

To Be a Citizen: An Integrative Literature Review of Mexican American Parents and Their
Struggle Assimilating to U.S. Culture

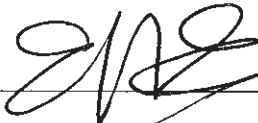
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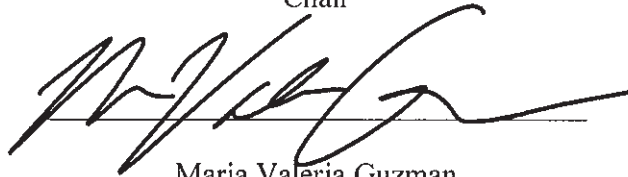
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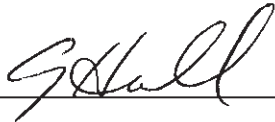
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**To Be a Citizen: An Integrative Literature Review of Mexican American Parents and Their
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Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the wonderful people that have been in and are a part of my life. Thank you for supporting me along my journey and staying by my side throughout the good and bad times. To my fiancé Chase who stood by my side and supported me as I pushed through graduate school. You were always there for me and always provided the space for me to feel loved and supported even through difficult times. Your unconditional love and support is what got me through graduate school and helped me get to where I am today. Thank you for pushing me to be the best version of myself.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my late grandmother Ophelia and grandfather Enrique. Thank you for your strength and resiliency that brought our family to the United States. Your willingness to come into a new country to provide for your family amazes me and makes me so grateful to have the grandparents I had. Thank you for instilling that strength and resiliency in me and my family today. Your courageous acts have not been forgotten and will be remembered throughout the years.

Esta tesis está dedicada a mi difunta abuela Ofelia y mi abuelo Enrique. Su fortaleza y resiliencia trajeron a nuestra familia a los Estados Unidos. Su voluntad de venir a un nuevo país para mantener a su familia me sorprende y me hace sentir muy agradecida de tener los abuelos que tengo. Gracias por infundir esa fuerza y resiliencia en mí y en mi familia hoy. Tus valientes actos no han sido olvidados y serán recordados a lo largo de los años.

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Abstract

The Mexican population is one of the most disadvantaged groups in the United States facing higher rates of poverty, lower educational levels, poorer health outcomes, and lower naturalization rates (Alonso, 2016). The Mexican American population encounters multiple adversities assimilating to U.S. cultures such as acculturation stress, language barriers, cultural differences, financial insecurity, limited educational opportunities, discrimination, and other systemic oppressions (Cervantes et al., 1991). Research exists that addresses the role art therapy plays in the treatment of these multiple adversities; however, minimal research emphasizes the challenges Mexican American parents face assimilating to the U.S. An integrative literature review was conducted to identify a culturally competent framework for Mexican American parents participating in art therapy. A total of four articles were found discussing art therapy and the Hispanic/Latino population. Of the four articles, only one article discussed art therapy and Mexican Americans. None of the resources specifically focused on the needs of Mexican American parents in art therapy. Recommendations for future research were made in response to the themes identified in the literature, such as the need to identify the needs and challenges Mexican American parents face increasing training for culturally competent and bilingual therapists, and an investigation of effective materials, directives, and therapeutic approaches for the population. Finally, opportunities were identified to create an effective framework for family therapy that involves Mexican American parents struggling with acculturation.

Keywords: Mexican Americans, assimilation, art therapy, culturally competent

Chapter I

Introduction

There are 60.5 million Latinos living in the United States which represents 18.4% of the total U.S. population (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services [HHS], 2021). Among the Latino subgroups, the Mexican population is ranked the largest group representing 61.4% of the entire Latino population (HHS, 2021). In 2019, 12.2% of the Latino population, over the age of 18, experienced serious psychological distress; however, only 9.7% sought out mental health services for their psychological distress (SAMSA, 2019). The Mexican population is one of the most disadvantaged groups in the United States facing higher rates of poverty, lower educational levels, poorer health outcomes, and lower naturalization rates (Alonso, 2016). The Mexican American population encounters multiple adversities assimilating to U.S. cultures such as acculturation stress, language barriers, cultural differences, financial insecurity, limited educational opportunities, discrimination, and other systemic oppressions (Cervantes et al., 1991). The identification of these barriers reflects the immense issues individuals face assimilating to U.S. culture as they transition from their country of origin's culture.

As the Mexican American population increases in the United States, there has been a multitude of services identified for their physical and mental health. For example, the Coalition for Immigrant Mental Health and the Immigrant Learning Center provides awareness of and access to appropriate mental health services for those who are undocumented or are of mixed-status (CMIH, 2021; The Immigrant Learning Center, 2021). While there is a multitude of services available for the Mexican American population, there still is a lack of consideration for the unique needs of parents dealing with assimilation to U.S. culture and finding culturally competent treatment.

Acculturation and acculturative stress place parents at a higher risk of developing psychological problems due to the expectations of the host country (Kouyoumdjian et al., 2003). Acculturative stress can lead to a variety of mental health-related issues including depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, suicidal ideation, and identity confusion (Williams & Berry, 1991). Utilizing an approach such as art therapy with Mexican American parents may benefit parents as they assimilate to U.S. culture and transition from their country of origin's culture.

