The Effects of Acculturation on Self-Esteem Ratings of Iranian-American Immigrants

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful parents and brothers. I dedicate this to my parents Parvaneh Ebrahimi and Morad Mirakhor who have been extremely supportive on every step of the way and have believed in me in times that I doubted myself. You have provided me with love and inspirations and your journey through immigration and building a new life has given me the strength to be where I am today. Thank you for your understanding, love, and patience. Thank you for your important and impactful presence; I love you both and I thank you for the life you have provided for me. I dedicate this thesis to my brothers Ebrahim and David. You two have been extremely loving and supportive all my life. You have acted as my older brothers, as protectors and saviors. I love you Ebrahim and David. I could not have done any of this, had it not been for your support.

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF ACCULTURATION ON SELF-ESTEEM RATINGS OF IRANIAN-AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS

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The different dimensions of acculturation, language, personal relationships, self-efficacy, and self-esteem were examined in 65 Iranian immigrant adults (age range 18-30) residing in Los Angeles. The impact of age of arrival, length of residency, and gender were tested on all five scales. Pearson Correlations and the Independent Samples T-test were conducted to analyze the data. Results showed no significant relationship between age of arrival and self-esteem, no significant correlations between self-esteem and length of residency, and no major differences among the two gender groups. However, the results yielded significant relationship between age of arrival and language, and a significant relationship between age of arrival and personal relationships. Furthermore, a significant relationship between language and acculturation and a relationship between personal relationships and self-esteem was noticed. Implications regarding further research on Iranian-American immigrants were discussed.
Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The number of Iranian immigrants residing in the United States, and more specifically in Los Angeles, has been growing since the Iranian revolution took place in 1979 (US INS statistical Yearbook, 1996). The 2000 U.S. Census estimated that 338,000 Iranian Americans reside in the United States and that large concentrations of Iranian Americans live in the state of California, particularly around Los Angeles, Orange County, La Jolla, and San José. In 2010 the Iranian Alliances Across Borders, started the Iranian Count 2010 Census Coalition (ICCC) to ensure that the Iranian American are accurately represented in the U.S census (http://www.iranianalliances.org/latestnews/188-censusspecificsnews). The 2010 census indicated that there are 2,700,000 Iranians residing in the U.S (http://iranpoliticsclub.net/library/iran-population/index.html). Iranians have left their country whether as refugees or immigrants and fled to the U.S. in hope of a better life. In recent years the number of immigrants has been on the rise because of discrimination against religious minorities and individuals’ sexual orientation in Iran. In spite of the large Iranian American population in the United States, there is limited data available on the experience of Iranian Americans. The absence of information regarding the challenges and the experiences that this population confronts in the process of acculturation and how other factors involved in this process affect and Iranian immigrant’s self-esteem is missing from the available literature and is therefore a motivation for the current research project.
Background of the Problem

The state of California has one of the highest rates of Iranian immigrants in the U.S. and the future of California will be significantly affected by the diverse, newly arrived pool of immigrants (Daha, 2011). It is important to study the nature of the Iranian immigrant youths’ life and to understand the difficulties they stumble upon when it comes to negotiating between two cultures, internalizing a new language, and a new life. Research on Hispanics has indicated that immigrant emerging adults are likely to face cultural challenges, such as acculturation and acculturative stress, in addition to the typical challenges of adulthood which may lead to identity crises, mental health issues, social adjustment issues, and affect the individuals’ overall sense of well-being (Arnett, 2000; Boden, Fergusson, & Horwood, 2008). It is crucial to investigate how factors such as the process of immigration, acculturation, language, and identity development in a new culture affect Iranian immigrants’ view of one’s self and more specifically their overall ratings of self-esteem. Research has indicated that lower ratings of self-esteem in teenage years is associated with greater risks of mental health problems, substance dependence, and lower levels of life and relationship satisfaction in adulthood (Boden, Fergusson, & Horwood, 2008). However, there is limited data available specifically on Iranians; only studies involving other minority groups can be used to shed light on the Iranian process of immigration and acculturation. Thus this study addresses how the process of acculturation and the experiences involved throughout the acculturation process affect self-esteem ratings for Iranian American immigrants. The current study will address variables such as the general experience of immigration, acculturation, age of arrival of
immigrants, linguistic acculturation, more specifically accent strength, and how such factors may influence the personal relationships and self-esteem of Iranian immigrants. Particular attention will be paid to the impact of length of residence and how the age at which the individual immigrated affects the experience of acculturation, adoption of a new life, and in turn self-esteem ratings in adults. The results gathered will be helpful to the Iranian-immigrant community and will allow for better allocation of resources in the beginning stages of immigrant life.

**Statement of the Problem**

The effects of the acculturation process and its effects on self-esteem have been extensively researched in other immigrant populations, such as the Latino/a population, Israelis, South East Asians, Indians, Europeans, Soviet Union refugees, and data indicated that the experiences involved in acculturation seem to influence self-esteem (Birman, 1998; Perez, 2011; Wang, Schwartz, & Zamboanga, 2010; Tricket & Birman, 2005). Research shows that the process of immigration and acculturation take a great toll on the immigrant youth (Perez, 2011), and that lower ratings of self-esteem at age 15 are associated with greater risks of mental health and social problems hence resulting in lower ratings of self-esteem in later stages of life (Boden, Fergusson, & Horwood, 2008).

