, you need to leave … very embarrassing, I shouldn't say that it is because of color per say, but we are all of very complexion in my family except for my husband who looks middle eastern.

> P8 stated:

> what I remember, the most difficult thing was my accent, people would say that I sound like Rose Perez and comment on why was I so Spanish, why are you so loud and stuff like that but it was just that and I took as a minor bullying and stuff like that, nothing that … as long as you don't hit me or touch me we were good, so it was just stuff like that and wouldn't say it was too crazy compare to what

others experiences were, but I definitely had people be like calm down with the Spanish, I definitely had people be asking me to calm down on my Spanish, that mean.

The last portion of the section provides more information on the challenges faced by the participants in balancing the two cultures and maintaining their bicultural identity. While several points of this study highlight protective factors regarding biculturalism, this stage also acknowledges some disadvantages and how a lack of welcoming from the host culture impacts the participants' ability to preserve their uniqueness.

Addressing the Research Questions

This study aimed to explore how U.S. firstborn Latinos experienced growing up between two cultures and developed self-worth beliefs within their acculturation process. Thematic analysis of all data obtained from the 10 participants in this study consistently generated the relevant results for this research.

The first theme developed was the use of bilingualism, which formed the foundation of their acculturation process and contributed to the participants' evolving cultural identity. The participants described the choices made by their parents regarding which language was spoken at home and how these choices adapted not only to the environment but also to the family's overall needs. The participants discussed the challenges of switching between languages, the difficulties they encountered, and the subsequent criticism they faced regarding their ability to speak fluent Spanish and other dialects the parents spoke in their home country.

The second theme in this study delved into how participants used a strength-based approach to build their character. Participants identified traits such as resilience, their ability to overcome challenges, as well as leveraged their differences and uniqueness, such as speaking another language. These elements formed the foundation for the development of their self-worth beliefs in the context of their acculturation process. Additionally, focusing on goals, self-reliance, and achieving maturity at an earlier age were considered indispensable. Participants emphasized that support and guidance from parents and other members of the enclave played a paramount role in their success and significantly contributed to their Latino identity. While the findings indicated that this process was arduous during their formative years, it proved rewarding in adulthood.

The third theme revisits the acculturation process and how the participants gave meaning to their cultural identity. This theme illustrates the development of a social circle with a Latino character, highlighting the participants' appreciation for learning their parents' culture. This includes aspects such as respect for authorities, a sense of belonging rooted in their "togetherness," the significance of music, and especially the importance of food. However, it was unanimous among the participants that they had limited appreciation for aspects like Marianism, and the ongoing clash of traditions between the two cultures remained a perpetual source of confusion. This theme exemplifies the reasons and choices in the process of blending values, ultimately shaping their unique cultural identity.

The fourth theme explores the obstacles faced by firstborn-generation Latinos. Participants encountered ongoing challenges related to feeling like outsiders and often

perceiving themselves as inferior to the larger group. This sometimes led to assimilation into the host culture. While this process taught participants the importance of being aware of their limitations, it was also a significant factor contributing to low self-esteem. The themes combined provide evidence that self-worth beliefs are intertwined with their need for important titles attached to their names, academic achievements, and community approval.

Both themes two and four collectively describe the participants' individuality within a more collectivistic identity during adulthood, highlighting its positive aspects in terms of a sense of belonging and pride, as well as a source of strength. However, a few participants reported that an innate desire for family approval never dissipated and continued to be a source of distress. Some participants acknowledged that therapy played a crucial role in learning how to set boundaries and recognizing when prioritizing family approval was detrimental to their individuality.

Summary

Chapter 4 included information about data collection methods and analysis procedures that were used to develop themes from interviews with U.S. firstborn-generation Latinos. This chapter also includes steps that were taken to ensure quality and trustworthiness of the study. Semi-structured interviews were used with 10 participants who met research criteria. Interviews were conducted via Zoom meetings, audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim. These transcriptions were carefully proofread, manually coded, and organized into family codes, and a dictionary codebook was

developed during the initial three interviews. This process facilitated simultaneous development of major themes.