This study aimed to identify the barriers Mexican American parents face when assimilating to U.S. culture and propose an art therapy group that could be beneficial to this population. An integrative literature review with a literature matrix was used for this study. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify themes in literature and find relationships between themes and sub-themes to understand how they address the research question (Betts & Deaver, 2019). It was hypothesized that identifying barriers that Mexican American parents face assimilating to U.S. culture would help inform a structured art therapy group that addresses the needs of Mexican American parents. By identifying best practices in counseling and art therapy for this population's needs, more culturally competent services can be developed for the population.

Operational Definitions

Acculturation– the process of cultural adjustment and adaptation from the individual’s place of origin to the adoptive host country (Bridges et al., 2021; Wallace et al., 2010).

Acculturation stress– the challenges individuals face due to the process of adjusting and adapting to the host country’s culture (Kapke et al., 2017; Lawton et al., 2018).

Acculturation conflict– an intergenerational conflict that occurs as youth and their families experience differential and conflicting levels of acculturation (Kapke et al., 2017).

Assimilation– the integration of the host country’s culture into the individual’s place of origin (Bridges et al., 2021; Smokowski et al., 2008).

Collectivist culture– emphasizes the relationships with one another and the interconnectedness between people plays a central role in each person’s identity (Sue et al., 2019).

Familism– the sense of the individual being deeply integrated into family dynamics (Smokowski et al., 2008).

Hispanic/Latino– a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or any other Spanish culture or origin (HHS, 2021).

Mexican American– an individual residing in the United States that is of Mexican birth or descent (Smithsonian Institute, 2021).

Narrative Therapy– “a form of therapy that aims to separate the individual from the problem, allowing the individual to externalize their issues rather than internalizing them” (Gehart, 2016).

Chapter II

Methods

I completed an integrative literature review research study. An integrative literature review selects two topics that the researcher systematically analyzes to compare and contrast and integrates the topics to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a singular topic (Broome, 1993). I searched databases, including EBSCO, JSTOR, PubMed, Google, Google Scholar, and utilized the Journal of the American Art Therapy Association and the Journal of Creativity in Mental Health accessed through the Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) library. Additional sources were identified using reference lists from pertinent scholarly sources. The data was organized into a literature matrix, an organizational tool that catalogs articles and data used in the literature review. A thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. These themes were used to develop a proposal for group art therapy for Mexican American parents.

Chapter III

Literature Review

Statistics

There are 60.5 million Latinos living in the United States, representing 18.4% of the total U.S. population (HHS, 2021). According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2019), 12.2% of the Latino population over the age of 18 experienced serious psychological distress in 2019. In 2019, only 9.7% of the Latino population received mental health services, and of those, 58% received treatment for a major depressive episode (SAMHSA, 2019). According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS, 2021), the Latino/Hispanic population includes individuals from Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, South or Central America, or any other Spanish culture or origin. Among the Latino subgroups, the Mexican population is the largest group representing 61.4% of the entire Latino population (HHS, 2021).

Needs and Barriers

Mexicans are one of the most disadvantaged groups in the United States regarding socioeconomic mobility and access to citizenship (Alonso, 2016). Additionally, Mexican Americans have higher rates of poverty, lower educational levels, poorer health outcomes, and lower naturalization rates compared to other immigrant groups and native populations (Alonso, 2016). The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI, 2021) reported that 19% of Mexican Americans have no health insurance. Without insurance, receiving physical and mental care is more challenging for this population. The population can receive limited public assistance for their physical and mental health; however many individuals worry that without documentation they will be deported and separated from their families (NAMI, 2021). In 2017, the Pew

Research Center reported 4.9 million unauthorized Mexican immigrants living in the United States (Passel & Cohn, 2019). Many undocumented Mexican immigrants need physical and mental health services but refrain from seeking out assistance because of fear of deportation.

The Mexican American population encounters multiple adversities assimilating to U.S. cultures, such as acculturation stress, language barriers, cultural differences, financial insecurity, limited educational opportunities, discrimination, and other systemic oppressions (Cervantes et al., 1991). Consoli et al. (2012) found acculturation barriers to be the most frequently identified barrier among Mexican American adults. This identification reflects the immense issue individuals face assimilating to U.S. culture as they transition from their country of origin's culture. Language is another barrier that many Mexican Americans face as they immigrate to the United States and have not learned the English language. One-third of Hispanics/Latinos living in the United States cannot speak English or cannot speak English proficiently (Krogstad et al., 2015).

Consequently, many Mexican Americans cannot receive the necessary services and experience other barriers in education, work, community, and access to healthcare services (Consoli et al., 2012). Approximately 15.7% of Mexican Americans living in the United States live in poverty (NAMI, 2021). Many Mexican Americans cannot find a job that will pay a living wage, or those who come to the U.S. with educational background cannot always utilize their degrees because they are not considered equivalent in the U.S. (Consoli et al., 2012). Therefore, these individuals face limited educational and work opportunities to meet the basic needs of themselves and their families. Government restrictions are another barrier Mexican Americans face, as some must obtain visas or gain citizenship to receive additional services that the U.S. offers. The current cost to apply for U.S. citizenship is \$725 and is non-refundable regardless

of The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) acceptance or rejection of your application (Immigration Direct, 2022). The cost applies to each family member, not an entire family, which can add up tremendously for a family assimilating to the U.S. In addition to the price of citizenship, individuals applying for citizenship must pass a naturalization test. This includes a lengthy preparation of 100 civic questions, and the oral exam will only select 10 questions that are asked. The cost and exam required to become a U.S. citizen are other barriers Mexican American parents must overcome when assimilating to the United States. This barrier becomes even more difficult for parents to overcome if they are not proficient in English, do not have the financial resources to cover the costs, or cannot find the resources or time to prepare for the naturalization exam and expenses.