Age-relevant cultural factors impact a child’s development; changes in cultural values and upbringing- for instance due to immigration- significantly affect the child’s development (Farver et al., 2007). Perez (2011) suggested that the experience of immigration and the process of acculturation take a great toll on the individual’s identity and sense of well-being; the multidimensional process of acculturation increased the
already rambunctious emotions experienced in adolescence and may influence self-esteem. The process of acculturation impacts identity development and makes the task of creating a coherent identity more difficult for immigrant adolescents (Farver et al., 2007; Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006). In addition, healthy identity development allows for the better formation of ethnic identity (EI) and individuals with a positive EI tend to have higher self-esteem (Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006; Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992). The current study focuses on the reflections of Iranian immigrants on their experience of immigration and acculturation and how such processes impact self-esteem.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to examine the effects of age of arrival on acculturation and hence ratings of self-esteem of Iranian immigrants in the United States. The study will focus on acculturation, in a general sense, and more specifically the acquisition of the English language and how it affects various areas of functioning and self-esteem. The following hypothesis will be examined:

**Hypothesis 1:** The younger the individual is at age of immigration, the easier the process of acculturation will be, hence resulting in higher self-esteem ratings among Iranian-American immigrants.

**Hypothesis 2:** The longer the length of residency in the United States, the higher self-esteem ratings will be for Iranian immigrants.

**Hypothesis 3:** There will be differences in the self-esteem ratings between Iranian immigrant men and women.
Definition of Terms

Iranian: Iranian who is a person from the nation of Iran, or of Iranian descent who speaks Farsi (Bozorgmehr, 1992).

Iranian-American: Iranian-Americans or Persian - Americans are Americans of Iranian ancestry or people possessing Iranian and American dual citizenship (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian-american). For the purpose of this study an Iranian-American is an individual either born and/or raised in the United States by an Iranian family or an Iranian born citizen who has immigrated to the United States.

Second-generation Iranian: The child or children born in the United States to Iranian immigrants are considered second-generation Iranians.

Acculturation: Acculturation has been defined by many researchers throughout the years and a more complete and different view of the acculturation definition will be provided in later sections. For the purpose of this research acculturation will be defined as the process of learning and adapting the culture, lifestyle, values, attitudes, and language of the host culture and how these new values interact and interfere with one’s original cultural values and practices. (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Robbins, Chatterjee, and Canda, 2006).

Assimilation: The desire of the immigrant to decrease the significance of the culture of origin and to identify, interact, and accept the host culture (Berry, 2003)

Integration: when an individual maintains the original culture and incorporates aspects of the new culture; engagement with both cultures. Integration is otherwise termed as Biculturalism.
Marginalization: when an individual has little to no involvement in maintaining the original culture or learning about the host culture (Berry, 2003).

Separation: when an individual strongly associates with the culture of origin and avoids interacting or learning about the host culture (Berry, 2003).

Linguistic Acculturation: Although linguistic acculturation is an aspect and a subsection within the greater concept of acculturation, it should be separately defined. Linguistic acculturation is defined as the ability of an individual to speak English comfortably and fluently with minimal or no accent, and to be perceived as someone who has a native like accent (Perez, 2010).

Self-esteem: This concept is defined as the evaluation and assessment of one’s overall human worth (Michaels, Barr, Roosa, & Knight, 2007). Self-esteem will be measured based on the levels of socialization, performance in general situations and situations where English is required, and the attitudes about one’s self. Self-esteem will be measured on a scale from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree.

Bridge to Literature Review

In Chapter two the literature review will provide detailed information about Iran and Iranian immigration. This section will focus on topics such as Iran and Iranian immigration, demographics of Iranian immigrants, the experience and history of minorities in Iran, types of immigrants, immigration and trauma, adolescence and identity development, ethnic identity, role of family on adolescence and identity, acculturation and self-esteem, linguistic acculturation, and self-esteem.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Iran and Iranian Immigrants