The four main themes that were generated from data analysis were use of bilingualism, strength-based character building, development of a social circle with a Latino character and overcoming obstacles. Study findings demonstrate the profound impact of acculturation on participants' identity formation and their beliefs of self-worth within the context of their bicultural acculturation process. Participants faced additional challenges when transitioning between settings, such as moving from school to home or from a friend's house to another, which required constant language switching. These challenges led to difficulties involving finding their social group and prioritizing goals, especially considering differing cultural values in each setting.

Furthermore, participants frequently struggled with the burden of satisfying their families and prioritizing their family's happiness over their own individual fulfillment. This conflict between the greater good (common in collectivistic societies) and pursuing self-fulfillment (common in individualistic societies) posed a clear challenge for those navigating both worlds simultaneously. In Chapter 5, study findings are further discussed, including limitations and implications for future research as well as social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

U.S. firstborn-generation Latinos often face challenges that can significantly impact their lives. Depending on how the acculturation process unfolds, experiences of one generation can have lasting effects on future generations (Bako & Zana, 2018). Higher levels of acculturation are associated with an increased likelihood of engaging in unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, unhealthy eating habits and abusive drinking (Abraido-Lanza et al., 2005). Despite challenges during the acculturation process, U.S. firstborn-generation Latinos have some advantages. These advantages include the significant potential for learning and embracing competitive perspectives through integration of two distinct cultures, transcending the merging of two cultural paradigms (Arndt & Ashkanasy, 2015). This involves increased adaptability skills and passing down of talents to future generations. Living between cultures requires cognitive flexibility and intercultural sensitivity to accommodate distinctions between U.S. and Latino cultures (Christmas & Barker, 2014). This IPA study involved exploring how U.S. firstborn Latinos experienced growing up between two cultures and developed self-worth beliefs in the context of their acculturation process. I explored how this population negotiated, organized, and navigated cultural differences, as well as how they gave meaning to their cultural identity, and related this acculturation process to developing their self-worth beliefs.

The 10 participants in this study were prescreened to ensure they met criteria for participation. Semi-structured interviews involved how participants perceived their experiences, which guided their cultural identity formation and beliefs of self-worth. Four

themes were generated from data analysis: use of bilingualism, strength-based character building, development of the social circle with the Latino character and obstacles to overcome. This chapter includes an interpretation and discussion of findings, study limitations, recommendations for further research, implications for positive social change, and a conclusion.

Interpretation of the Findings

Findings contribute to the body of available literature on acculturation of Latinos, especially among children of immigrant parents. Participants explained how they experienced life within two cultures, formed their cultural identity, and developed beliefs about self-worth. These findings align with previous literature that supports four themes that were developed for this study. By addressing U.S. firstborn-generation Latinos, their acculturation process, identity formation, and self-worth beliefs, this study can inform future research directions and culturally-informed services for best practices.

Theme One: Use of Bilingualism

Language acquisition is one of the most profound changes involved in acculturation and a significant challenge for immigrants on a daily basis (Berry, 1997). Bilingualism is assessed by measuring amount of time spent using a language or variations in language use and switching between them (Kalamala et al., 2023). Becoming bilingual is a complex process that involves engaging various domains of the human brain, including cognitive control and working memory (Kalamala et al., 2023). The most successful approaches to ensuring bilingualism among first-generation immigrants are often found among families where parents play a pivotal role, demanding

the use of Spanish at home, a direct influence in their children's language acquisition process (Velazquez, 2014).

Participants learned English at school and Spanish at home. I addressed decisions made by families regarding which language to use at home and how participants acquired proficiency in each language, as well as specific contexts in which each language was used. Learning process and choice of language were largely based on environment and not on participants' needs or preferences. It is essential to distinguish the similarities between languages, for example grammar structure in English is very distinct from Spanish.

Unanimously, participants disclosed presence of specific individuals in the room determined which language they would use for communication, whether English or Spanish. Environment and parents' ideology played a crucial role in shaping these language patterns (Velazquez, 2014). P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P9, and P10 reported speaking Spanish was a household rule. All 10 participants described languages that were spoken, influence of family members, and the ongoing need to determine which language to use based on people present in the room. However, they found this process to be somewhat confusing. During their literacy development, participants recognized the importance of their families' efforts to promote English, as this was integral to their academic success.

