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An Exploratory Study of Acculturation Experiences of Graduate Student Immigrants at the University of San Francisco

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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF ACCULTURATION EXPERIENCES
OF GRADUATE STUDENT IMMIGRANTS AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

by COURTNEY LAMAR

November 20, 2018

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

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ACCULTURATION EXPERIENCES OF GRADUATE STUDENT IMMIGRANTS

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF ACCULTURATION EXPERIENCES
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Masters of Arts in International studies

ACCULTURATION EXPERIENCES OF GRADUATE STUDENT IMMIGRANTS

Abstract

This study explores the shared challenges during the acculturation process of graduate student immigrants pursuing higher education in the United States. 13 graduate student immigrants at the University of San Francisco discuss their experiences of cultural adjustment into U.S. culture. Through qualitative interviews and thematic analysis, this study seeks to understand the acculturation experiences of graduate student immigrants in the San Francisco Bay Area of the United States. This analysis is based on the individual-level experience examining attitudes and acculturation strategies in the dominant society. Analysis, possibly policy implication for institutions of higher education, and possible directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: acculturation, assimilation, integration, marginalisation, multiculturalism, pluralism, qualitative research, separation

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Chapter One

Introduction

According to Project Atlas (2017), an initiative launched by the Institute for International Education, global mobility of international students has increased from 2.1 million to 4.6 million students from 2001 to 2017. Despite the social and political climate in the United States (U.S.), the country has remained the number one host country for international students. Despite the cultural, social, and political climate in recent years and racist, nationalist rhetoric targeted at foreigners by the Trump Administration, the data provided by Project Atlas (2017) suggests that the U.S. has remained the top host country in the world for graduate student immigrants.

Open Doors (2017), a report and resource guide focusing on international students and scholars studying or teaching at higher education institutions in the U.S., reports that during the 2016-2017 academic year, there were a total number of 391,124 international graduate students pursuing higher education in the U.S. This number is up 1.9% from the 2015-2016 academic year (Open Doors, 2017). While the numbers of international education participants have fluctuated since 2001, data show the increase in participation of international graduate students. According to The University of San Francisco Fact Book and Almanac 2018, there are 4,273 enrolled graduate students and approximately 14% (600) are international graduate students (Ziajka, 2018, p. 7).

As data reveal the increasing number of international graduate student participation, it is important to explore the cultural shifts experienced by graduate student immigrants and their cultural adjustment to the U.S. This phenomenon of cultural, social, and psychological adjustment is known as acculturation and will provide insight into the

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shared challenges among graduate student immigrants living in the San Francisco Bay Area (SF Bay Area) while attending the University of San Francisco (USF). Additionally, approaching this study within the greater acculturation framework might reveal the primary factors that contributed to the decision-making process of choosing USF, the SF Bay Area, and the U.S.

The theoretical framework of this study will be Berry's (1991) Model of Acculturation Strategies. He provided four acculturation strategies (Assimilation, Integration, Marginalisation, and Separation) represent attitudes held by the non-dominant group towards the dominant group in plural societies. Using this model will aid in determining which strategy participants relate to most closely based on each participant's individual challenges and experiences at USF, in the SF Bay Area.

Furthermore, graduate student immigrants experience dramatic cultural shifts that can induce various obstacles adjusting to the dominant society. When these experiences cause conflicts and create problems, individuals may experience acculturative stress. Therefore, the unique nature of this study contributes to acculturation literature by focusing on a specific pool of graduate student immigrants pursuing professional degrees or have recently (within one year) completed professional degrees at USF. Additionally, unlike undergraduates, graduate student immigrants experience acculturation differently. Lack of salient resources, inadequate orientations, absence of social support systems, in addition to minimal knowledge of the complexities of U.S. culture like language, values, ideologies, political and social systems of a multicultural society, like the SF Bay Area, all have proven to induce acculturative stress. The SF Bay Area, home to approximately seven million people, is a culturally pluralistic region of Northern California (Bay Area

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Census, 2010). Cited by Business Insider as the tech capital of the world, San Francisco is culturally and ethnically rich, is a global financial hub, and is globally recognized for its influence on the world (Weller, 2016). Thus, this study takes into account the uniqueness of the SF Bay Area and the extent to which it has influenced participants' experiences in the acculturation process.

Also, this study will utilize Berry's (1991) acculturation model of acculturation strategies (assimilation, integration, marginalisation, and separation) to explore the cultural identities of each participant. By examining the acculturation model and determining which acculturation strategy participants have chosen, this will gather information about the how participants culturally adjust to U.S. culture. Finally, this study can suggest future recommendations on how to better aid graduate student immigrants easing the shared challenges they experience in the U.S. There are four primary reasons for focusing on graduate student immigrants:

Program Length

Professional degree programs are relatively short in nature in comparison to non-professional degree programs. Graduate student immigrants are in a special position as the typical length of these programs generally range from one to two years. Programs with quick turnaround rates, leave graduate student immigrants less time to get accustomed to the dominant society. With some participants having little to no previous exposure to U.S. culture, the amount of time to become familiar with the complexities of U.S. culture, campus life, and focusing on academic and career goals is significantly short.

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Housing

The luxury of living in on-campus housing is extremely rare for graduate students, and it is even less of a commodity for graduate student immigrants, especially in the SF Bay Area housing market, in which the vast majority of graduate students seek off-campus housing accommodations. Because many participants have not lived in the SF Bay Area and are not familiar with the housing crisis consuming the area, housing issues are extremely likely to cause acculturative stress related to financial and housing insecurity.

Access to Campus Resources

Equally important, due to the vast majority of graduate student immigrants living off-campus, access to campus resources is significantly limited. On USF's campus, there are services available for students like the Student Leadership and Engagement (SLE) office and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) for students to utilize when dealing with acculturative stress and coping methods. Additionally, many graduate student immigrants live in different parts of the SF Bay Area making physical access to these services increasingly difficult and limited given the time constraints other aspects of daily life.

Financial Support

Differences in currency require financial adjustments on the behalf of graduate student immigrants. Financial adjustment includes adjusting to the standard of living in the U.S. and the SF Bay Area. Graduate student immigrants are limited to the amount of financial assistance from USF and the U.S. government, meaning many participants depended on financial assistance from family to support their studies in the U.S.

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According to Open Doors (2018) the top two primary sources of funding for international student in the U.S. are 1) Personal and Family and 2) Current Employment. Without enough financial support from family and school, graduate student immigrants seek out jobs as sources of income soon after settling into U.S. culture.

With respect to the overall model of acculturation strategies and the challenges that cause acculturative stress, participants discuss navigating their cultural identities in a pluralistic society like the SF Bay Area. Navigating cultural identities focuses on whether or not participants feel more or less connected to their home culture, their host culture, neither culture, or both cultures following their experiences.

Examining the challenges of individual-level cultural adjustment during the acculturation process presented as the focal point of this study. The complexities of adjusting to a culturally pluralistic region like the SF Bay Area are rooted in the model of acculturation strategies presented by Berry (1991) which provide insight into the attitudes projected onto the larger, dominant society. As a result, understanding graduate student immigrants' cultural experiences in complex and diverse social environments will be helpful in providing recommendations and knowledge into the planning and executing of introductory programs to ease the transitions of graduate student immigrants into U.S. society at the start of their academic studies at USF.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

First Theories of Intercultural Contact

In 1914, the first theoretical model exploring cross-cultural interactions was developed by Robert Park of the Chicago School of Sociology upon recognition that individuals from various cultural backgrounds seek the best and most effective ways to communicate with one another with the goal of avoiding any potential conflicts. Park's framework for cross-cultural communication between culturally diverse individuals includes three stages of intercultural contact: contact, accommodation, and assimilation (Persons, 1987). Contact involves the initial interaction between individuals of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Second, the accommodation stage involves the process of adopting necessary cultural behaviors of the dominant culture which triggers the last form of intercultural contact in Park's (1914) model, cultural assimilation (Padilla & Perez, 2003). Assimilation is the willingness to relinquish characteristics of one's cultural heritage and adopt various characteristics from the host culture. Park's (1914) theory was based on the notion that cultural assimilation was inevitable and also irreversible. Furthermore, as the number of immigrants within the U.S. rapidly grew, so did the interest amongst social scientists in studying intercultural contact. Researchers began to explore if the acculturation process was intentional but also reversible.

Park (1938) expanded on his theory of cross-cultural communication and intercultural exchange when he emphasized communication as a complex social phenomenon and its role in the cultural process in *Reflections on Communication and Culture*. Given the relevance of Park's (1938) theory for cross-cultural interactions, this

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literature will be discussed in greater detail. He discussed acculturation in the context of metropolitan cities by illustrating metropolitan cities as hubs for cultural diversity and communication (Park, 1938). In this case, Park (1938) compared cultural exchange to the “market place...from which news is disseminated and cultural influences are diffused” or, “...the center in which old ideas form into the crucible and new ideas emerge” (p. 201). He also explained that individuals continue to seek “enlightenment,” and in this way, describe this acculturation process as a “mutual interpretation of minds and culture” (Park, 1938, p. 201). Moreover, he continued discussing the social structure of cultures existing amongst one another in metropolitan cities by illustrating that cultures in the same physical vicinity are realistically isolated from one another. Park (1938) states:

When peoples of different races and divergent cultures seek to live together within the limits of the same local economy, they are likely to live for a time in relation...as symbiotic rather than social...as identical with cultural. They live...in physical contiguity, but in more or less complete moral isolation, a situation which corresponds in effect if not in fact, to Summer’s description of primitive society. (p. 201)

Park (1938) further explained this form of cultural pluralism leads to feelings of isolation by the minority group and produces a feeling of self-consciousness or an awareness of the “social distance” from the dominant group (p. 202). This resulted in a desire to social engage and actively participate in the dominant society. Park (1938) expanded the notion of the cultural conflict of “self-consciousness” happening in both cultural groups (majority group and minority group) and is a common struggle amongst immigrants when comparing their cultural behaviors (values, norms, language) to the dominant group (p. 201-202).

Early Acculturation Framework

Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) developed the first framework of acculturation and expanded the theory to include individuals and group aspects of acculturation. According to Redfield et al. (1936), “Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (p. 150). With respect to Park’s model of acculturation and cultural change, Redfield et al. (1936), implied that acculturative changes do not happen right way; they emphasize the necessity of prolonged direct contact between the two cultural groups. Additionally, Redfield et al. (1936), first mentioned the economic, social, and political relationship between two cultural groups suggesting that acculturative situations in which group standing is unequal affects the acculturative experiences of both cultural groups.