Language Barriers

Within the United States, 33.2 million Hispanics/Latinos speak English proficiently (Krogstad et al., 2015). However, 15.7 million Hispanics/Latinos, which is one-third of the Hispanic/Latino population in the U.S., do not speak English or cannot speak English proficiently (Krogstad et al., 2015). Consoli et al. (2012) identified how language barriers could affect individuals' access to education, communication with children's school personnel, range of job opportunities or advancements, and access to healthcare services. Consoli et al. called attention to the lack of bilingual school personnel and mental health service providers for Hispanics/Latinos in the U.S. Many Hispanics/Latinos reported having emotional ramifications because of their lack of English proficiency, such as feelings of inadequacy, lack of acceptance, and social isolation due to discrimination and stigmatization (Consoli et al., 2012). Six out of ten Hispanic/Latino adults reported having difficulty communicating with healthcare providers because of language or cultural barriers (Swanson & Contreras, 2018). The Civil Rights Act of

1964 requires translators for all healthcare institutions (HHS, 2020). However, staff may be unaware of cultural barriers to medicine between patients and doctors and may not be aware of the ethical stands of interpreting. Also, staff members in the hospital are extremely busy and may not have the proper amount of time and focus on dedicating to interpreting for patients.

Additionally, bilingual family members may not have a high proficiency in English or enough knowledge of the medical field to properly interpret for other family members. Family members may also be emotionally distressed when accompanying other family members to the hospital. Therefore they will not have the proper focus to interpret or could withhold information they deem too distressing or too private. Because of the language barrier, many Hispanics/Latinos lack the services needed for their physical and mental health and suffer from the lack of critical care necessary for their physical and mental wellbeing (Swanson & Contreras, 2018).

Many Hispanic/Latino parents must rely on their children to translate for them when immigrating to the United States. Frequently, children of immigrant Hispanics/Latinos become proficient in the English language much quicker than their parents and are required to translate day-to-day transactions, documents, correspondence, and complex contracts for Spanish monolingual family members (Weisskirch & Alva, 2002). Children who consistently translate for their monolingual parents report higher rates of acculturative stress, psychosocial stress, increased responsibility of adult roles, an overwhelming influence to translate accurately, and report a negative impact on parent-child relationships (Weisskirch & Alva, 2002). Monolingual parents report higher parental depression and stress, less parental motoring, less influence in their role as a parent, and less positive involvement with their children (Martinez et al., 2009). The expectation of these children to translate for their monolingual parents place children at a higher

risk for acculturative stress and limits them from assimilating to U.S. culture (Martinez et al., 2009). Additionally, monolingual parents relying on their children negatively impacts family dynamics and limits parents from learning the English language and assimilating to U.S. culture (Weisskirch & Alva, 2002).

Mental Health

In several studies, results showed that the Hispanic/Latino population had higher rates of depression, depressive symptoms, and other diagnosed mental illnesses (Kouyoumdjian et al., 2003; Radloff, 1977; Vernon & Roberts, 1982). Kouyoumdjian et al. (2003) identified two risk factors that influence the mental health of the Hispanic/Latino population. First, lower socioeconomic status and financial instability correlated with higher rates of depression increased hostility, and more exposure to stress (Kouyoumdjian et al., 2003). Second, acculturation and acculturative stress place individuals at higher risk of developing psychological problems due to the expectations of the host country. A literature review written by Williams and Berry (1991) found acculturative stress can lead to a variety of mental health-related problems, including depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, suicidal ideation, and identity confusion. Bridges et al. (2012) utilized a multimethod (self-report, semi-structured interview, open-ended questions) assessment that studied the prevalence rates of mental illnesses in Hispanic/Latino adults. One-third of participants met the current criteria for a psychiatric disorder, 18.5% met the criteria for major depressive disorder, 9.9% for post-traumatic stress disorder, and 23.5% for generalized anxiety disorder. Results found that 14.8% of participants from the study could have been diagnosed with more than one disorder from presenting symptoms. Bridges et al. multimethod assessment demonstrate the significance of providing

mental health services for Hispanic/Latino individuals and addressing the barriers these individuals face when attempting to receive services.

Acculturation to the United States

Wallace et al. (2010) reviewed acculturation literature to identify acculturation measures used when studying Hispanic/Latino individuals and their acculturation process. Wallace et al. noted 26 assessments used in assessing acculturation in Hispanic/Latino individuals. Furthermore, Wallace et al. clarified the specific components that encompass acculturation. These include nativity, length of residence in the U.S., cultural competence, familism, income, sex, education, language use, generation, sociocultural demographics, social relations, and health experiences (Wallace et al., 2010). Recognition of these acculturation measures and the ability of Hispanic/Latino individuals to assimilate with these measures is critical to studying the population and their health needs.

Smokowski et al. (2008) administered a cross-sectional analysis of Hispanic/Latino families, their acculturation process from their country of origin to the United States, and how that influenced their family dynamics. Smokowski et al. found that the increase in parent and adolescents' involvement with their culture of origin within the United States related to higher family cohesion, adjustability, and familism. It also created lower parent and adolescent conflict. Researchers found that acculturation conflicts were the most significant risk factor in predicting lower family cohesion, adaptability, familism, and higher parent-adolescent conflict (Smokowski et al., 2008). Lawton et al. found that family functioning impacted the relationship between acculturation differences and mental health outcomes for Hispanic/Latino parents and their children. Lawton et al. discovered acculturation conflicts affected Hispanic/Latino parents' mental health and family functioning between the parents and adolescents. These results

illustrate the correlation between acculturation in Hispanic/Latino families and their mental health (Lawton et al., 2018).