Eight participants described the language selection process as necessary to assess who was present in the room, often relying on individual appearance to find a way to express emotions in one language versus the other. Although healthy behaviors and successful acculturation are observed in groups that combine cultures and languages

(Abraido-Lanza et al., 2005), the process of becoming fully bilingual and bicultural is marked by stressful interactions and fundamentally contingent upon receptiveness of both the enclave and host groups. Smith et al. (2020) observed natural translation is a neurologically distinct process compared to ongoing language switching, indicating that language switching is a demanding process requiring proactive control.

P3 and P10 reported feeling frustrated by ongoing external pressures, such as the demand for fluency and heavy criticism for not speaking additional dialects from their parents' home country. Baker (2015) observed the ethnic immigrant identity formation process is influenced by cultural, societal, and interpersonal values, as well as integration of traditions. First-generation immigrants demonstrated a higher level of intercultural sensitivity and cognitive flexibility than U.S. firstborn generation and they scored higher on biculturalism compared to U.S. firstborn generations (Christmas & Barker, 2014), indicating a disadvantage for this population.

When Americans reject the Latino group, the minority population that is already conditioned by past generations to perceive the hybrid culture as inferior, firstborn generations are more likely to reject their Latino identity (Silver, 2015). P5, P7, and P9 shared the negative impact of peers expressing surprise at their fluency in English, as well as having much higher expectations for their fluency in Spanish. Despite challenges, firstborn generations are more likely to embrace the framework of bilingualism (Tran, 2010). Language and cultural acquisition cooccur and are mutually inclusive for each language, culture, and value system (Tran, 2010). Findings in this study emphasize the

value and effort that is required to sustain bilingualism and how it is an essential part of the cultural identity of U.S. firstborn-generation Latinos.

Theme Two: Strength-Based Character Building

The second theme developed from participants' descriptions of their life experiences and influential factors that played important roles in shaping their identity and connections with their Latino community. Participant 7 reported that being exposed to two cultures increased their ability to overcome environmental adversities. Exposure to cultural diversity provides a broader range of values and a more flexible cognitive process (Torres & Rollock, 2009). The support and challenges encountered by firstborn generation Latinos were essential for their successful adulthood. Participant 5 reported that there were unique ways to express themselves in Spanish, enabling them to convey messages at a higher level of meaning. While all participants reported that learning two languages during language acquisition was a significant source of stress, it became rewarding in their adult lives. After the phase of simultaneous language learning, securing bilingual proficiency was a valuable asset in the workforce. Participant 7 described interactions at work, facilitated by ongoing bicultural exposure, which allowed them to acclimate to different settings, adding flexibility as a strong part of their identity.

The entire sample of participants discussed difficult moments in life, facing discrimination, which led them to doubt their innate potential and made them feel the need to work twice as hard compared to Americans. These recurrent challenges were identified by all 10 participants as sources of stress that transformed into sources of strength, ultimately fostering resilience. Participant 1 reported that their bilingual skills

became a valuable asset, setting them apart from the larger group. Participant 1 benefited from contact with members of both groups, which fulfilled their underlying need for social acceptance. A secure attachment to someone from the Spanish culture strengthened the participants' Latino identity, which later helped in identifying mentors in the American setting. This reinforces the idea that maintaining Latino culture requires a secure attachment with an adult Latino mentor, whom the mentee looks up to with respect and admiration.

All participants discussed stereotypes related to bicultural ethnicity as stressful and hurtful. The assumption that Latinos look a certain way often exposed them to unwarranted statements. Participant 3 reported that Americans could not identify their ability to comprehend Spanish due to their skin complexion, which led to hasty comments about Latinos. Participant 3 reported that using the ability to blend in became a strength and a part of their individual identity. Participant 5 reported that Americans communicated in ways that implied misconceptions about Latinos, such as assuming they all look a certain way, do specific jobs, or belong to a particular category. It is important to understand that discrimination can be transmitted to others, sometimes even unconsciously (Brown & Lee, 2015). Capielo et al. (2019) presented findings that demonstrate the complexity underlying discrimination in deeper dimensions, leading to irreparable psychological harm to immigrants and their families. These effects can even affect future generations due to an overwhelming sense of not belonging. The rejection of mainstream culture and discrimination are linked to immigrants' feelings of isolation (Bagci et al., 2019).