Furthermore, due to the continually increasing interest in acculturation studies, the Social Science Research Council held a number of acculturation research seminars from July to August in 1953 at Stanford University. These seminars examined acculturative processes and provided a complex base for further acculturative research. Barnett (1954) and the Social Science Research Council defined acculturation as the following:

For the purposes of the formulation under consideration, acculturation may be defined as culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct cultural transmission; it may be derived from non-cultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modifications induced by an impinging culture; it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following upon the acceptance of alien traits or patterns; or it may be a reactive adaptation of traditional modes of life. Its dynamics can be seen as the selective adaptation of value systems, the processes of integration and differentiation, the generation of developmental sequences, and the operation of role determinants and personality factors. (p. 974)

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This new outlook on acculturation theory was complex in nature due to the inclusion of four important and distinct cultural systems, the transmission of cultural traits upon intercultural contact, and the specificity of releasing certain cultural traits during the acculturative process. Padilla and Perez (2003) describes this new perspective on acculturation as “...an advance” specifying cultural aspects that are more resistance to change and the choice of “...what elements of their culture they wish to surrender and what cultural elements they want to incorporate from the new culture” (p. 37).

The Work of John Berry

John Berry, a prominent acculturation scholar, contributed a vast amount of literature on acculturation theory applying it to anthropological, sociological, and psychological perspectives. Because of his great contributions to acculturation theory and the focus on his model of acculturation strategies, this section will discuss some of his works in depth. Doing so will more clearly define the foundation of this study. Around 1980, Berry expanded the scope of acculturation to include the acculturation dynamics and perspectives of underrepresented groups in the context of multicultural and pluralistic societies. His framework included experiences from both the individual-level and group-level experiences in the dominant society and focused on what factors of acculturation individuals and groups were willing to keep and which factors willing to be surrendered. Berry’s theories examined: If individuals could choose which cultural factors to acculturate, then could the acculturation process be irreversible? This included four important factors: assimilation, integration, rejection, and deculturation. Those factors of

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acculturation integrated the notion of dominant culture versus minority cultures, and the inclusion and exclusion of cultural traits in multicultural and plural societies.

Focusing on the acculturation process in relation to plural societies, Berry (1991) defined plural societies as, "...those in which a number of distinct ethnic groups manage their lives together, using some generally shared institutions (such as civic, economic, and legal institutions)," (p. 24). He cited Porter (1972, 1975) criticizing the idea of integrating multicultural policies into the political systems as it is seen as a tactic of limiting cultural assimilation within a dominant society, but the focus on maintaining ethnic identities perpetuates the exact opposite.

An important criticism of multiculturalism has been levelled by John Porter (1972, 1975), who argued that maintaining interest in ethnicity merely perpetuates ethnic stratification in... society: multiculturalism may serve only to keep particular groups in their place in the "vertical mosaic". It may also provide a basis for discrimination (p. 19).

Furthermore, Berry's more recent work on acculturation expanded to include topics like globalization. Berry (2008) examined the connection between acculturation and globalization which involves the integration of cultures, economies, people, and policies on a global scale. From an economic standpoint, globalization promotes free trade and corners global markets among nation-states. On the contrary, a cultural perspective of globalization suggests the loss of the non-dominant group's cultural distinctiveness. Thus, Berry (2008) suggested that globalization is a complex phenomenon and the original notion of the formation of a homogeneous culture can be challenged. Also, he explored whether globalization caused further integration between individuals from the dominant and non-dominant culture as opposed to leading to assimilation or segregation.

Acculturation Strategies

Berry’s expansion on the techniques in which an individual can acculturate into a plural society led to the development of his first model of acculturation strategies. Acculturation strategies represent individual-level and group-level attitudes towards plural societies (Berry, 1991). This application of psychological acculturation to the greater framework provides a baseline to determine a participant’s willingness to interact with the larger society. With this model, Berry (1991) proposes two issues that determine in what phase of acculturation participants find themselves. The first issue focuses on the willingness of the participant to preserve cultural characteristics from their home culture revealing the importance of each participant’s own cultural behaviors in the larger society. The second issue addresses the priority of the participant to engage with the larger plural society, in this case, the SF Bay Area. The engagement signifies any kind of relationship with groups of different cultural backgrounds in the larger society.

Figure 4 Four Acculturation Strategies, Based Upon Orientation to Two Issues

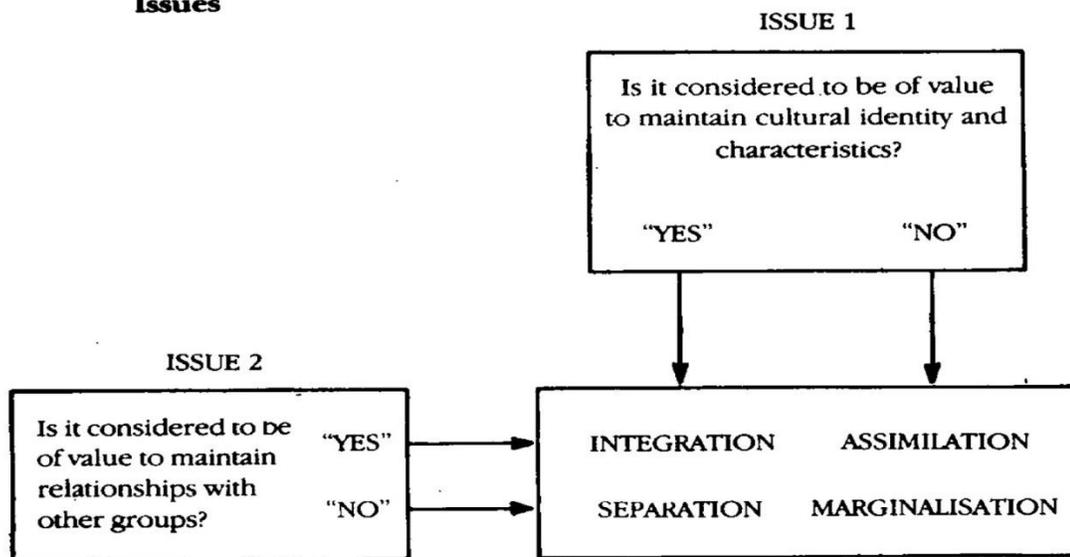


Figure 1: Berry's (1984) Model of Acculturation Strategies

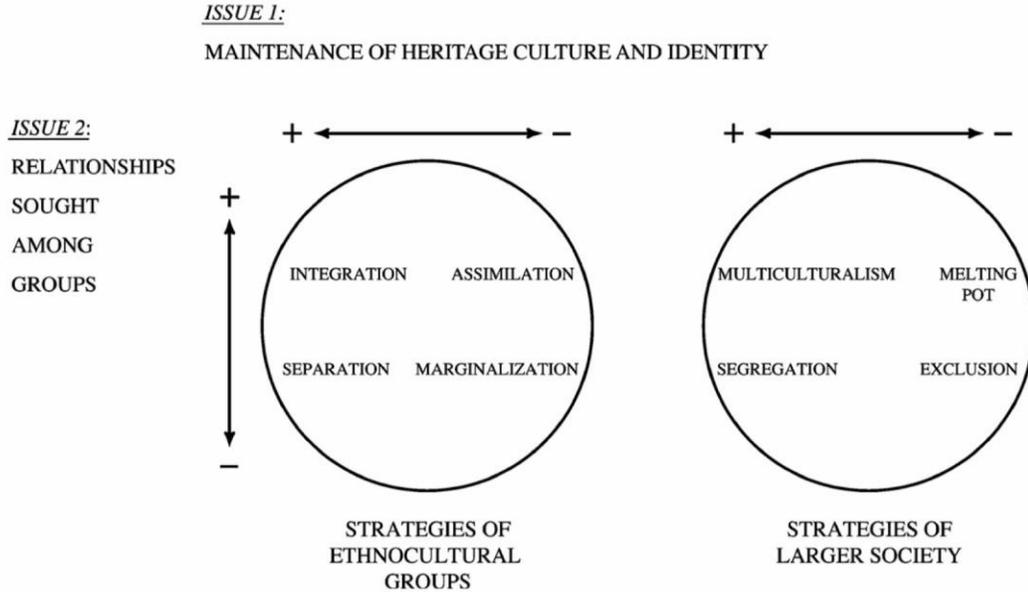


Fig. 1. Intercultural strategies in ethnocultural groups and the larger society.

Figure 2: Berry's (2008) Model of Acculturation Strategies

Figures 1 and 2 display how Berry's model has developed over a 20-year period showing how he expanded the model to include intercultural relations within multicultural societies from the perspective of the larger society. In this study, the SF Bay Area is considered to be multicultural because of the culturally rich population of the region. It is an important assertion to understand how strategies can change when looking from the perspectives of the non-dominant and dominant groups. Below, the terms are separated to provide clarity of how acculturation strategies differ when implemented by each particular group.

Acculturation Strategies of Non-Dominant Groups

From the point of view of non-dominant ethnocultural groups (on the left of Fig. 2), when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures, the *Assimilation* strategy is defined. In contrast, when individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the *Separation* alternative is defined. When there is an interest in both maintaining one's original culture, while in daily interactions with other groups, *Integration* is the option. In this case, there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time seeking, as

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a member of an ethnocultural group, to participate as an integral part of the evolving larger social network. Finally, when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss), and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) then *Marginalisation* is defined. (Berry, 2008, p. 331)

Acculturation Strategies of the *Dominant Society*

Assimilation when sought by the dominant group is termed the *Melting Pot*. When Separation is forced by the dominant group it is *Segregation*. Marginalisation, when imposed by the dominant group it is *Exclusion*. Finally, Integration, when diversity is a widely-accepted feature of the society as a whole, including by all the various ethnocultural groups, it is called *Multiculturalism*. (Berry, 2008, p. 332)

When examining the comparisons, it is crucial to understand how each set of acculturation strategies is applied when implemented by the two different groups. From the non-dominant groups, the acculturation strategies affect the cultural decisions and personal lives of acculturating individuals. This also means that individuals are choosing which cultural behaviors to either maintain, release, both, or neither. From the larger society, the acculturation strategies are implemented from a hierarchical viewpoint in which the dominant group implements the overarching tone within a given society. For example, some consider the SF Bay Area to represent the multiculturalism strategy, while other cities in the U.S. might exhibit the separation strategy.

Socioanalytic Approach and Role Theory Approach

Smither's (1982) socioanalytical approach to acculturation theory is based on cultural awareness and the willingness of the individual to acculturate based on their personal role and their perception of assimilating to the role (expectations) set by the majority. Smither (1982) references Sargent's (1951) definition of role (or expectation)

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“...as a “pattern or type of social behavior which seems situationally appropriate to him in terms of the demands and expectations of his group.”” (p. 63).

Smither (1982) examined majority-minority relations as being seen in five particular ways over the course of history: elimination, segregation, fusion, assimilation, and pluralism. Smither (1982) traces the growing urge to study majority-minority relations by social scientists in the 1960s by examining the resistance by African-Americans toward racial oppression and segregation during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. This cultural awareness of the minority’s changing attitude toward the majority expanded the limitations of acculturation research.