Services for the Hispanic/Latino Population

As Hispanics/Latinos live in the United States legally or illegally, there is a multitude of services individuals can utilize for their physical and mental health. The first resource is the Coalition for Immigrant Mental Health (CIMH). The CIMH is a collaborative community-based research program that promotes awareness of and access to appropriate mental health services for those who are undocumented or are of mixed status. The National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) provides resources for immigrant youth, including Mexican American youth, that ensures services and support are provided to youth and their families despite their immigration status (NCYL, 2020). The NCYL also partners with other public agencies to educate them on appropriate services for immigrant youth and help redesign their current services to be culturally relevant (NCYL, 2020). The Immigrant Learning Center is an online resource for immigrants that provides a multitude of resources for documented and undocumented immigrants living in the United States. The Immigrant Learning Center resources are healthcare access for undocumented immigrants, tangible support for undocumented immigrants, access to emergency funds and scholarships, resources on how to learn English, how to apply for citizenship, and other additional services that are available for immigrants (The Immigrant Learning Center, 2021). Another resource for Mexican Americans is Therapy for Latinx. Therapy for Latinx (2021) is an online resource that provides a directory of mental health providers for the Hispanic/Latino community, as well as, information for crisis hotlines and national resources for the Hispanic/Latino population.

Immigrant social workers are an important resource for Mexican Americans as they acculturate to U.S. culture. Immigrant social workers focus on being culturally competent and sensitive to cultural factors held by the Mexican American population (Furman et al., 2010). It is a value that immigrant social workers provide culturally appropriate services to their clients and recommendations that consider the differences in Mexican American culture. Immigrant social workers may address the social isolation and the lack of social and emotional support Mexican Americans may experience as they assimilate to U.S. culture (Furman et al., 2010). Immigration policies, acculturation, education, career, physical and mental health may also be addressed in the alliance between social worker and client (Furman et al., 2010). An immigrant social worker who can offer culturally appropriate approaches to their client can foster a better therapeutic relationship with the Mexican American population and establish improved assimilation to U.S. culture (Furman et al., 2010).

Therapeutic Interventions

Many Hispanics/Latinos who immigrate to the United States face challenges adjusting and adapting to the host country's culture. Many of these individuals are challenged by mental health-related problems, including depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, suicidal ideation, and identity confusion from acculturative stress (Williams & Berry, 1991). Fortunately, there are therapeutic approaches that support Hispanics/Latinos and their challenges with acculturation. Approaches such as solution-focused brief therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, brief strategic family therapy, psychodynamic therapy, narrative therapy, and multidimensional perspectives help Hispanics/Latinos acculturate to U.S. culture despite the challenges they endure. The goal of discussing therapeutic interventions for the Hispanic/Latino population is to identify effective and culturally appropriate approaches for the population.

González Suitt et al. (2016) conducted a systematic review investigating the effectiveness of solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT) with the Hispanic/Latino population. The three main interventions that researchers identified in the literature were (1) adult behavioral health, (2) children and adolescents in the school setting, and (3) couples counseling. Out of the 298 individuals who participated in the six studies reviewed, results showed SFBT as an effective stand-alone therapeutic intervention and in combination with other therapeutic approaches, including cognitive-behavioral, interactional, strategic family therapy, psychoeducation, and counseling. This systematic review showed SFBT could be an effective therapeutic intervention for adolescents struggling in the school setting, older adults presenting with psychosocial problems, and couples wanting to improve marital satisfaction (González Suitt et al., 2016).

Casas et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review investigating the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and anxiety in the Hispanic/Latino population. Casas et al. included cultural adaptations for the Hispanic/Latino population within their treatment, which enhanced their outcomes by adjusting the delivery of services. Cultural adaptations noted in the literature were: language, age, developmental level, personal values, immigration experience, and environmental factors (Casas et al., 2020). Results showed cultural adaptations in CBT effectively reduced anxiety by targeting internal barriers to treatment and increasing social validity by making therapy more relevant (Casas et al., 2020).

Alegría et al. (2014) utilized a multisite randomized controlled trial with 257 Hispanic/Latino participants to investigate the effectiveness of CBT over the telephone versus face-to-face therapy. Results showed that individuals with depression demonstrated greater initiation in treatment with telephone interactions. Furthermore, care management increased

engagement by addressing system-level barriers such as work schedule conflict, insurance difficulties, and health system problems (Alegría et al., 2014).

Santisteban et al. (2003) investigated the efficacy of brief strategic family therapy (BSFT) with Hispanic parents and adolescents, ages twelve to eighteen, struggling with parent-child relationships. A hundred and twenty-six families participated in the study. They attended brief strategic family therapy focusing on supporting the family structure, identifying any unhealthy patterns in family interactions, and restructuring the family interactions into healthy interactions (Santisteban et al., 2003). Researchers utilized multiple rating scales that analyzed adolescent behavioral problems, substance abuse, and family functioning to correlate the effectiveness of BSFT (Santisteban et al., 2003). Results showed that BSFT effectively increased family cohesion and family interactions between parents and adolescents (Santisteban et al., 2003). Identifying the effectiveness of BSFT with Hispanic and Latino families can aid as they assimilate to U.S. culture and face challenges within their family dynamics in the process.