Dennis et al. (2010) discussed how intergenerational conflicts are a part of immigrants' life and highlighted the importance of psychosocial adjustment for maintaining stable mental health. In their study, they found that firstborn generations experienced higher levels of psychological distress, but social and cultural adaptation was perceived as easier. This perception aligned with the assimilation model of acculturation (Dennis et al., 2010). Furthermore, perceived discrimination has been shown to have a direct relationship with lower self-esteem, increased psychological distress, and social adaptation difficulties in both the host and the newcomer groups (Tonsing, 2014). These challenges, while also evident as barriers in other themes, inspired participants to be self-focused, set goals, and maintain resilience in the face of adversity.

Self-reliance resonated with the participants as they harnessed their strengths and fearlessly dedicated themselves to achieving their goals, all while maintaining self-sufficiency within their communities. Aligned with Tran's (2010) findings that support multicultural communities promoting assimilation and the expansion of support systems, living between two worlds allows for flexibility and the ability to accommodate. This flexibility is evident in descriptions of times in life when setbacks were perceived as signs of changing direction to achieve higher goals, which is an essential trait in building one's identity (Baker, 2006). Corroborating Berry's (1980) ideas about how children are more likely to embrace the host culture, switching between two cultures helped participants learn their parents' culture. Being exposed to two cultures increases one's ability to handle environmental adversities, as they are provided with a broader value

system and a more flexible cognitive process, making them more likely to embrace diverse challenges and redirect when necessary (Tran, 2010).

The collectivistic nature of Latino communities reinforces that individual accomplishments are a source of pride for entire communities (Dennis et al., 2010). Participant 7 reported that their grades in school, work promotions, and titles were seen as successes for the community as a whole. All participants reported that their achievements were closely tied to their beliefs about self-worth and served as a measure of their self-esteem. Parents' active participation in school activities is a critical factor in overall success (Plunkett et al., 2009). Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 emphasized the importance of parental guidance, support, and gratitude for being bicultural as fundamental elements in their identity formation process. Participants 1, 3, 4, 7, and 9 reported that being unaware of differences was a protective factor during childhood, along with being part of other Latino groups, which was key to success when facing higher expectations from parents. The combined impact of these factors, unawareness, and participation in other Latino groups, strengthened their character. Parental protection and significant involvement in supporting school achievements among firstborn generations, along with high expectations, are common features in collectivistic cultures (Nguyen & Hale, 2017; Rice et al., 2012). Rice et al. (2012) discussed the high expectations in collectivistic cultures, where individuals often feel that their possible failure is terrifying at the individual level because individual failure is perceived as a representation of their group. The combination of all these elements was vital for character development and foundational to identity formation.

Theme Three: Development of the Social Circle with the Latino Character

Sustaining contact with tradition is foundational to one's cultural identity (Baker, 2015). The third theme focused on aspects of participants' lives inherently connected to Latino culture, encompassing customs, beliefs learned directly from their parents, and challenges specific to Latinos. This theme delved into the various facets of Latino culture, describing how these elements of life shape the participants' identity and their beliefs about self-worth within the Latino culture. Participants discussed the characteristics of their surroundings, the influences of Latino culture, and their daily interactions that bring them closer to their cultural enclave.

According to Leon (2010), consistent parenting and a stable environment foster healthy development in children, enabling them to form healthy relationships, develop autonomy, gain confidence, and regulate their emotions effectively. Participant 6 discussed cultural values learned almost unconsciously from their parents, such as how to adapt to their living environment, respect their elders, and value togetherness. All participants reported that the skills of sharing moments with family and friends were essential and required consistent parental involvement and reinforcement. Latino culture is collectivistic, promoting positive emotional expression and exemplifying the group's natural tendencies toward social gatherings (Acevedo et al., 2020). Participants 1, 6, 8, and 9 reported that they perceived collectivism in the Latino culture as both a negative and a positive aspect of their lives. The positive side of collectivism was characterized by the support it provided when the community came together for the greater good or to celebrate their success, benefiting the enclave. They took pride in sharing that a central

aspect of their lives as first-generation Latinos was their connection with music and food,

which are vital elements in maintaining their cultural identity and preserving Latino

culture. The negative aspect involved the overbearing involvement of family and friends

in personal matters. Participant 6 shared the pressure of handling unsolicited advice and

the immense responsibility of representing the Latino group.