Smither (1982) provides four main modern models of acculturation research that attempt to explain why acculturation occurs in individuals. According to Smither (1982), Goldlust and Richmond (1974) developed a statistical approach using demographic variables to explain that “education and length of residence...were the most useful predictors of successful acculturation” (p.61). Kim’s (1979) communications approach to acculturation examined how individual variables and human communication (intrapersonal, interpersonal, mass media behavior, and communication environment) influences the acculturation process. Szapocznik et al. (1978) specifically examine the behaviors and values of the minority as two different functions of acculturation. Smither (1982) states, “...behavior will adjust to meet survival needs, values will change much more slowly” (p. 62) Thus in Szapocznik et al. (1978) behaviors/values model argues the length of expose to the host culture as well as the demographic makeup of the individual influences how fast one acculturates. Lastly, Smither (1982) looks at Padilla’s (1980) work to examine how individuals prefer either the majority or minority culture and how

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the five dimensions of acculturation (language familiarity, cultural heritage, ethnic pride and identity, interethnic interaction, and interethnic distance) influence the overall acculturation process (p.62). Smither (1982) criticized these models of acculturation not because of *how*, but *why*:

...None of the theories...take into consideration individual difference and the personality process of the individual which facilitate or retard acculturation. Padilla's emphasis on the preference of the individual for the majority or minority culture is an important consideration in understand the overall process, but falls short of explaining *why* a person will choose one culture over the other. (p. 62)

Thus, Smither's (1982) socioanalytical model examines an individual's character structure and personality characteristics as efficient indicators of an individual's willingness to acculturate in society. This method of utilizing personality indicators explains "an individual's understanding of what is expected of him or her, as well as his or her ability to meet those expectations" (p. 65).

Social Cognitive Approach to Acculturation

The social cognitive approach to acculturation theory was introduced in Padilla and Perez's (2003) psychological approach to how immigrants adapt to a culture based on social stigmas and societal standards. Because acculturation research provides minimal insight into the individual-level of acculturation cognitive theory, this study will reference Padilla and Perez theory on social cognition. Padilla and Perez (2003) introduced the social cognitive approach into acculturation theory by developing their model of acculturation based on in which social identity and social cognition affect how an individual perceives themselves in relation to their social and cultural environment. They expanded the social cognitive approach to acculturation by looking at four main components: cultural competence, social identity, social dominance, and social stigma.

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Overall, acculturation is a vast phenomenon that incorporates constructs from many academic fields. More specifically, the acculturation literature looks at both individual-level and group-level behaviors in a plural society. However, the specific experiences of graduate students have not been integrated into the field. In response, this study takes an incremental step to fill this gap by exploring the experiences of graduate student immigrants acculturating into a multicultural society. Next, I now turn to the methods that I used to do this study.

Chapter Three

Methods

Qualitative methodologies are commonly used within social science research studies (Weiss, 1995). The specific methodology used for extracting themes from participant interviews was thematic analysis. In Chapter Three, I discuss the overall methods used in this study including: the process of recruiting participants, why performing qualitative interviews was the most effective way of collecting data, the process of coding the data, and extracting the themes supported by the data that contribute to providing some insights into the research questions. Additionally, in this qualitative analysis, this study will utilize Weiss' (1995) perspective on qualitative interview studies. His perspective on qualitative interviews is important because these types of interviews allow for more room for understanding the complexities of a phenomenon. Finally, I will discuss the six-step thematic analysis framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) that describes analyzing verbal raw data and code into themes. This guide for extracting important themes and underlying ideas and concepts was utilized during this study and provides further insight from participant interviews on their acculturation experiences.

Qualitative Interviews

Weiss (1995) discussed the process of performing qualitative interviews and how interviews are effective in providing deeper meanings to a research topic. Weiss (1995) explained qualitative interviews lack uniformity "...of questioning to achieve fuller development of information..." (p. 3). Because this study is seeking a deeper inquiry into the acculturation phenomenon, participants were asked the same initial seven

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questions and the interview style remained conversational and semi-structured to allow participants a comfortable environment to discuss challenges they have experienced during their time as graduate students.

Interview Schedule

The interview schedule (see Appendix B) was designed by the researcher, consisting of seven open-ended questions for participants to answer about their acculturation challenges. Before the open-ended questions, participants were asked to state their name, age, nationality, and gender as introductory demographic questions. In addition to providing demographic information, this information was ultimately used to see if participants reconsidered the identity of their cultural background throughout the course of the interview. The questions were read aloud so participants were able to speak freely, in English, using their own knowledge of the English language to communicate their answers. If the questions were not clearly understood by the participant, the researcher clarified the meaning of the question.

Location

This section sought to capture why participants chose a specific location for their studies. In the interview schedule, participants were asked to explain the factors that contributed to choosing the U.S. and specifically the SF Bay Area.

Participant Information

This study involved a total of 13 participants (10 females, 3 males) aged from 20-39 years old. All participants have been living in the U.S. for a minimum of 30 days. Some participants have either attended a different U.S. institution or have previously visited the U.S. at least once before moving to the SF Bay Area. The participants were

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aware that these questions focused specifically on their time as a graduate student enrolled in a professional degree program at the University of San Francisco.

The mean age of the participants was 26 years old, while the most common age of participants was 24 years old. The youngest of participants was 22 years old and the oldest age of participants was 39 years old. 11 out of 13 participants are currently or have previously been in the Masters in International Studies program. This was a convenient sample because of the number of graduate student immigrants accessible and available through this program who also fit the criteria of the research question. All participants were ensured anonymity, so no names were included in this research. Demographic information has been included such as: age, place of birth, length of time living in the U.S., and number of prior visits to the U.S. prior to enrolling in USF. Table 1 displays the participant information.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Participants

Participant #1	23-year-old male born and raised in Duala, Cameroon. He has been living in the U.S. for a year and a half and now resides in Washington, D.C. He decided to study in the U.S. for the abundance of opportunities that are not present in Cameroon, to further advance his career, and because he wanted the “American Experience.” He completed his Bachelor’s degree in Canada and has strong ties to U.S., Cameroonian, and Canadian culture.
Participant #2	24-year-old male born and raised in Gujarati, India. He has been living in the U.S. for eight years and now resides in Modesto, California. He decided to study in the U.S. because of his interest in software and research development and the proximity to Silicon Valley and also being the tech hub of the world.
Participant #3	24-year-old female born and raised in Turkey. She has been living in the U.S. for a year and a half and now resides in San Francisco, California. She decided to study in the U.S. because she previously visited the U.S. for a work study summer program and developed a liking and curiosity for U.S. culture. She completed her Bachelor’s degree in Turkey and is familiar to Turkish, European, Polish, Asian, and Middle Eastern cultures.
Participant #4	27-year-old female born and raised in Accra, Ghana. She has been living in the U.S. for two years and now resides in Oakland, California. She decided to study in the U.S. for a cultural shift because of changing generational values. She completed her Bachelor’s degree in Turkey and has been immersed in Ghanaian culture for most of her life.
Participant #5	24-year-old female born and raised in Mumbai, India. She has been living in the U.S. for two month and currently resides in San Francisco, California. She decided to study in the U.S. to pursue academic and professional opportunities in the Masters of Science field she feels are lacking in India for women. She completed her Bachelor’s degree in India.
Participant #6	25-year-old female born and raised in Kolbu, Norway. She has been living in the U.S. for two years, and frequently travels back and forth between San Francisco, California and Mexico City, Mexico. She decided to study in the U.S. because she sought a “proper education.” She completed her high school academia in the U.S. before moving to France to complete her Bachelor’s degree.
Participant #7	22-year-old female born and raised on the island Palau. She has been living in the U.S. for six years and currently resides in Palo Alto,

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	California. She decided to study in the U.S. because the lack of academic and professional opportunities in Palau. She completed her Bachelor's degree in Hawaii and has cultural affiliations with U.S., Japanese, European, and Palawan cultures.
Participant #8	26-year-old female born and raised in rural Guatemala. She has been living in the U.S. for twelve years and currently resides in San Francisco, California. She decided to study in the U.S. for a cultural shift to further pursue academic and professional opportunities. She completed her Bachelor's degree in the U.S. and frequently visits the majority of her family back in Guatemala.
Participant #9	24-year-old female born and raised in Gaza until the age of eight when her family relocated to Ramallah in central West Bank. She has been living in the U.S. for three years and currently resides in Burlingame, California. She decided to study in the U.S. because she wanted to learn English and also to study and experience different culture. She completed her Bachelor's in the West Bank and has cultural ties to both U.S. and Palestinian cultures.
Participant #10	27-year-old female born and raised in Manila, Philippines. She has been living in the U.S. a year and a half and currently resides in San Francisco, California. She decided to study in the U.S. because of the international recognition of U.S. institutions and for career opportunities. She completed her Bachelor's degree in the Philippines and has visited the U.S. prior to moving.
Participant #11	39-year-old male born and raised in Mexico. He has been living in the U.S. for six years and currently resides in San Francisco, California. He decided to study in the U.S. because he wanted to improve his English skills and for career and economic opportunities. He completed his Bachelor's degree in the U.S. and has strong cultural ties to U.S., Mexican, European, and Native American cultures.
Participant #12	30-year-old female born and raised in Seoul, South Korea. She has been living in the U.S. for a year and a half and currently resides in San Francisco, California. She decided to study in the U.S. because of the historical relations between the U.S. and South Korea in addition to international recognition of U.S. institutions. She completed her Bachelor's degree in South Korea and hopes to further study U.S./South Korea relations on an international scale.
Participant #13	24-year-old female born in the Philippines, and raised in the Philippines, Pakistan, Dubai, and then permanently, the U.K. She has been living in the U.S. for six years and currently resides in San Francisco, California. She decided to study in the U.S. for a cultural

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	shift from British culture. She completed her Bachelor’s degree in the U.S. but continues to have a strong connection to U.K. culture.
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Table 2: Participants’ Stated Reasons for Studying in the U.S.

Participant #1	Opportunities; Lack of infrastructure in home country
Participant #2	Tech industry; Silicon Valley
Participant #3	Cross-Cultural Opportunities; Educational Opportunities
Participant #4	Cross-Cultural Opportunities
Participant #5	Career Opportunities; Educational Opportunities; Financial Hub
Participant #6	Educational Opportunities; International Recognition of U.S. Institutions
Participant #7	Cross-Cultural Opportunities; Educational Opportunities
Participant #8	Cross-Cultural Opportunities; Educational Opportunities
Participant #9	Cross-Cultural Opportunities
Participant #10	International Recognition of U.S. Institutions
Participant #11	Cross-Cultural Opportunities; Economic Opportunities
Participant #12	International Recognition of U.S. Institutions
Participant #13	Cross-Cultural Opportunities

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Recruitment and Screening Process

The recruitment process consisted of contacting 13 participants who are currently enrolled at or recently (within one year) graduated from USF. Screening of participants included requiring that all 13 participants have lived in the U.S. for a minimum of 30 days. 30 days was the minimum time because it provides time for participants to settle into their environment and familiarize themselves with their neighborhood, the greater city, USF's environment, and campus resources.