Guidorizzi (2006) utilized a narrative approach with Latino immigrants to reauthorize their narrative when immigrating to the United States. Guidorizzi worked alongside thirty Latino immigrants in reframing their challenges immigrating to the United States into positive experiences that accounted for their acculturation (Guidorizzi, 2006). Guidorizzi's narrative approach also identified services and social supports that would help the individuals establish stronger roots in the new country. Through the utilization of the narrative approach, the Latino immigrants were able to reframe their previous challenging narratives into narratives of hope and excitement as they acculturate to their new country's culture (Guidorizzi, 2006). The utilization of the narrative approach allows these marginalized individuals to tell their stories, place them in the cultural contexts that highlight the aspects of their challenges, and allows these individuals to

re-create their narratives based on their new understandings of their challenges and their contexts (Guidorizzi, 2006).

Role of the Therapist

Researcher Gelman (2004) conducted a grounded theory study to identify how Latino clinicians successfully modified psychodynamic therapy with Hispanic/Latino clients. Included in the study were fifteen bilingual and bicultural Latino therapists, seven male and eight female therapists, who practiced in community health centers, hospital clinics, schools, and private practices from a psychodynamic perspective. Counselors in the study modified the following elements to effectively work with Hispanics/Latinos using psychodynamic theory: counseling relationship and personalismo, individuality and individually tailored, addressing external realities, self-disclosure, gift-giving, physical contact, activity and direction, and language as a therapeutic technique (Gelman, 2004). Counselors expanded the psychodynamic framework by centralizing the relationship rather than their approach, considering each client as an individual, and acknowledging the external realities and their impact on their clients. Therapists increased self-disclosure, gift-giving, and the thoughtful use of language to support and maximize the expansion of the psychodynamic framework. Results showed that the variations in treatment enhanced the cultural sensitivity of the clinician's work and provided individualistic treatment for the clients. The modifications in the psychodynamic approach with Hispanic/Latinos provide effective treatment for the population and supplement the lack of research found for the population.

Writers Arredondo et al. (2014) discussed the effectiveness of using a multidimensional perspective with Hispanics/Latinos in counseling. This multidimensional perspective considers culture, race, economics, history, sociopolitical factors, and personal characteristics to build an

individualistic profile of the client (Arrendondo et al., 2014). An individualistic profile of the client is not singularly based on their race/ethnicity but on the multiple identities that the individual holds as their being. Looking at the Hispanic/Latino population, counselors must consider multiple identities such as language fluency, acculturation, race, social class, legal status, immigration history, and educational levels (Arrendondo et al., 2014). Considering the client as more than just Hispanic/Latino is essential to creating an individualistic profile that better addresses the personal experiences of the individual seeking therapy and a more effective treatment plan. A limitation in both studies was the lack of client perspective and client confirmation that the multidimensional perspective and expansion of the psychodynamic theory were effective in treating Hispanics/Latinos.

Barriers to Treatment

Bridges et al. (2012) identified barriers Mexican Americans face as they consider using physical and mental health services. Barriers identified were finances, lack of health insurance, no knowledge of services, language barriers, transportation, fear of deportation, perception of therapy, and adequate help from religious leaders. Participants from Bridge et al.'s study reported that services were too costly, and participants did not seek out services because of their lack of health insurance. Participants additionally reported that they did not seek out services because of the lack of Spanish-speaking providers. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (2021) stated that the cultural differences between the therapist and Mexican American clients might lead to misunderstandings and misdiagnoses, causing individuals to avoid treatment. Likewise, Mexican Americans may be unaware of the services accessible to them, causing them not to seek out services (Bridges et al., 2012). Participants lacked transportation, causing them to miss many appointments or abstain from receiving services because they had no access to

transportation (Bridges et al., 2012). Participants also identified their fear of being deported if they enrolled in services, their lack of faith in the efficiency of services, and identified that meeting with religious leaders was valuable for the improvement of individuals' mental health (Bridges et al., 2012).

Lastly, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (2021) discussed stigmas that Mexican Americans might hold surrounding mental health treatment. Many Mexican Americans can often be very private and do not want to publicly discuss challenges at home (NAMI, 2021). Individuals may also avoid treatment out of the fear of being labeled as 'loco' (crazy) or bringing shame and attention onto the family or are 'machismo' and refrain from treatment because of their exaggerated masculine pride (NAMI, 2021).

Art Therapy

Art therapy is a therapeutic approach using art materials to enrich the lives of individuals, families, and communities through the creative art process. Art therapy for the Hispanic/Latino population focuses on improving their lives through processing immigration, acculturation, and the shifts in family dynamics while also facilitating self-expression, communication, assistance with language and cultural barriers, fostering trust and understanding in the therapist-client relationship, and linking the clients with their own culture (Moreno & Wadeson, 1986; Bermudez & ter Maat, 2006). Art therapy provides a safe space for Hispanics/Latinos to discuss personal conflicts, present life circumstances, previous lives in their country of origin, and adjustment to the new culture (Moreno & Wadeson, 1986).