Stereotypical gender roles were identified by all participants as negative, yet still

a practice that holds value among Latinos. Participants 6, 8, and 10 referred to the terms

marianismo and machismo to describe their community, particularly in their home

country. Marianismo emphasizes a patriarchal power structure in which women should

not share personal thoughts or needs; they must respect and show obedience to men, a

concept intertwined with machismo (Nunez et al., 2015). These coexisting constructs

reveal socially acceptable norms and beliefs that support men and women in traditional

gender roles, which are considered harmful to Latinos and associated with negative

emotional factors (Nunez et al., 2015).

Participant 6 reported that marianismo and machismo carried certain traits of

Latino culture that they would not adopt but would instead gradually work to modify.

This progressive approach created conflict with the participant's parents. Participant 6

disclosed being in favor of an equal distribution of work, responsibility, and decision-

making power between males and females. Participants 4 and 6 reported adopting an

approach of separating themselves from the enclave when it came to handling aspects of

Latino culture that were not in alignment with their personal beliefs. The separation

acculturative style is characterized by individuals distancing themselves from the larger

society while maintaining their ethnic identity and traditions from their home country (Berry, 1992).

These aspects of their lives show how the participants were constantly facing challenges in response to merging the two cultures. This example illustrates the challenges of walking the fine line between separation and marginalization. The ongoing clash of traditions between the U.S. and Latino cultures is a process resulting in stress and confusion (Capielo & Dillon, 2019), which can be expected when individuals live with constant differences while comparing their lives to their peers in the host culture. Participants 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 shared the dilemma of sleepovers, a common practice among their American peers but not part of their interactions with peers in Latino homes. Participants 3, 7, 8, and 9 reported that, now as adults and mothers, they can understand, but as children, it was an activity that strengthened friendships and was an element of Latino culture that made them feel isolated.

Theme Four: Obstacles to Overcome

Immigrants perceive acculturation as more effortless for themselves compared to their children's cultural adaptation process (Tonsing, 2014). Berry (1997) identified several steps involving acculturation, many of which heavily rely on acceptance from the host group. Participants in this study unanimously reported that their parents frequently shared how life was difficult, often involving experiences of hostility, rejection, and discrimination. This contributed to a challenging adjustment process, a feeling that was passed on to future generations. Moreover, the communities hosting immigrants, which are less accepting of them and are characterized by rejection, create an unsympathetic

environment that promotes poor long-term adjustment among immigrants (Berry, 1997). Capielo and Dillon (2019) reported that Latinos born in the United States are more likely to experience racial and ethnic discrimination than foreign-born Latinos.

The study's fourth theme described aspects of the participants' lives characterized by ongoing obstacles and barriers. Participants discussed differences and limitations particular to their position as U.S. firstborn generation individuals. Challenges discussed by the participants included continuous feelings of being outsiders and feeling inferior compared to their American peers. Participants disclosed that Americans often expressed surprise when they were able to speak English correctly and even attend college. These were the disclosures reported in this study. Participant 1 discussed having limited resources growing up, such as not having money to purchase lunch, and also the lack of emotional support when parents were not able to attend school functions as aspects of life that contributed to feeling inferior to their American peers.

The participants' experiences illustrated how they adopted specific patterns of behavior that sustained their feelings of being inferior to their American peers, such as not sharing their opinions and experiences while working on school activities. During social interactions, they reported feeling the need to fit in better with both the American and the Latino groups, often distancing themselves from the enclave's expected roles. For example, Participant 5 discussed their parents' disappointment for not taking over a family business but instead excelling independently in an academic career. These similar decisions led participants to experiences and feelings characteristic of marginalization.

Marginalization means not belonging to either group, the Latino or the American (Berry, 1987).

All participants referenced the challenges of navigating between two cultures. Participant 5 discussed situations with friends where they did not want to follow their parents' rules or conform to American norms. Instead, they chose to follow neither cultural recommendation, resulting in feelings of isolation. Biculturalism describes the appreciation for values and resources that complement both cultures and the life choice of identity formation. Biculturalism promotes the ability to adopt distinctive cultural strengths while overcoming limitations (Arndt & Ashkanasy, 2015). Participant 3 reported struggling to incorporate these values, particularly when it led to confusion. This participant discussed a situation when a teacher placed them in an advanced Latino class, assuming a higher level of fluency in Spanish. A similar struggle was faced by Participant 10 at home, as the parents assumed that because the participant was an American and spoke English, they must excel in all domains where English is used.