Process and Procedure

Participants in this study were contacted by the researcher due to familiarity with the individuals. 11 of 13 participants are currently enrolled in a graduate program at USF, while the remaining 2 of 13 participants graduated from USF in May 2018 (within six months). 11 of 13 participants were either currently or previously enrolled in the Master of Arts in International Studies program, which has a high enrollment of graduate student immigrants. The remaining 2 participants were currently or previously enrolled in the 1) Masters of Sciences in Computer Science and 2) School of Management Financial Analysis program and were recruited by word-of-mouth due to expressed interest in sharing their experiences with the researcher.

All interviews were completed at locations on USF Hilltop Campus, including the University Center, Gleeson Library, and Kalmanovitz Hall. After having participants complete a consent form and fully comprehend the purpose of the study and the data to be collected, the researcher asked four demographic questions (name, age, nationality, and gender) as introductory questions in order to identify participants during transcription. The participants were then asked the seven questions, which focused on the

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cultural challenges of acculturating into the SF Bay Area and U.S. society. All participant interviews were recorded for transcription purposes. No follow-up interviews were necessary in this study.

Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Interviews

As discussed in Chapter Three, the framework of data collection and analysis is based on the coding of raw data into themes based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework. As a common method of analyzing qualitative research to find common patterns in the data collected by the researcher, this method was used to pinpoint the commonalities from participants about the challenges of acculturating in the SF Bay Area. This methodology provided further insight into each question conducted by the researcher. Given the diversity of themes included in this study, a thematic analysis is advantageous.

Six Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase 1: Becoming familiar with the data

The first phase of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis is to become familiar with the qualitative data conducted from the interviews, which includes transcribing the verbal interviews into written form. The transcription process included listening to all 13 interviews two full times through. The first listen consisted of the researcher writing down first impressions of each interview listening for changes in tone of voice, consistency, and common themes sans biases. In the second listen, the interviewer took note of relevant words, phrases, sentences, sections, actions, activities, concepts, differences, opinions, and processes. This was to pull the common themes and challenges expressed by participants. In this phase, the researcher developed a fuller meaning to the

qualitative data and started to identify the common underlying themes throughout each interview.

Phase 2: Generate initial codes from the data

The second phase includes generating initial codes from the data after identifying an initial list of ideas and themes from Phase 1. The initial codes were based on the raw data from the transcription process. During this phase, the importance of identifying as many codes as possible will keep the context of the key themes relevant later on. Braun and Clarke (2006) states, "...a common criticism of coding is that the context is lost (Bryman, 2001)," (p. 89). Thus, codes such as lack of infrastructure, hard to focus, tech industry, and housing issues are kept for further discussion in Chapter Five.

Phase 3: Search for themes within the data

The third phase included focusing on the greater themes presented from the raw data from Phase 1 and the initial code findings from Phase 2. An important step in organizing how initial codes begin to connect to the greater themes is based on the context that was coded during Phase 2. For example, codes like 'understanding how Americans talk' and misunderstanding of English phrases can be placed under the subtheme interpretation and the larger theme of language.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

In the fourth phase, themes generated from Phase 3 were further narrowed down and reviewed. Some themes were compressed and turned into one overall arching theme. Once themes were compressed, the themes were reviewed again to assure relation to the overall data set and also to see the relation to the other themes and the research question

itself. By the end of this phase, it was apparent that the themes pulled from the data began to give further insight into the study.

Phase 5: Define and name themes

The fifth phase involved further refining themes and applying meaning to how each theme connects to the study. Because of the small nature of the participant pool, there were three final themes were extracted to answer three questions explored in this study: 1) During this study, in which phase of the acculturation model (assimilation, integration, marginalisation, separation) were participants; 2) What were the prominent reasons for pursuing graduate studies in the U.S.; and 3) What were the main Acculturation Stress Indicators identified in this study? The themes in these categories are explored in Chapter Four.

Phase 6: Writing the report

The sixth and final phase of thematic analysis is the writing of this dissertation and explains the themes extracted and uses the data as evidence to explain the common challenges of graduate student immigrants when acculturating in the U.S.

With this explanation of the methodological approaches of this study, I now turn to an analysis of the data collected from the qualitative interviews.

Chapter Four

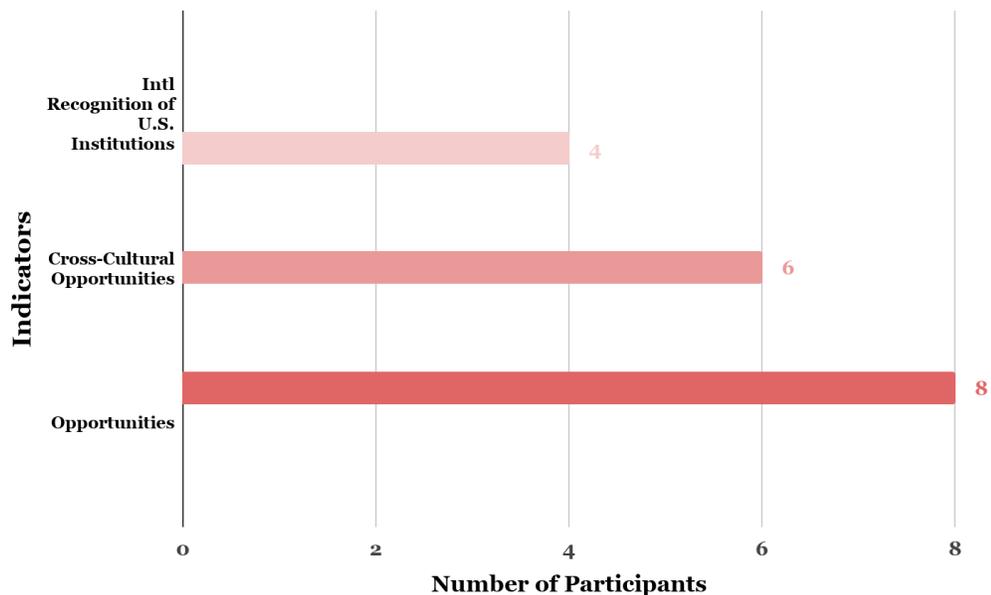
Data Analysis

In this chapter, themes generated from the qualitative interview data will be shared and discussed. This section will reveal the following: In what phase of acculturation participants are in; examples of the extracted codes, ideas, and themes examining what influenced participants to study abroad in the U.S., the most common acculturation stress indicators, and the degree of connectedness to the participant’s home and host culture.

Influences to Study Abroad in the U.S.

The themes generated from the thematic analysis discussed in Chapter Three explored the reasons why participants chose to pursue graduate studies in the U.S. The top three themes extracted are opportunities, cross-cultural opportunities, and international recognition of U.S. institutions. Other themes recorded throughout participant interviews will be analyzed in Chapter Five.

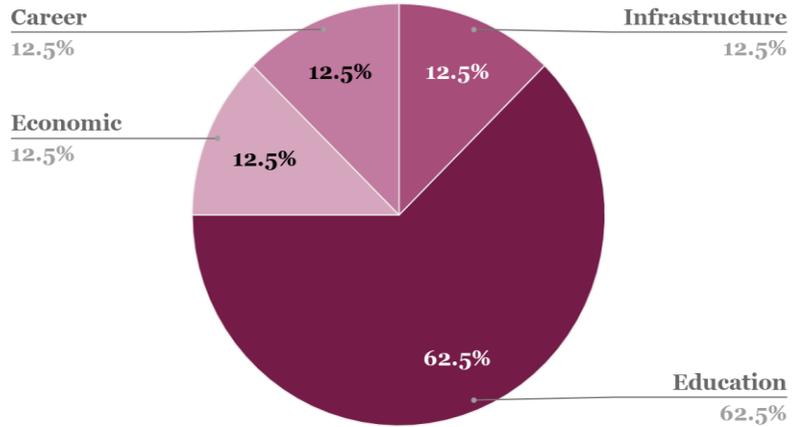
Figure 3: Study Abroad Influences



Opportunities

Presented in Figure 4, 61% of participants mentioned opportunities as a primary reason for choosing the U.S. This includes lack of similar opportunities in their home cultures, furthering education, and the SF Bay Area, specifically, as the tech capital of the world and also a financial hub or economic opportunities, it was determined in this study that the most common indicator for pursuing graduate studies in the U.S. was attached to some sort of benefit that was available in the U.S. and not available in the home culture.

Figure 4: Opportunities Subcategories

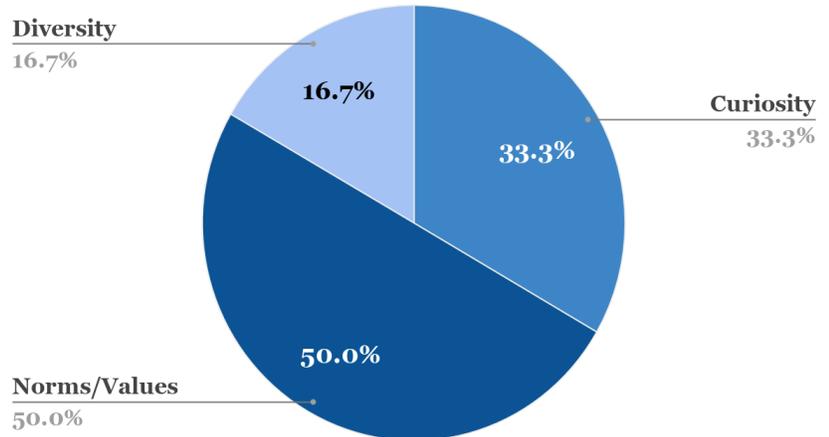


[Participant #7]: *I'm not saying that life back home is bad, but definitely the amount of opportunities is lacking... There's not a lot of opportunities there especially after high school...I feel like for everyone, moving to the states...is a thing and it's the best option you have, especially after high school. We have community college, but that's only two years...It's not bad but then you'd want something more...minimum wage is \$3.50...compared to \$13/14.50 in San Mateo. So, you'd definitely want to go out, get a higher degree so you can get higher pay.*

Cross-Cultural Opportunities

Second, 46% of participants mentioned the need for a shift in cultural surroundings as a reason for studying in the U.S. These data are also presented in Figure 5. Within this category,

Figure 5: Cultural Adjustment Subcategories



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participants mentioned that they were seeking to challenge their lives academically, professionally, and culturally when settling in the U.S.

[Participant #4]: *I needed to challenge myself. Home was too comfortable for me. At home, everything is taken care of for you. The food you're going to eat. I don't have to pay rent. I don't have to pay any bills. Nothing, so I'm kind of like a baby, but that also kind of makes me my parents' pet because they tend to make the decisions for you. They tend to choose your life for you. They choose what you have to do, what time you have to get back home, and stuff like that. I needed to get out of that.*

[Participant #8]: *Education in Guatemala is private, only those that can afford can go to school. Education is not perceived as a right, but rather as a privilege. Only those that can afford it can go.*

Participant #9, a 24-year-old female from Gaza spoke about her love for cultures as a reason for immigrating to the U.S.