Moreno and Wadeson (1986) organized an open art therapy group that met for 20 sessions over five months at a community mental health center in hopes of adding additional therapeutic support for the Hispanic/Latino population. There were no directives assigned to the

group, and the size of the group fluctuated from four to six members per meeting. Initially, the group consisted of women and men; however, early on in the group, the men dropped out, reasoning that they were not artistically qualified. Moreno and Wadeson supplied cray pas, crayons, magic markers, tempera, and collage materials. During the sessions, group members would spontaneously discuss their work or the work of others. There were a variety of topics discussed, including personal conflicts, hardships of their present life circumstances, previous lives in their country of origin, and adjustment to the new culture. Moreno and Wadeson reported that group members could relate to each other's struggles and receive support as they created art with one another. Members felt safe exploring their emotions within the group and could dedicate time to their own issues and feelings and not feel guilty. Moreno and Wadeson reported that through art-making, the women were able to look at their finished images, reflect on the hardships in their present situation, and reminisce about the homes they had left in their country of origin. Researchers found that art expression promoted experiences of universality throughout the group and created a supportive environment that many Hispanic/Latinos lack in the United States (Moreno & Wadeson, 1986).

Bermudez and ter Maat (2006) used two surveys, one for the client and one for the art therapist, to understand the effectiveness of art therapy with the Hispanic/Latino population. The art therapist questionnaire inquired about the therapeutic needs of the adult Hispanic/Latino population, a rating scale of effectiveness of art therapy with the population, the benefits and limitations of art therapy, and any specific directives that were helpful or unhelpful with the population. Bermudez and ter Maat distributed a similar survey to the clients reflecting on the effectiveness of art therapy. An inefficient amount of client surveys were submitted. Therefore researchers decided to exclude the client surveys from the data analysis to avoid a

misrepresentation of the Hispanic/Latino population (Bermudez & ter Maat, 2006). The art therapists' surveys revealed the most prevalent therapeutic needs of their clients were issues of acculturation and minority status, mental illness, need for socialization, experienced traumatic events and abuse, language barriers, feelings of depression, self-expression, and communication, and low self-esteem. The survey also discussed the benefits of using art therapy with adult Hispanic/Latino clients, such as facilitating self-expression, communication, assistance with language and cultural barriers, fostering trust and understanding in the therapist-client relationship, and linking the clients with their own culture, and helping with assessment and diagnosis. Out of the 25 female and two male art therapists, 95% of art therapists who worked with the adult Hispanic/Latino population agreed that art therapy was either a helpful or very helpful approach to the population's needs (Bermudez & Maat, 2006).

A study conducted by Linesch et al. (2012) utilized focus groups, participant questionnaires, and art interviews to uncover the acculturation experiences of Hispanic/Latino families. Eight families were separated into three art therapy focus groups (men, women, and adolescents) to create art reflecting their acculturation process (Linesch et al., 2012). Linesch et al. reported that the men's group focused on their immigration experience, challenges that may have occurred in their experiences, and their strengths in transition from their land of origin to their new adopted culture. The women's group explored their acculturation experiences, how moving countries impacted their identity formation, challenges they have faced between their traditional cultural values and the individualistic values of the United States (Linesch et al., 2012). The adolescent group focused on their identity formation and acculturation experiences and were challenged to explore the tension between their parents' traditional values and the values of their current residency (Linesch et al., 2012). After the focus groups, families met to

create art. As a family, the art therapy sessions focused on exploring strengths, accomplishments, connections, challenges, stressors, losses, and the tension families had faced between their culture of origin and culture of assimilation (Linesch et al., 2012). Linesch et al. stated that the study offered insight to art therapists into the experiences of Hispanic/Latino families as they assimilate to U.S. culture.

Following the previous study, Linesch et al. (2014) focused on single mothers, unemployed men, and adolescents at risk for acculturation stress after immigrating from Mexico. Three art therapy groups were formed to discuss their struggles with acculturation. However, the unemployed men's group was excluded from the case study because of their unwillingness to participate in art-making. The study participants were eight women in the women's group and two females and one male in the adolescent's group. Both groups were open-ended art experiences to express and share their struggles with immigration and acculturation. Linesch et al. reported that the women's group gained insight and meaning in their lives through addressing the challenges of immigration and acculturation. Art-making was utilized as a form of meaning-making, communication, and emotion regulation. The women also reported that the sense of freedom they were given with the art-making allowed them to gain an experience of voice, community, and relief from the psychological stress that they had endured from immigration. The art sessions with the adolescent group seemed to foster self-confidence in the participants, a willingness to share more about their personal experiences of immigration, their accomplishments, and how their struggles could be reframed as positive lessons. The research conducted by Linesch et al. demonstrated that the participants valued the art-making process and were able to recognize the benefits of artistic expression. Participants claimed the art helped open their eyes and become more active in shifting their original traditions to their new adopted

culture. Researchers concluded that using art therapy and imagery to explore complicated experiences of individuals such as Mexican Americans provided relief from individuals' struggle with immigration and acculturation.

Chapter IV

Results

In this study, an integrative literature review was used to examine the needs of Mexican American parents as they assimilate to U.S. culture. The needs of Mexican American parents and the effectiveness of art therapy with Mexican Americans were explored of integrating the needs of Mexican American parents and art therapy. A total of 4 articles were found discussing art therapy and the Hispanic/Latino population. Of the four articles, only 1 article discussed art therapy and Mexican Americans. None of the resources specifically focused on the needs of Mexican American parents in art therapy.

After conducting an integrative literature review, there were three areas where minimal information was provided. These include (1) the needs and challenges of Mexican American parents, (2) recommendations and services for the parents, and (3) specific directives and materials for this population. The art therapy studies focused primarily on the family as a whole rather than the acculturation challenges for parents.

Based on the literature, three areas of insufficient information were found. These areas are identified below. If the information was identified in the literature, it was presumed that best practices in art therapy could be identified for Mexican American parents struggling to assimilate to U.S. culture.