An important factor was the responsibility placed on the firstborn generation when parents held them accountable for helping bridge communication gaps between the immigrant parent and transactional settings, such as being used as a translator. Participant 6 reported feeling like the caregiver's personal assistant. Once again, although the obstacle involved language skills, the emotional impact was significant, as children were placed in adult roles with responsibilities, they were not mature enough to handle.

Theoretical Framework

The fourfold theory of acculturation defines acculturation as the process by which an immigrant minority group adjusts to the dominant group's psychology, characterized by greater numbers and power (Berry, 1992). Integration and separation as acculturative styles require an individual's desire to maintain their cultural heritage, whereas assimilation and marginalization can result from external factors (Berry, 1997). The integration acculturative style was evident among some participants who described their ability to select and adopt aspects of both cultures into their lives. This integration included pursuing personal dreams while simultaneously embracing the collective spirit of the Latino group. Preconditions for this level of freedom of choice included high levels of multiculturalism, low levels of prejudice, and a positive attitude towards diversity (Berry, 1997). Another example of integration was the use of "Spanglish," in which participants intentionally combined words and idioms from both Spanish and English.

The separation acculturative style is guided by choices aimed at preserving Latino culture or by the dominant American group attempting to keep U.S. firstborn generation Latinos in their place. Assumptions made by the host community based on appearance also served as a source of prejudice that hindered immigrants from pursuing integration and biculturalism. Participant P7 shared an experience of a unique religious ceremony that teachers and peers rejected, leading the participant to avoid interaction with Americans due to the painful nature of the experience.

The assimilation acculturative style involves individuals relinquishing their Latino cultural identity and adopting traits from the host culture. Participant P2 disclosed that

earlier in life, they had no choice but to embrace the American way of life to find a sense

of belonging and considered it a better option. Immersing themselves in American culture

also facilitated quicker English language acquisition, resulting in academic success.

However, a potential challenge is that immigrants and U.S. firstborn generation

individuals may feel a sense of emptiness later in life as they have relinquished an

essential part of themselves. Unlike their immigrant parents, firstborn generation Latinos

may not fully experience Latino culture, which can lead to future resentment toward their

parents for not imparting aspects of their cultural heritage during their childhood. Several

participants expressed regrets about not speaking more Spanish, not learning to cook

traditional dishes, and not spending more time in their parents' home countries.

     The marginalization acculturative style is primarily characterized by collective

and individual confusion, stress, feelings of alienation, loss of identity, and disconnection

from both their home country and the larger society, both culturally and psychologically

(Berry, 1990). Participant P9 reported that she was treated poorly during a visit to her

parents' home country. Participants 2, 5, and 10 shared their experiences of growing up

always feeling like they were on the wrong side of people, being ashamed for speaking

English, and consistently finding themselves in the middle of groups rather than truly

belonging to either one. These participants disclosed moments in their lives when they

didn't feel like they belonged to either group, experiencing a constant sense of not fitting

in and facing rejection.

     Parental guidance, support, and acceptance from both communities are essential

for developing a bicultural identity. Crucial factors in the formation of this identity

include nurturing self-reliance, maintaining focus, demonstrating determination, and cultivating resilience, all while receiving continued guidance and support from parents. As the values learned from parents and their respective cultural backgrounds begin to clash with American values, differences become evident. Participants were able to critique outdated customs, such as Marianismo, while remaining loyal to values like respecting their elders and appreciating aspects such as cuisine, music, and the collaborative approach characteristic of collectivistic cultures. The development of their self-worth is a result of life accomplishments, including degrees, job titles, and living lives that not only lead to happiness but also pride.