[Participant #9]: *I wanted to come here to U.S. ...to learn English, to study, to try another culture.... For me, I love cultures. I like food. I love trying new foods. My favorite is to sit with maybe one Indian [person], from another religious [background] and ask questions.*

International Recognition of U.S. Institutions

Third, 30% of participants said that the global recognition and familiarity of U.S. institutions contributed to their decision to pursue graduate studies in the U.S. This includes international relations between U.S. and other nation-states, the U.S. as a key player and top of the world hierarchy in international relations (global politics), and the lasting implications of colonial influence on society.

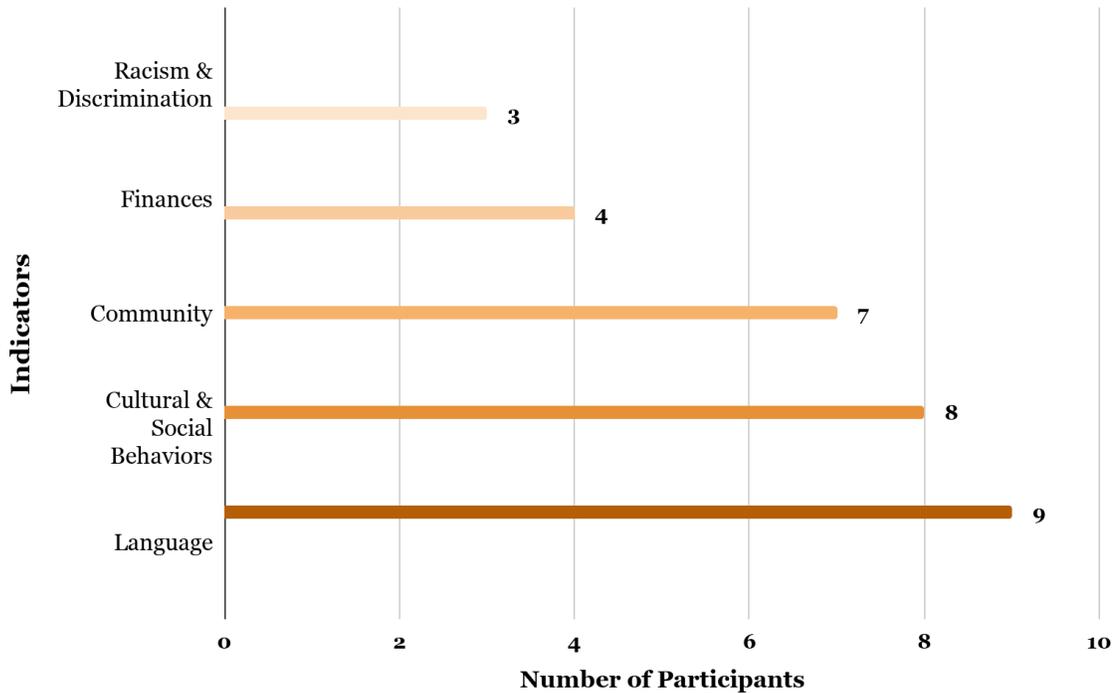
[Participant #10]: *The Philippines has such a bad colonial mentality...a degree from the states is so much better than a degree from the Philippines.*

[Participant #12]: *South Korea and U.S. relationship is special than the other countries. We have a thought that US educational system and political system is advanced than the other countries.*

Acculturative Stress Indicators

Acculturative stress occurs when acculturation experiences cause problems for acculturating individuals (Berry, 1991). For graduate student immigrants, these experiences can be daily encounters that pose problems because of cultural differences. In this section, we identify the top five acculturative stress indicators: language acquisition, cultural and social behaviors, community, finances, and racism and discrimination.

Figure 6: Acculturative Stress Indicators



Language

69% participants mentioned some form of language challenges proved to provide some sort of challenge and affected their graduate studies both in academia and in their daily lives. Language barriers include experiencing difficulty translation words,

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interpreting words and phrases and their relative meanings, and also includes anxiety and self-consciousness about participants' own accents.

[Participant #10]: *I get so self-conscious about...not just speaking in front of everyone, but speaking in English in front of everyone...I feel like I have to have an American accent for people to understand me.*

[Participant #13]: *One thing that I found really tricky was my accent...I felt like I stuck out more, and I think I tried to mold my accent to say things in an American way...so people would understand me...but also because I felt like it made me blend in a little bit more.*

Cultural and Social Behaviors

Differences in cultural and social behaviors accounted for 61% of participant responses. Cultural and social behaviors include actions that are generally accepted or rejected by the larger society. In relation to behaviors, acculturative stress can result from a lack of knowledge and understanding of what is perceived as socially acceptable in the dominant culture. Participant #1, a 23-year-old male from Duala, Cameroon expressed how shocked he was when his American friends confronted him about snapping at restaurant staff in American culture. A behavior that is socially acceptable in Cameroonian culture as simply gaining one's attention is, conversely, considered very rude in American culture.

[Participant #1]: *When we're at the bar, in our culture snapping at someone is not a big deal. Do like "Hey! My friend!" is not that big of deal, but here I learned that it is kind of rude. So, this kind of little interaction shocked me.*

Similarly, Participant #9, a 24-year-old female born and raised in Gaza and Ramallah in the Central West Bank discussed the normality of casual cheek kisses when greeting people in Middle Eastern Culture. She explained that after a few weeks in the

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U.S., her husband explained to her that in U.S. culture, it is not socially acceptable to greet another person by kissing on the cheek.

[Participant #9]: *Sometimes, for example, my husband will always be helping me. Here, the people they don't like kissing...When in Palestine, when you should say hi to anyone, you cannot just hug them...you should shake hands and then [mocks three kissing sounds] Here, when I started to do that and the people...you know, they don't like it here in U.S. when I shake hands and kissing. This is what we are doing there in Palestine. And my husband told me, 'Honey, they are not doing that. Just hug them or say hi or just shake hands. Kissing, they don't like kissing. Kissing? Don't kiss anyone! Only me, honey. Just kiss me!'*

Community

54% of participants expressed that the lack of community caused them to feel less connected to the larger society. This aspect of lack of community was a huge indicator of acculturative stress as participants expressed feelings of loneliness and had trouble adjusting to the individualistic nature of U.S. society. Participant #4, who was found to be in the Separation phase of the acculturation model, mentioned that U.S. culture is so individualistic and she is used to always being surrounded by family and friends.

Additionally, Participant #9 described Palestinian culture as very community-oriented and that it was hard for her to adjust to making appointments to spend time with others.

[Participant #9]: *The relations. So, for example, the middle east culture, we are so close together - the family, the friends. For example, I can go to my friends' home without calling; I can kick my neighbors' door, 'What are you doing? Are you cooking? I am not cooking. Can you give me food?' When I came here, I was crying...I was upset...my husband all the time he is in his work...I cannot go to anyone without an appointment...there you can kick the door, 'Are you here? Open the door...come over...but here I cannot do that I have to tell him before one week or one month...I have to come for a reason, but there I can go every day.*

Financial Hardship

30% of participants indicated that financial hardship causes a lot of stress and affect their graduate studies. Participants have mentioned that being in a location as

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expensive of California, more specifically, the SF Bay Area, influenced their decision to get a job to financially assist them through graduate school. Additionally, the SF Bay Area housing crisis causes stressor like financial insecurity and housing insecurity which causes day to day anxiety. It is not solely about how to survive in the SF Bay Area, participants also mention they feel an obligation to financially assist their families back in their host country. The burden of supporting themselves in the U.S. and their families back home proved to be a factor that causes great acculturation stress.

[Participant #8]: *“Being a low-income student...it affects my experience in graduate school because then I’m always like, ‘I can’t spend all day in the library as much as I would love to, to get all my thesis,’ but I also need to think about...how to survive in an expensive city like San Francisco - how to provide for myself, but also how to provide for my mom back in Guatemala and my little brother now here in San Francisco....there’s a lot of family responsibility that I feel graduate school doesn’t see. They don’t understand that a lot of us don’t come just us, or our needs - that we carry more needs... I can’t just leave my needs or my family needs at home; they’re always with me. Sometimes my sister calls me like, ‘Hey this is what’s going on, we need help’...So, it’s just a lot of expectations and trying to navigate with my family expectations, work expectations, and school expectations. and I feel like at least with my family and work they can get a little more flexible, but I think with school, it’s very structural and it’s very hard to bend those structures or to work your way around.”*

Racism and Discrimination

23% of participants expressed being confronted with racism and discrimination during their time as a graduate student. Seen below, one participant discussed the overt racism her faced, while the latter participant recounts a direct form of racism. The three participants that racist encounters off-campus within San Francisco.

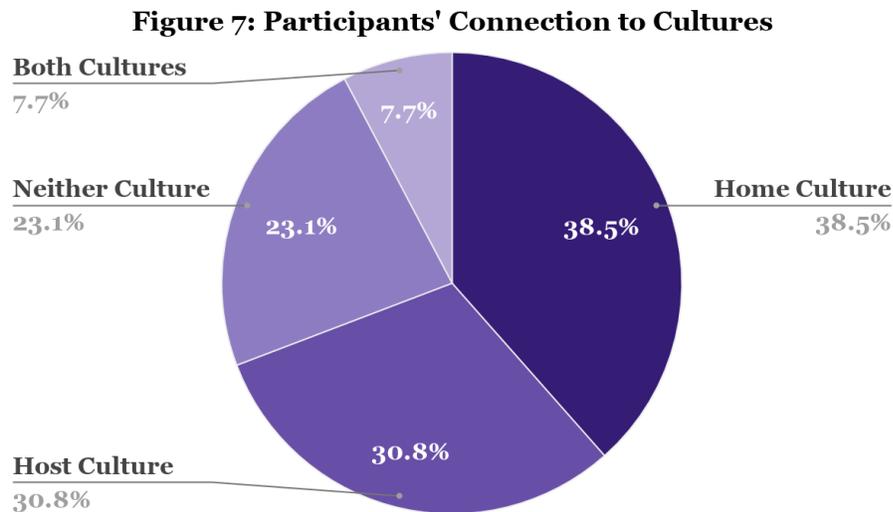
[Participant #1]: *One time I went to visit this home, and there was this white girl and me... the landlord was white as well, and he was kind of ignoring me, but was more showing with the girl...his intention was to give the room to the girl. I don’t know if that was intention, but that’s how I felt.*

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[Participant #2]: *One of the experiences I would like to share is whenever I used to travel in the MUNI buses, I've had some experiences when homeless or some random people used to make some comments on my nationality or my ethnicity...yeah, I've had some racial experiences.*

Navigating Cultural Identities

This section examines participant' responses on their cultural attachment to the home, host, either, or neither cultures after being immersed in U.S. culture for their respective lengths.



Connectedness to Home Culture

39% of participants felt more connected to their home culture. Despite which strategy participants preferred at the time, participants in this category discussed that aspects of their home culture are engraved in their 'blood' and will always determine how the places they are from and the cultural heritage they represent. The overarching theme in this category is that participants feel that being connected to the home culture's traditions and values has molded their identities and also shapes their relationships and perceptions no matter where they are in the world.