1. The needs and challenges Mexican American parents struggle with as they assimilate to United States culture.
2. Identification of therapeutic techniques that are culturally appropriate and effective for the population.

3. Directives that are culturally appropriate for the population and materials that are appropriate and effective for the population.

Chapter V

Discussion

Introduction

Mexican American parents face many challenges as they immigrate to the United States and assimilate to American culture. Parents must face challenges of acculturation stress, language barriers, cultural differences, financial insecurity, limited educational opportunities, discrimination, and other systemic oppressions (Cervantes et al., 1991). Acculturating to the United States is one of the most significant barriers Mexican American families must face when immigrating to the U.S. (Smokowski et al., 2008). While there are services for Mexican Americans such as community programs, social worker services, governmental programs, and counseling that assist families as they immigrate to the United States, many of these services are not culturally appropriate for Mexican American parents. Many services provided for Mexican American parents lack the cultural competence and adaptability to be effective with these parents.

Additionally, research lacks specificity in the needs and challenges of Mexican American parents and focuses on Hispanic and Latino families. While Mexican Americans are a part of the Hispanic/Latino population, there still are considerable differences between these populations. Because of these limitations, the proposal for Mexican American parents will be based primarily on the research of Hispanic/Latino parents and families. Additionally, rather than proposing an art therapy group for Mexican American parents, it was determined that a family therapy framework for Mexican American families would alternatively be proposed to respect the collectivist culture that many Mexican American families hold.

Before proposing a family therapy framework for Mexican American families, it was necessary to note the multiple limitations that challenged the development of this proposal. The first limitation was considered as if it was ethically appropriate to create the proposal with the limited information found on the needs and challenges of Mexican American parents. Most research focused on the children's needs or the family's needs but never identified the needs and challenges parents faced assimilating to U.S. culture. Additionally, there was a lack of research on the best therapeutic approaches for the specific population. While out of the four articles that discussed art therapy with Hispanics/Latinos, none of the articles specifically identified the best therapeutic approaches for the population. In addition, there were no findings over culturally appropriate materials for the population or any specific directives to utilize with the population. Another essential consideration when creating a framework for family therapy is Mexican culture and how it is rooted in a collectivist culture. A collectivist culture emphasizes the relationships with one another, and the interconnectedness between people plays a central role in each person's identity (Sue et al., 2019). Would it be culturally appropriate to create an art therapy group with just the parents and not the entire family? Collectivist cultures emphasize the needs and goals of the whole family rather than the needs and desires of each individual. Therefore, separating the parents from their children for therapeutic purposes may not be culturally appropriate and ineffective for the parents.

After considering the limitations of creating an art therapy group for Mexican American parents, it was decided that a framework for family therapy with Mexican American families would be proposed. While there is a lack of research on Mexican American parents, there is sufficient information to propose a family therapy framework utilizing research based on Hispanics/Latinos. Proposing a family therapy framework for Mexican American families is a

crucial step to increasing awareness of the population, and being able to identify their needs and challenges was the determining factor for the proposal. The proposal will include the entire family but will focus on the needs of the parents and the children's need to remain culturally appropriate.

Proposal

The overarching goal of this proposal is to create an effective framework for family therapy involving Mexican American parents struggling with acculturation while also considering the population's collectivist culture. The goal is to create a foundation for family therapy with Mexican Americans, focusing on parents' needs and challenges when coming to the United States. Art therapy will be used in sessions to process and reflect. Rather than just identifying the struggles these families face coming to the United States, the goal of therapy is to also provide sources outside of therapy to help families better acculturate to the United States. The family therapy proposal aims to identify both the needs and challenges of parents and children separately, then come together as a family to discuss and create a solution for the family as they assimilate to the U.S. The theoretical foundation used with the family is the narrative approach. The therapist's role is as a co-editor in the family's narrative. The therapist provides optimism and hope for the family as they separate their challenges from themselves and rewrite their narrative. Narrative therapy aims to integrate considerations of cultural and diversity issues at the core of the approach. The broader questions of diversity and how society, its norms, and language affect individuals are the guiding premises and suitable for clients from marginalized groups (Gehart, 2016). Therapists may use externalization, deconstruction, existentialism, and the telling of one's story as techniques to help clients reauthorize their narrative from the narrative approach (Gehart, 2016). The proposal is a framework for family therapists to utilize

when working with Mexican American families struggling with acculturation. The proposed family therapy would run for seven sessions, for around sixty to ninety minutes, building on the single goal of improving the family's acculturation to the United States. For the proposal, an important accommodation is that the therapist is a bilingual counselor educated on collectivist cultural values, practices, and beliefs.

Table 1

Family Therapy Framework

Goal	To reauthorize the family's challenges as they acculturate to the United States.
Part I	
Participants	Individual art-making
Directive	Draw your self-portrait.
Materials	White 8.5in x 11in paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils, skin-colored crayons, and colored pencils, pencil, and erasure.
Processing Questions	What does your self-portrait say about yourself? How has your self-portrait changed coming to the United States? What would your self-portrait look like without the challenges your family has faced in the U.S.? How does your self-portrait differ from your family's self-portraits? How does your self-portrait contribute to your narrative of immigrating to the U.S.?
Part II	
Participants	Individual art-making
Directive	As a family, determine other individuals you would like to include in your family portrait. These can be people or animals living here, in Mexico, or deceased. Decide who will draw each individual member.
Materials	Mexican magazines, American magazines, glue, scissors, white 8.5in x 11in papers, markers, crayons, colored pencils, skin-colored crayons, and colored pencils, pencil, and erasure.
Processing Questions	Who or what was included in the family portrait? What people or animals originated from Mexico? What people or animals

originated from the United States? How are these people or animals a part of your narrative? How do these people or animals influence your family? How have they influenced your transition into the states? Are these people or animals with you now?