Limitations of the Study

The current study explored the unique experience of growing up between two cultures for the U.S. firstborn generation of Latinos in New York City. The participants' responses shed light on how firstborn-generation Latinos developed their cultural identity and perception of self-worth. Reasonable efforts were made to ensure the truthfulness and trustworthiness of the study. However, some limitations were noted. The average age of the participants was 32. While they provided rich content, it's important to note that the sample lacked diverse views on the phenomenon across different stages of life. Another limitation, also related to diversity, pertained to the participants' backgrounds. This sample represented only five Latin American countries, whereas South and Central America comprise 33 countries. Furthermore, all the participants were well-established professionals. Including a more diverse sample with varying socioeconomic and

educational backgrounds could have offered a broader perspective on how acculturation influenced the participants' lives, identity, and self-worth.

While the interviews were originally planned to take place virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person interaction would have been preferable. Although the setting and prior discussions helped establish rapport, the participants could not experience the support and care that face-to-face interaction would have allowed me to provide.

Lastly, it was expected that personal bias might be a limitation of this study. I am not only a Latino immigrant but also a mother of a U.S. firstborn-generation Latino; thus, I have a personal interest in the target population. To mitigate the potential effects of my bias, I used an audio reflective journal, listened to myself asking the questions, and adopted a neutral tone of voice while posing them. I reviewed the initial interviews with my chair and continued to journal after each subsequent interview. The transcripts were manually completed and reviewed with my chair during the analytical steps. Upon completing the third interview, I consciously set aside my biases and preconceived ideas. Maintaining an impartial demeanor became second nature, ensuring that the data in this study is solely based on the participants' responses.

Recommendations

The primary purpose of this project is to contribute scientific evidence to the existing literature on acculturation and to educate the public, the scientific community, and providers in general. The participants in this study experienced a significant amount of stress during their unique acculturation process. The groups that can benefit from these

findings include immigrant parents, firstborn-generation Latinos themselves, educators in districts serving this population, mental health providers, and even policymakers involved in distributing resources to communities impacted by the presence of U.S. firstborn-generation Latinos.

While this study explored the experiences of U.S. firstborn-generation Latinos in a general sense, the sample was drawn from New York City, an area with a high immigrant population and abundant resources, including bilingual services. Future studies could consider different geographical areas and participants from diverse social and economic backgrounds. Furthermore, all participants in this study were professionals with at least a college degree, and the majority held postgraduate degrees, such as master's degrees, indicating their well-established status in their respective fields.

During some of the interviews, many of the participants mentioned knowing other individuals who, while not from the same background, were also firstborn generation in the U.S. from different countries. These individuals had their own unique family traditions that differed from those of an American background. Future studies should focus on a broader sample of participants, such as individuals who may not have achieved the same level of professional accomplishment or who have succeeded in different settings, such as continuing their parents' line of work.

Another aspect unique to New York City as a setting for this research, which might differ from other areas, is the significant presence of Latino culture and the relative abundance of resources, such as food, clothing, and individuals who share the culture, facilitating biculturalism. Future studies can explore more profoundly the impact of

acculturation in the absence of these resources, where the only exposure to Latino culture is at home.

Implications

This investigation can contribute to the body of literature, educate providers, and empower immigrants to make informed choices regarding the immigration process and family development, all of which can drive positive social change. First, the contribution to scholarly scientific literature not only fills a gap but also raises new questions. This study offers insights into a unique group of individuals who are the first to be born in the U.S., distinct from their immigrant Latino parents. Revealing these experiences will deepen our understanding of the lives of U.S. firstborn-generation Latinos, including their strengths, challenges, and their significance to society.

Moreover, this study can bring about social change by providing service providers in education, mental health, and physical health with a more comprehensive understanding of this population's experiences. Results of this study revealed potential barriers in the participants' lives, including challenges in learning English in the school system and the limitations they faced when trying to perform at similar levels to their American peers who were exposed to English on a daily basis. Health providers would greatly benefit from these findings by understanding that the values of a collectivist culture can sometimes conflict with the values of an individualistic society.

The data gathered for this study documented how U.S. firstborn-generation Latinos navigate between two cultures and the perceived impact this has on their identity formation and beliefs of self-worth. The data illustrated the influence of parents and

caregivers in general, as well as the importance of how the host culture received them. The findings also highlight the dual role of both worlds: the enclave and American society in shaping the experiences of the firstborn generation of Latinos. The enclave recognizes that the firstborn generation also faces its unique challenges in life, while the American setting needs to acknowledge the importance of being receptive to their experiences.