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Connectedness to Host Culture

31% of participants felt more connected to U.S. culture. Participants in this category were found to have a deeper appreciation for various forms of cultural norms in the U.S. than in their home culture. During interviews, participants in this category made some sort of cultural comparison between their home culture and U.S. culture. Participant #10, a 27-year-old female born and raised in Manila, Philippines, talked about the everlasting colonial mentality engraved into Filipino society, stating that many people tend to think, 'Everything is better in the States.'

[Participant #3]: *I knew what I was getting involved and I wanted to be involved because I like American culture...Comparing to other cultures I have been to, including my own country, I would say there are more pros for me in this culture that I like...Every culture has its own pros and cons.*

Connectedness to Both Cultures

Less than one percent of participants felt connected to both cultures. This participant, a 24-year-old female raised in Middle Eastern culture expressed feeling 'in between' both cultures and related to characteristics of both cultures. She discussed the advantages of participating in U.S. culture like being in an open-minded society with less conservative views, while always feeling connected to aspects of her home culture, like her personal religious values and beliefs.

Connectedness to Neither Culture

While 23% of participants didn't feel connected to either culture, responses from participants that did not connect to either culture were based more on self-identity versus cultural norms and values. Each participant mentioned understanding both aspects of both the home and host culture but ultimately not in regards to their self-identity, not relating to either one.

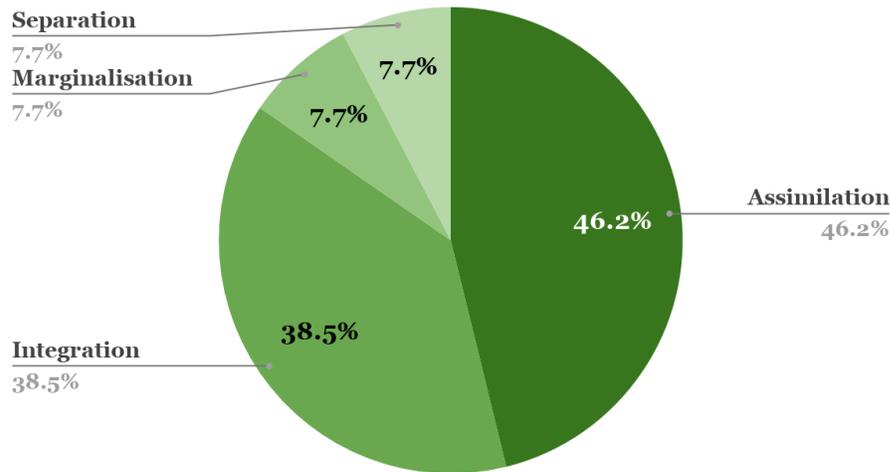
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[Participant #11]: *Back in Mexico, living in Mexico, I know that I have my mom's Native American and Indian and my father's family is more white ...and descendants of Spaniards...tall, blue eyes, blonde hair... So, in Mexico, it was a little bit of...I was kind of between those two worlds like I want to be passed as white because obviously I'm not white. You can see that I have that indigenous tan, that darker skin, and I always wanted to pass as white. (Pause) But then later when I moved to the US, I went back to school, and I started learning and reading issues of race and identity...and at first people would say. When they ask me, 'Where are you from?' and I would say, 'Oh, I'm from Mexico,'... 'Well, you don't look like Mexican.'...and at first, I was like oh that's good because that's what I was trying to pass...(Pause).....so when I was living in Mexico, I would say that I wanted to identify myself as more European, more like white than my indigenous roots, but when I came here, and I learned and studied race and identity, I was like, 'Wait a minute!' So, when people ask me where I'm from, and I say that I'm from Mexico, and that I don't look Mexican...What is that telling me, right? What do you mean? How does a Mexican person look? So... I changed my point of view, and I changed my view of myself, and then I was like, 'Well, I am Mexican, I am Native American...and white Spaniards. But that doesn't define myself... that doesn't tell me anything because in Mexico, we have so many ethnicities that sometimes we don't even look like...I was telling you about the Afro-Mexican communities that exist there, but we have this notion back home...and I think it's all over the world...the whiter that you are...the lighter skin you are... because that's what society's telling us to do...but when you are conscious about these things...race and how everything plays a role, you become aware like, 'Wait a minute! This is something wrong.' Why should I want to become something that I am not? Why don't I accept myself as I am... mixed...Native American and white and not try to get that thing that I'm not going to get...that passing...breaking that mold of following...that path...and saying, 'No! This is who I am.'*

Model of Acculturation Strategies

The thematic analysis used to determine the common themes were based on responses extracted from the qualitative interview data. From the emerging codes and themes, participant responses were again analyzed to determine what phases (Assimilation, Integration, Marginalisation, and Separation) of Berry’s model (1984, 1991, 2008) of acculturation (see Chapter Two: Figure 1, Figure 2) participants are in. Following transcription of interviews, the researcher asked two questions from the model to determine the phase: 1) Is it considered to be of value to maintain cultural identity and characteristics; and 2) Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups? These are YES or NO questions based on participant answers.

Figure 8: Acculturation Strategies



Assimilation

6 of 13 participants were found to be in the Assimilation stage defined by Berry (1991) as “...relinquishing one’s cultural identity and moving into the larger society” (p. 27). Participants in this category used words and phrases with the notion that they would rather be in U.S. culture rather than their own culture. A direct example of this would be

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the following statement made by Participant #1 when asked Question #3 (see Appendix B).

[Participant #3]: *I always wanted to get an American experience...because having an American background can be very trusting...Before coming here [to the U.S.], my ideas were really shaped by what I was seeing on the TV when I was seeing the U.S., it was always about the skyscrapers of New York, the American culture, the western movies... all that was positive...the image of the self-made man, the savior...the image that everything can happen in America.*

The following statement was made by Participant #10 when discussing with the researcher about opportunities to engage with the campus community.

[Participant #10]: *There are so many ways in which you can assimilate better into US society.*

Integration

5 of 13 participants were found to be in the Integration stage which involves maintaining cultural attributes of the home cultural, while adopting characteristics of the larger society. Participants in this category explored the intersections between their home and host cultures. This involved remaining connected to the home culture in some form, but also being open-minded and willing to learn and engage with other cultures in the SF Bay Area. For example, Participant #9 expressed being culturally in between Palestinian culture and U.S. culture. For example, she enjoys the less conservative nature of U.S. culture including clothing, alcohol consumption, and eating whatever foods she wanted. However, characteristics of Palestinian culture she holds on to are family relations, the community-oriented nature, and her religious values and beliefs.

Marginalisation

One participant was found to be in the Marginalisation stage which includes no value of retaining cultural values from the home culture or gaining cultural values or

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norms from the host culture. Participant #6 explained that although she feels more connected to Norwegian culture, she does not retain any cultural norms from there and also does not feel connected to U.S. culture either. She explained that when deciding to come to the U.S., she did not want to have any cultural, emotional, or personal connection to the U.S.

[Participant #6]: *I still feel very much connected to my own culture because that's just who I am. I'm Norwegian; I'm not letting go of that part. I guess it has something to do with that I've been to so many countries, and I know how to adapt myself to a new culture, but I never go to the point to where I feel like I'm part of that culture, except with Mexican culture, but in the U.S., that did not happen at all. I went there with the idea, 'I'm just going to get done with the degree and then I'm going to get out of here. I'm not going to...I'm not seeking to get emotionally or personally or culturally attached or I was not giving any effort at all to fit in. So yeah, I wouldn't say at any point that I would feel American in those senses. No.*

Separation

One participant was found to be in the Separation stage, which involves maintaining the cultural values of the home culture, but contact with other cultural groups of the host culture is of lesser importance. In this stage, the Participant #4, a 27-year-old female from Accra, Ghana talked about issues of race and identity like self-identity, self-awareness, and self-consciousness and feeling disconnected from U.S. culture and from people of her own racial and ethnic background. She would actively seek individuals at USF or groups in the SF Bay Area of her ethnic background to find community.

[Participant #4]: *We equally know ourselves, but here...I'm talking about the fact that I'm an African. I'm not Black American, I'm African. I'm conscious of my color, which has never been a thing for me. I've never been conscious of me being black...and that's to say that Ghana has a lot of white people there but still you find a lot of Americans, you find a lot of Indians in Ghana...you find a lot of Lebanese people, but they aren't exactly the majority in the country...but they're in your schools, they're in your offices, ...amongst people. But that has never posed a problem. It's never, "Oh! He's white or something." But here, I'm sitting*

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on the bus and I'm like, "Oh shit, I'm the only black person on the bus." Or, when some other black person comes in, you actually feel at peace because you see another black person on the bus. Just seeing another black person just makes your life better suddenly. I've never had to be that conscious of my life at that time, but now I really am.

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Chapter Five

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges during the acculturation process of graduate student immigrants in the U.S. A thematic analysis was utilized during this study to explore the common themes from participant interviews about acculturating into U.S. society. Berry's (2003) bidimensional conceptualization of cultural identity and self-identity was utilized to pinpoint if participants can either identify the home culture, host culture, both cultures, or neither cultures. Additionally, this study also utilized Berry's (1991) model of acculturation to determine which of the four acculturation strategies (assimilation, integration, marginalisation, separation) participants chose. With the emerging themes and a detailed look at the acculturation strategies, this chapter will discuss give a general summary of the research and examine in depth the results and offer solutions to aid graduate student immigrants at the University of San Francisco as well as in the U.S. and implications for future research.

As discussed in Chapter Two, acculturation literature focuses on both individual and group-level cultural behaviors and how those behaviors change based on a variety of indicators. As acculturation literature has expanded to different academic fields, anthropological, sociological, and psychological approaches have developed a diverse set of approaches such as personality and character, role theory, majority-minority relations, cultural spaces, social cognitive theory, and more. What is more, this study contributes to the literature by focusing on graduate student immigrants at the University of San Francisco and provides insights on experiences in an individual level in a culturally pluralistic region.

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As discussed in Chapter Three, to determine which acculturation phase participants were in, it is essential to examine their cultural preferences such as their 1) preference for maintaining cultural norms and values of the home culture and 2) preferences for active participation in the host culture. Because of the diversity of the research pool, each participant's answers were examined independently. As a result, the emerging themes from the interview schedule indicated the primary reasons for studying abroad, the most common acculturative stress indicators, how participants feel about navigating their cultural identities, and which acculturation strategy participants were utilizing based upon former responses.

Influences to Study Abroad

The first category explored the main factors that influenced participants to study abroad in the U.S. Participants answers were vast because of the diversity of backgrounds and experiences. The most common responses were 1) opportunities, 2) cultural adjustments after contact with the host culture, and 3) international recognition of U.S. institutions.