Part III

Participants	Collaborative art-making.
Directive	Use these materials to create a family portrait with all of your self-portraits.
Materials	Mexican magazines, American magazines, glue, scissors, white 16in x 24in paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils, skin-colored crayons, and colored pencils, pencil, and erasure.
Processing Questions	How has your family portrait changed after immigrating to the United States? Who is excluded from the family portrait? What challenges come along with your family portrait? How would your family portrait change living in Mexico?

Part IV

Participants	Collaborative art-making.
Directive	As a family, create an image of your family's timeline, starting and ending wherever you think is most important for your family.
Materials	Mexican magazines, American magazines, glue, scissors, ruler, white 8.5in x 11in paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils, skin-colored crayons, colored pencils, pencil, and erasure.
Processing Questions	What is included in your timeline? Who is included in the timeline? What events are included in your timeline? What events on your timeline are positive, and which ones are negative? How did you decide as a family which events to include and exclude? How do these events shape your family? How have these events shaped your time in the United States?

Part V

Participants	Individual art-making.
Directive	Create an image of your family's life without the challenges and worries they have faced.

Materials	Mexican magazines, American magazines, glue, scissors, white 8.5in x 11in paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils, skin-colored crayons, and colored pencils, pencil, and erasure.
Processing Questions	What challenges are excluded from the image? How does your family feel without these challenges and worries? How would your family's lives change without these challenges and worries? How would living in the United States change without these worries and challenges?

Part VI

Participants	Individual art-making.
Directive	Create an image of what the different solutions can be to your challenges and worries.
Materials	Mexican magazines, American magazines, glue, scissors, white 8.5in x 11in paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils, skin-colored crayons, and colored pencils, pencil, and erasure.
Processing Questions	How would these solutions change your family's current challenges? How does your family currently feel without these solutions? How would your family change with these solutions? What is needed to make these solutions in your family? How would your family's relationships change with these solutions?

Termination

Participants	Collaborative art-making.
Directive	As a family, create a storybook of your family's new narrative in the United States.
Materials	Mexican magazines, American magazines, glue, scissors, white 8.5in x 11in paper, 8.5in x 11in colored construction paper, stapler, markers, crayons, colored pencils, skin-colored crayons, and colored pencils, pencil, and erasure.
Processing Questions	How are your challenges and worries excluded from the storybook? How is your family's life different from the new narrative? What would change in your family with this new narrative? How would your challenges and worries change from this new narrative? How would your family feel in the new narrative? Who would be included or excluded from this new narrative? Where does this new narrative take place?

Limitations

This review was limited by the availability of published research about Mexican American parents, excluding Hispanic and Latino research. While Hispanics and Latinos share a considerable amount of cultural identity, there remain significant differences between Spanish cultures that differentiate one culture from another. Because the review focused on isolating parents' acculturation and assimilation needs rather than family needs, it excluded research on child or adolescent needs and their impact on parents. Another limitation is using a single researcher in analyzing the literature, which can introduce researcher bias to influence results. Additionally, creating and utilizing a literature matrix allows researcher bias as the content added into the matrix is affected by the researcher's interpretation and language usage.

Delimitations of this study were the choice to search for themes in publications such as Hispanic, Latino, Mexican, Mexican American, Mexican American immigrants, immigrant resources, immigrant social worker, art therapy, therapy, therapy with Latinos, psychodynamic theory with Latinos, narrative therapy, counseling, bilingual, mental health, acculturation, cognitive behavioral therapy, mental health needs, barriers, language barriers, and language brokering. The study was conducted within six weeks, limiting the research period and collection of data. Researchers chose to limit research to the U.S. only and focus on only Hispanics/Latinos immigrating to the United States.

Chapter VI

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to identify the barriers Mexican American parents face when assimilating to U.S. culture and propose an art therapy group that could be beneficial to this population. It was hypothesized that identifying barriers that Mexican American parents face when assimilating to U.S. culture would help inform a structured art therapy group that addresses the needs of Mexican American parents. By identifying best practices in counseling and art therapy for this population's needs, more culturally competent services could be developed for the population. Using a thematic analysis in the literature, results showed that there was insufficient research on Mexican American parents and the needs and challenges they face assimilating to U.S. culture. Results showed inadequate research on specific materials, directives, and theoretical approaches that are effective with Mexican American parents. Much of the literature focused on Hispanics/Latino families, and their children's struggles in the United States and only identified the children's needs and struggles assimilating to the United States. Due to the insufficient research, the original proposal of an art therapy group for Mexican American parents was modified into a proposed family therapy framework for Mexican American families.

Based on the findings of this literature review, it is recommended that there is further investigation of effective materials, directives, and therapeutic approaches for Mexican American parents. Additionally, it is recommended that the needs and challenges of Mexican American parents are identified in future research to aid the creation of a therapeutic group for these individuals. Therapists working with these individuals must be fluent in the Spanish language and are educated on the culture Mexican Americans hold. These services must be made

available to locations and settings that Mexican American families have access to and are comfortable visiting. Therapists working with these individuals must be able to adapt their framework for each individual or family they work with and can be flexible with the challenges these individuals may face when receiving services.

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