In addition, substantial contribution to positive social change from this research is the potential to minimize stereotypes and discrimination towards the Latino community. Finally, I hope that the dissemination of this information empowers individuals and communities alike. Through increased understanding and appreciation of the complexities of cultural integration, we can collectively foster positive social change. By embracing diversity and opening our minds to the richness of different cultures, we can work toward building more inclusive, harmonious, and equitable societies. Ultimately, this understanding may lead to greater empathy, tolerance, and cooperation among individuals from diverse backgrounds, contributing to a more united and interconnected world.

Conclusion

This phenomenological study explored the experiences of growing up between two cultures for U.S. firstborn-generation Latinos. The participants, consisting of three males and seven females, ranged in age from 29 to 38 and represented a diverse range of Latin American countries, including Mexico, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Peru. All ten participants in the sample were the first in their family's linear

generation to be born in the United States, with both parents being Latinos who had been raised in Latin countries.

The results revealed that parental influence and support played a pivotal role in factors such as resilience, which contributed to the individual's ability to adjust and develop their cultural identity. Parental support was essential for finding their place in society, representing the first step in establishing their belief system, particularly regarding their self-worth in American society. The results also indicate how the participants perceived the relationship between tangible accomplishments and self-esteem assessment, as well as their beliefs of self-worth. This underscores the importance of family and community approval throughout the process of bicultural immersion.

The pressure from parents, the enclave, and the host culture to achieve acceptance constituted significant barriers that informed the struggles of acculturation, cultural identity formation, and beliefs of self-worth. Berry's (1990) theory of acculturation, which proposes that the receptiveness of the host culture is a contributing factor in adaptation, was supported. Parental support and guidance influenced how individuals chose when there were moments to exercise the freedom to select one culture over another and the degree of biculturalism. Participants who experienced discrimination and consistent victimization in the larger setting were more likely to express negative sentiments about American culture. This contribution to the body of literature can assist health providers, educators, social scientists, policymakers, and immigrant parents in their efforts to promote cohesiveness in society, particularly given the rapid growth of the Latino community.

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Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Demographic Questions:

1. What is your age and gender?

2. Where were your parents born?

3. Do you speak Spanish and English?

4. What is your primary language?

5. Do you speak, read, write, and understand the English and Spanish?

Semi-structured Interview Guide:

Research Question

RQ.1. How do U.S. firstborn Latinos describe their acculturation process and give meaning to their cultural identity?

Interview Questions

- How do you describe your ethnic identity at this time?
    - Tell me about the language of choice to communicate with individuals in the enclave, parents, family members at your parents' home country.
    - How you arrive to this choice of language?
    - Tell me about the language of choice to communicate with in individuals outside the enclave.
        - Probe: How does the language switching work for you?
    - Did you experience specific stressors related to your ethnic identity?

- How do you describe your parents' ethnic identity and culture?

  o How is it similar or different than yours?

- How was your experience growing up with your family cultural background at home and the U.S. mainstream culture?

  o What aspects did you like about your family of origin culture and U.S. mainstream culture?

  o What aspects you did not like about the family of origin culture and U.S. mainstream culture?

- What challenges you faced in navigating potential cultural differences between home and school while you were growing up?

  o If any, how did you work through these challenges?

  o Probe: How do you currently navigate moving between your parents' culture and mainstream culture?

Research Question

RQ.2. How do U.S. firstborn Latinos describe the development of their self-worth beliefs in the context of their acculturation process?

Interview Questions

- How do you feel and believe that felt about your ability to accomplish your goals in life?

- In the presence of disappointment or the inability to complete a task are you more likely to give up or attribute to having a bad day?

- In the presence of a negative social interaction with more "American peers" how did you respond? What are you more likely to attribute?

- In the presence of a feedback are you more likely to see the positive side of things or the negative?

- Have you ever noticed any difference in your ability to accomplish your goals when in the enclave setting versus the mainstream setting?

    o Probe. Did you ever encounter yourself exercising more respect in the enclave setting or in the mainstream setting?

- How do you describe your self-worth and self-esteem?

    o What are the sources of self-worth and self-esteem?

- What others think about you have an impact on your beliefs of self-worth?

- What are the things that make you feel good about yourself?