Opportunities

The most common reason for studying abroad was opportunities. Within this category are specific reasons mentioned by participants are the following: education, career, economic, and infrastructure. This is the perceived aspect of weighing the cost and benefits of leaving the home culture and moving to the U.S. Participants in this category discussed that in some of their home culture, opportunities for educational advancement were available like in the U.S. Participant #5, a 24-year-old female from Mumbai, India talked about the gender dynamics of India and how gender inequality

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limits women from career advancement in India, especially in the technology and science curriculum. She appreciated how U.S. culture is more welcoming of women in academia than in her home culture. Furthermore, with the prevalence of globalization and a thriving global economy, participants described how beneficial studying in the U.S. would be for potential career opportunities and future employers.

Cross-Cultural Opportunities

The second most common reason for graduate student immigrants studying in the U.S. is cultural adjustment, or a change in one's cultural surroundings. Based on participant interviews, cultural adjustment includes a change in cultural norms and values different from those of the home culture, a curiosity about U.S. culture and the difference in power dynamics and cultural, social, and political structure, and then the cultural, ethnic, gender diversity of the U.S. and the SF Bay Area. Moreover, many perceptions about opportunities in the U.S. and U.S. culture stem from various influential factors like social media networks and western culture's dominance in various markets, like television and media, clothing, food brands, and other indicators of globalization.

International Recognition of U.S. Institutions

The third reason, international recognition of U.S. institutions continues to give insight on the power dynamics of U.S. on a globalized world. This category, solely based on participants' perceptions, was discussed parallel to the opportunities category, as participants mentioned recognition of U.S. institutions were based on the prestigious nature associated with various school names. For example, Participant #10, a 30-year-old female from Seoul, South Korea talked about the power relations between both South Korea and the U.S. and revealed the perceptions about U.S. educational and political

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systems are better and more well-known than anywhere else in the world. The underlying theme in this category is the dominance western culture has on many countries in the world hierarchy.

Acculturation Stress Indicators

Acculturative Stress Indicators detail what daily cultural barriers provides the most challenges to graduate student immigrants. Sam and Berry (2010) state that acculturation stress indicators also give insight into the individual psychological experience of the changing attitudes and cultural behaviors that happens when participants experience stress and anxiety in the host culture. It also pinpoints the moments when participants are disconnecting themselves with certain cultural behaviors and adopting those of the larger society. In this study, the most common factors affect the psychological acculturation process are language acquisition, difference in cultural behaviors, lack of community, financial hardship, and racism and discrimination. The responses from participants coincide with Park's (1938) explanation that cultural conflict results in the feeling of self-consciousness. It is apparent that this happens most often in the language category. Additionally, Park (1938) emphasizes how common it is for these feelings when any cultural conflict ensues and when participants begin to compare cultural behaviors and characteristics to the dominant group.

Language

The first indicator of acculturative stress was language acquisition. In this category, participants talked about their frustrations dealing with the language acquisition which, in this case, deals with the ability to comprehend and understand the English language. There are many aspects of the English language participants talked about. The

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first is accent and the perception of participants to be able to ‘sound more American’ to better fit into U.S. society. Two participants mentioned experiencing self-consciousness and doubt when during their daily interactions, people asked them to repeat themselves for clarification. Second, the interpretation of words and phrases in the English language provided challenges and acculturative stress to participants. A participant mentioned that it was difficult to interpret languages and apply the appropriate meaning because she thinks that in U.S. culture, individuals are less direct and that people are more passive aggressive and do not say what they truly mean.

Finally, direct translation of words and phrases in the English language pose challenges in academia. Participants spoke of the challenges of translating large pages of text and how it took a lot of time to write papers. Some participants spoke about writing whole papers into translation services and then translating the whole paper from their native language to English. Thus, when students’ papers were returned and professors commented on their grammar, this was also another source cause self-consciousness and contributed to acculturative stress.

Cultural and Social Behaviors

The second indicator of acculturative stress, cultural and social behaviors, like greetings and limits on personal boundaries, were a great source for acculturative stress as participants spent a lot of time navigating what are acceptable cultural and social behaviors in U.S. culture. For instance, participants discussed that upon correction, they experienced feelings of confusion and shock because an action appropriate in their home culture was not acceptable. Participants also talked about not wanting to offend anyone and furthermore, would intentionally overthink their actions as to not offend anyone.

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Looking at Participant #1 and Participant #9 examples differences of cultural behaviors. In Chapter Four, we discussed both participants experience with getting called out on cultural behaviors that are deemed unacceptable by the dominant society. Following this portion of the interview, participants showed feelings of agitation and expressed how frustrating it was to be reprimanded for doing something they were not aware was offensive. This lack of cultural and social understanding proved to be a source of acculturative stress.

Community

Third, community support was another indicator of acculturative stress. The community-oriented versus individualistic differences of the home culture and U.S. culture was mentioned a lot by participants. In this category, many participants said they failed to realize that U.S. culture was so individualistic in nature. Upon further explanation, participants talked about how their own cultures were very community-oriented and that friends and families spend a lot of time together. Participants #4, #7, #9, and #10 talked about family life at home and how common it is to visit family, friends, neighbors, and other community members frequently without scheduling an appointment or having to make time to see someone. On the contrary, in U.S. culture, finding time to meet and engage with people is extremely hard resulting in feelings of loneliness and isolation. Often, it was hard for participants to feel connected to the larger society because without friends, social clubs, or any kind of community, there was no one to talk to, thus, leading to acculturative stress. During the interview, Participant #4, a 27-year-old female from Ghana expressed that she sought out African student organizations and that seeing a black person, even on city transportation, was a “relief.”

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Financial Hardship

Financial hardship, a fourth indicator of acculturative stress, was accompanied by the notion that graduate student immigrants receive little financial assistance and seek financial support from their family, friends, and jobs. Participants also talked about the cultural dynamics of their families and how they are obligated to send money back to their families at home. Participant #1, a 23-year-old male from Duala, Cameroon explained that because he is the oldest male of his five siblings, when his father passes away, he will then become the sole provider in his family. The notion of having to provide for his family causes acculturative stress because sending money back home means there is less money in his budget for living expenses. Similarly, participant #8, a 26-year-old woman from Guatemala talked about being able to financially support her mother, father, and seven siblings living in Guatemala, while she deals with living in San Francisco and supporting one of her siblings that lives with her in San Francisco. She talked about immigrating from rural Guatemala where her mother and father live on a farm to come to the U.S. to seek higher education. However, she also talks about working long hours to be able to support herself and her brother who also migrated from Guatemala and now lives with her. Having to support her family caused participant #8 acculturative stress because she talked about having to dedicate less time to schoolwork and more time to working at her job because of how expensive it is to live in the SF Bay Area.

Racism and Discrimination

The fifth and final indicator of acculturative stress was racism and discrimination. Three participants talked about dealing with issues of blatant, perceived, and subtle

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racism. Participant #2, a 24-year-old male from Gujarati, India talked about his experiences riding public transportation or walking down the street when “random people” would make comments about his race and ethnic identity and that he has other experiences dealing with blatant racism. Participant #1, a 23-year-old male from Duala, Cameroon also mentioned he has experienced subtle racism while searching for housing within the SF Bay Area. Last, Participant #10, a 27-year-old female from Manila, Philippines revealed that she feared coming to the U.S. because of the racist rhetoric from the U.S. social and political realm projected on global media. She also talked about she intentionally chose schools and states in “the most democratic states” and also with “high Asian populations” to lessen her chances of racial experiences during her time in the U.S.

Navigating Cultural Identities

Navigating the cultural identities of participants looks at participant’s attitudes towards the larger society and how culturally connected they feel to it after being immersed in U.S. culture. Data showed that most participants felt more connected to U.S. culture than their home culture and only a small number of participants felt a connection to both or neither cultures. The acculturative stress indicators all play a huge role on attitudes towards the larger society. A pluralistic society like the SF Bay Area (and the larger U.S. society) is culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse in nature but that does not make it inclusive or equitable. Participants did talk about specifically choosing the SF Bay Area because of the cultural diversity of the region. The underlying reason is because many participants in this study love cultural diversity. It was also noted that some participants felt that they would not thrive in environments that were not diverse in nature. Thus, despite being settled in a culturally diverse and pluralistic society, the trend

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among participants is still to make some kind of cultural shift in behaviors and norms to feel more included in U.S. society, which parallels to the data which reveals that the assimilation phase of the acculturation strategy is the most common strategy.

Acculturation Strategies

All sections in this study contribute to the overall acculturation attitudes held by participants towards the dominant society. The assimilation strategy was the most common phase of participants based on the thematic analysis of the interviews. This strategy included disintegration of cultural characteristic of participants' heritage cultures and adoption of characteristic of U.S. culture. Factors like changing one's accent, clothes, cultural values, and behaviors contribute to the cultural assimilation of 46.2% of participants.

The second common phase was the integration category which accounted for 38.5% of participants. Integration dealt with the maintenance of characteristic of participants' heritage cultures while also adopting characteristics of U.S. culture. Participants in this category talked about the importance of their heritage culture on their personal goals, values, and norms while emphasizing the additional benefits of living in U.S. culture. Beneficial aspects to participants included the less conservative nature (openness) and overall accepting nature of U.S. society. Participants in the integration phase expressed a sense of freedom in U.S. culture to create their own identities.

The marginalisation and separation were equivalent with both categories accounting for 7.7% of participants. These categories represent participants who experienced minimal social interaction and no cultural connection to either culture. The participant in the marginalisation category revealed her initial intentions where to not

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become culturally, emotionally, or socially attached to U.S. culture because she wanted to focus solely on school. However, this participant also admitted to experiencing acculturative stress adjusting to the teaching styles of U.S. culture in which graduate students are expected to participate and engage in conversation in the classroom. This participant revealed that speaking frequently in class induced feelings of self-consciousness because of their accent and proficiency with the English language. Thus, feelings of social anxiety have led this participant to becoming marginalised.

Moreover, the participant in the separation category expressed a deep connection to her home culture but disconnection from U.S. culture. The disconnection resulted from failing to find a stable community of people to feel comfortable around. In this stage, loneliness and lack of community and social support systems results in an unwillingness to engage and form relationships with the larger society. Being a graduate student immigrant with many responsibilities, neglecting relationships with the larger society is common.

Recommendations

Community and Social Support Systems

Outside of academic departments, USF provides the opportunities for graduate student immigrants to get involved in student life with offices like SLE. Additionally, programs encourage students to take advantage support services like CAPS. However, if these services are readily available, why have participants expressed feelings of isolation and lack of community? Based on the results from this study, 53.8% of participants feel USF does not provide long-term community and social support services to engage with other students outside of the classroom.

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The individualistic nature of U.S. society has proven to be a difficult adjustment with many participants coming from their home cultures that are extremely community-oriented. This study suggests that USF develop better support services for their graduate student immigrants to provide connection and community in an attempt to avoid feelings of loneliness and isolation which leads to acculturative stress.

Language Services

Results from this study show that language acquisition was the top indicator for acculturative stress prompting feelings of anxiety and self-doubt. Participants shared their difficulties interpreting, speaking, and translating words and phrases in the English language. As an aid to assist graduate student immigrants with language skills, developing a language program would prove to be beneficial in helping break down language barriers for students that experience language difficulties.

Reverse Cultural Shock Services

There are vast amount of studies on the culture shock cycle that examine how an individual adjusts to a new cultural environment.

Adler and Gundersen

(2008) defines culture shock

as, "...the expatriate's reaction to a new, unpredictable, and therefore uncertain

FIGURE 10-2 Culture Shock Cycle

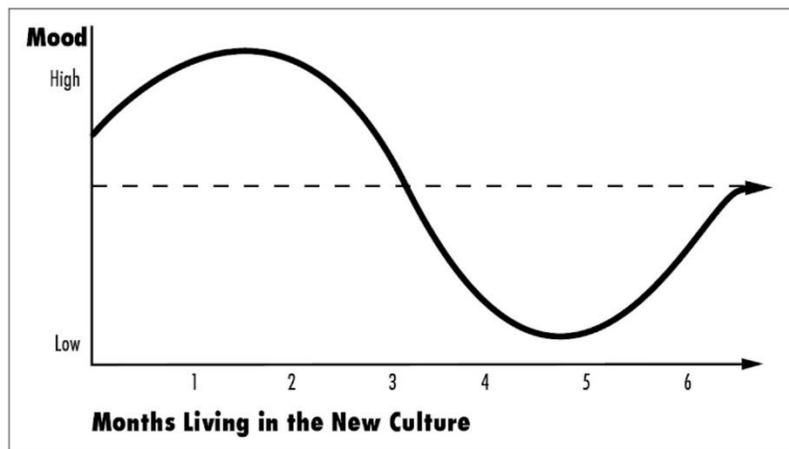


Figure 9: Nancy Adler's Culture Shock Cycle (2008)

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environment” and “results from a breakdown in an expatriate's selective perception and effective interpretation systems,” (p. 278). Culture shock is a common phenomenon and happens to a vast amount of people who travel frequently for long periods of time.

Adler and Gundersen (2008) developed a simple model of the Culture Shock Cycle (see Figure 9) which shows the various levels of cross-cultural adjustment when exposed to new cultural environments. Adler and Gundersen (2008) describes the top of the U-shaped curve as the “initial phase” in which participants feel excited upon enter a new cultural space (p. 277). Following the initial phase, excitement begins to dwindle as a routine sets in. Then, expatriates enter the bottom of the curve which represents the culture shock phase followed by cultural adjustment and content within the new culture. There is a gap within culture shock literature in which repatriation, reverse culture shock, or, as Adler and Gundersen (2008) deemed, cross-cultural re-entry is vaguely talked about. Simply put, it is the process of re-adjusting back to the culture of the home country. When conducting a study with immigrants, it is not entirely certain if participants will eventually return to their home culture. If and when they do, it is important to provide reverse culture shock services because culturally, participants have change significantly and could feel disconnected from their home culture upon returning.

Limitations of the Study

Various limitations of acculturation studies are presented through qualitative interviews and thematic analysis. Participant interviews could be limiting in nature, which could affect the quality of data collected. Additionally, some participants may not even be aware of the acculturating process, so it is important that the research explain all aspects to the participant so they can understand the framework in full. In addition, the

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fact that the majority of respondents were enrolled in the same Master's program might have biased their responses to be specific to the program rather than to broader socio-cultural phenomena related to acculturation. Future research could include more respondents from multiple institutions and programs to capture a fuller picture of graduate student immigrant experiences in the SF Bay Area.

Future Research

Acculturation and Social Justice

This study examines many factors explore the overall acculturation experience of graduate student immigrants in the SF Bay Area. However, with qualitative interviews and a thematic analysis primarily examining acculturation from the participants' viewpoint, this study leaves adequate room for exploring the nature of the U.S. social, cultural, and political climate and how it could influence the acculturation experiences of graduate student immigrants. Future research could examine political policies and look at the history of nation, state, and local-level policies influence on the social structure of a certain area, including political policy analysis, the history of nationalism, social movements, and uniformity within a society. Within this research would include rhetoric on diversity, inclusion, and equity efforts within society and organizations for non-dominant groups. Berry (2003) states, "Ideologies and policies of the dominant group constitute an important element of ethnic relations research," (p. 26). This constitutes further look into the larger society in which graduate student immigrants are acculturating.

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Technology and Acculturation in the Modern Era

In the era of constant technological advancements, there lies a gap in the acculturation field that allows for the study of Internet and technology and its influence during the acculturation process. Technology is an integral part of human interaction and a crucial means of global communications in which individuals connect from all over the world. Mechanisms like email, text messages, and social media platforms provide acculturating individuals with access to family and friends from the home culture. When applying this phenomenon to acculturation, future research on this topic would explore if technology, the Internet, and the age of social media in the modern era have an effect on the overall acculturation experience.

University and Organizational Research

For the purpose of this thesis and the convenience of the research study, the majority of participants were enrolled in the Masters of Arts of International Studies Program while two participants were involved in the Masters of Finance and Masters of Computer Science program at USF. Future research of the acculturation experiences of graduate student immigrants could go beyond a sample size of 13 participants and further explore students' perspectives from a plethora of difference programs and from more than one university. Widening the pool of participants will provide more perspectives and first-hand accounts of the acculturating experience.

Conclusion

This study explored the common themes and challenges during the acculturation process of graduate student immigrants attending USF and living in the SF Bay Area. 13 participants were interviewed to provide direct insight on these experiences in a

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pluralistic society and how USF can better aid graduate student immigrants in the process of cross-cultural adjustment. Data from this study revealed that most participants assimilate into U.S. culture relinquishing some characteristics of their heritage culture. Additionally, acculturative stress indicators played a significant role in understanding how graduate students interact with the larger society and acculturative strategies provided insight on participants' attitudes toward the larger society after being immersed in U.S. for a prolonged period of time. It is imperative to understand how graduate student immigrants adjust to U.S. culture, and to ensure they are equipped with the materials and services that make the transition to U.S. culture easier than before.

Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Acculturation

The phenomenon that results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups (Redfield et al., 1936).

Acculturative Strategies

The varying attitudes held and actual behaviors of individuals and groups towards the four ways of acculturating (assimilation, integration, marginalisation, and separation) (Berry, 1997, p. 11).

Acculturation Stress

When acculturation experiences cause problems for acculturating individuals (Berry, 1991, p. 22).

Assimilation

When individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures (Berry, 2008, p. 331-332).

Exclusion

Marginalisation when imposed by the dominant group (Berry, 2008, p. 331-332).

Integration

When there is an interest in both maintaining one's original culture, while in daily interactions with other groups (Berry, 2008, p. 331-332).

Marginalisation

When there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss), and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) (Berry, 2008, p. 331-332).

Melting Pot

Assimilation when sought by the dominant group (Berry, 2008, p. 331-332).

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Multiculturalism

When diversity is a widely-accepted feature of the society as a whole, including by all the various ethnocultural groups (Berry, 2008, p. 331-332).

Plural Societies or Cultural Pluralism

Resulting from immigration...people of many cultural backgrounds come to live together in a diverse society (Berry, 1997, p. 8)

Qualitative Interview Study

A study based on qualitative interviews in which the interviews lack uniformity of questioning to achieve fuller development of information. (Weiss, 1995, p. 3).

Social Cognition

A metatheoretical approach to studying social behavior by focusing on the mental processes that guide social interaction (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 41).

Segregation

When separation is forced by the dominant group (Berry, 2008, p. 331-332).

Separation

When individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others (Berry, 2008, p. 331-332).

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Appendix B: Interview Schedule

1. Could you elaborate on your self-identify?
2. Could you describe how you self-identified culturally prior to living in the United States?
3. Why did you decide to pursue graduate studies in the United States?
4. Can you give 2-3 salient cultural experiences that have posed challenges to you as a graduate student?
 - a) What are day-to-day things that may cause anxiety and potentially affect your studies?
5. As a result of your experiences, do you feel more connected to U.S. culture or your home culture? Please explain your response.
6. Is there anything else you would like to share as a result of our conversation?

Appendix C: Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Below is a description of the research procedures and an explanation of your rights as a research participant. You should read this information carefully. If you agree to participate, you will sign in the space provided to indicate that you have read and understand the information on this consent form. You are entitled to and will receive a copy of this form.

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Courtney Lamar, a graduate student in the Department of International Studies at the University of San Francisco. The faculty supervisor for this study is Dr. Kevin Lo, a professor in the Department of Organization, Leadership and Communication at the University of San Francisco.

WHAT THE STUDY IS ABOUT:

The purpose of this research study is to document and explore acculturation experiences of graduate student immigrants in the United States by examining the social, political, and cultural factors that pave the way for potential cultural and identity conflicts when integrating between two cultures (the home culture to the dominant host culture). In this way, what are the shared challenges of foreign graduate students immigrating to the U.S.?

WHAT WE WILL ASK YOU TO DO:

During this study, the following will happen: the researcher will conduct an in-person interview in which participants are able to share personal stories about their experiences immigrating from their home culture to the United States. Additionally, participants are able to share the social and cultural challenges faced during transition and how these challenges have either positively or negatively influenced their graduate studies. In-person interviews will be audio-only recorded for later transcription. Audio-recordings will be uploaded and stored in password-protected folders during the duration of the research project. Upon completion of the research project, audio recordings will then be destroyed.

DURATION AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY:

Your participation in this study will involve a one hour-long session. This will include the completion of an in-person interview. The study will take place at the University of San Francisco.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:

We do not anticipate any risks or discomforts to you from participating in this research. If you wish, you may choose to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time during the study without penalty.

BENEFITS:

You will receive no direct benefit from your participation in this study. However, the possible benefits to others include further information about the acculturation process of immigrants in the United States. We hope to learn more about the social and cultural factors of graduate student immigrants in addition to the shared challenges faced by graduate student immigrants

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and how it affects graduate studies. Information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future by providing insight and beneficial services for foreign graduate students to be used by various institutions.

PRIVACY/CONFIDENTIALITY:

Any data you provide in this study will be kept confidential unless disclosure is required by law. In order to keep information organized, the researcher will have a master list with a code linking your name to gathered data. In any report we publish, we will not include information that will make it possible to identify you or any individual participant. Specifically, any names, identifying information, and gathered data will be kept secure in a password protected file and can only be accessed by the researcher, research assistants, and the advisor. Upon completion of research project, the master's list with linking codes shall be destroyed. This consent form will be kept on file for up to three years from the time of signature.

COMPENSATION/PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION:

There is no payment or other form of compensation for your participation in this study.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY:

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time. Furthermore, you may skip any questions or tasks that make you uncomfortable and may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. Nonparticipation or withdrawal from the study will not affect your grade or treatment. In addition, the researcher has the right to withdraw you from participation in the study at any time.

OFFER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS:

Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you should contact the principal investigator: Dr. Kevin Lo at (415) 422-6139 or kdlo@usfca.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board at IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

I HAVE READ THE ABOVE INFORMATION. ANY QUESTIONS I HAVE ASKED HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT AND I WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM.

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