Iran is located on the Southwest parts of Asia and the eastern parts of the Middle East; a country with over 2000 years of history, trauma, and a rich culture (http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/countries/iran-map/). According to the Statistical and Demographic profile in Iran the current population is 77,891,220 in 2012 (www.indexmundi.com/iran/demographics-profile.html). Iranians speak diverse Indo-Iranian, Semitic, Armenian, and Turkic languages. Iran’s official language is Persian (the Persian term for which is Farsi), in which all government business and public instruction is conducted. However, various ethnic, religious, and linguistic minority backgrounds also reside in Iran including Azeris, Kurds, Baluchis, Arabs, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Baha’is, Sunni Muslims, and Others (Hassan, 2007). As close as up to 98% of the population practice Islam, with a more specific break down of 89% Shia and 9% Sunni, and only 2% of the population is considered to be Zoroastrian, Jewish, Baha’i, and Christian (Hassan, 2007). In 1979, the Kingdom of Iran became the Islamic Republic of Iran after a national referendum (Bozorgmehr, Sabagh, & Sabbagh, 1988). The current theocratic government is based on the laws of Islam, which is practiced by the majority of the population. As reported by the Central Intelligence Agency, the net immigration rate from Iran in 2011-2012 has been -0.11; the report does not distinguish between economic migrants, refugees, and other types of migrants nor does it distinguish between lawful migrants and undocumented migrants. The greater numbers of Iranian immigrants come from the 2% religious minority groups; for instance,
Jewish Iranian immigrants are part of the larger Iranian immigrant community in Los Angeles (Bozorgmehr, 1992). Bozorgmehr (1992) believed “to start with the country of immigration and, ignoring the pre-migration experiences of minority groups, is to engage in an ahistorical analysis; so for a better understanding of the religious minorities and the motives behind their immigration, it is better to go over a brief history of some of the minority groups residing in Iran” (p.391). As Bozorgmehr (1992) stated, it is beneficial to look at the premigratory experiences of the Iranian population to better understand their story; hence this section will introduce the main religions practiced in Iran and a brief history of the minority groups.

**Demographics of Iranian Immigrants in the U.S**

Since the 1970s, Iranian immigrants have been admitted to the United States, with the majority of the immigrants (about 90%) admitted from 1977 to 1980 (US INS statistical Yearbook, 1996). By the mid 1980s the number of Iranian immigrants residing in Los Angeles was estimated to be between 200,000 to 400,000 (Mofid, 1987; Beckland, 1987; Nazemi, 1988). The 2000 U.S Census estimated that 338,000 Iranian Americans reside in the United States. Large concentrations of Iranian Americans live in the state of California, particularly around Los Angeles, Orange County, La Jolla, and San José. In 2004, the Iranian American population was estimated at 691,000 (Mostashari & Khodamhoseini, 2004). According to extrapolated U.S. Census data and other independent surveys done by Iranian-Americans themselves in 2009, there are an estimated 1 to 1.5 million Iranian-Americans living in the U.S., with the largest concentration—about 720,000 people—living around Los Angeles (Ansari, 2009).
The experience and history of minorities in Iran

Jews

The Iranian Jewish ancestry dates back to the sixth century B.C. along with Jewish history of persecution. Bozorgmehr (1992) dated persecution of Jews back to the 7th century and unequal treatment and prejudice against the Jews continued to the 16th century when Islam became the official religion (Bozorgmehr, 1992). Throughout the years Jews have been involved in forced religious conversions; in the early nineteenth century an entire Jewish community was forced to convert to Islam (Fischel, 1971; Fischel 1953; Soroudi, 1981). When the Pahlavi family came to power in Iran in 1925, Jews were granted more freedom (Bozorgmehr, 1993) but after the 1979 Islamic revolution treatments of ethnic and religious minorities grew worse and close to 80,000 Jews fled out of the country during the years leading up to the revolution (Hassan, 2007). Currently an estimated 25,000 Jews reside in Iran. The current Iranian government allows for official discrimination against Jews, the freedom of Iranian Jews to practice their religion is limited, and Iranian Jews remain reluctant to speak out for fear of reprisals (Bozorgmehr, 1993). Iranian Jews have lived in fear and have reduced, or even completely cut their ties to Israel since 1993. During 1993 until 1998, Iran executed five Jews who were allegedly spying for Israel. In June 1999, Iran arrested 13 Jews (mostly teachers, shopkeepers, and butchers) said to be part of an “espionage ring” for Israel (Hassan, 2007; p.15) and were sentenced to serve from 3 to 13 years in prison.
**Baha’i**

The Baha’i religion has its roots in the 19th century in Iran; some of the fundamental beliefs of the Baha’i religion challenged the ideas of Islam and were therefore subject to severe persecution in Iran (Bozorgmehr, 1992; Cooper, 1982). The current government continuously incarcerates Baha’is because of their religious beliefs and prohibits them from practicing their faith (Bozorgmehr, 1992; Hassan, 2007). Baha’is’ have been denied the right to assemble officially or to maintain administrative institutions since 1983 (Hassan, 2007); Baha’is’ are not allowed to hold property or create community centers such as places of worship and graveyards (Bozorgmehr, 1997). They are denied access to education and employment (Bozorgmehr, 1992). On October 20, 2008, in a new report to the General Assembly on the human rights situation in Iran, U.N., Baha’is continuously face detention, false imprisonment (there also have been several cases involving torture or ill-treatment in custody), confiscation and destruction of property, denial of employment and government benefits, and denial of access to higher education (Hassan, 2007). Similar to the Jews in Iran, Baha’is bear unfair treatments and their lives are endangered because of their faith. Since Baha’is’ are denied the right for higher education many leave Iran for better educational opportunities for their children (Kazemzadeh, 2011).

**Armenians/ Christians**

The first Armenian community in Iran was established in the 17th century; persecution led Armenians to Iran during World War I (Bozorgmehr, 1997). Armenians enjoyed privileges afforded to no other ethnic minority for many years in Iran. After the 1979 revolution Armenians seemed to be under threat, and the comfortable arrangement
forged by the Armenian community under the ousted Pahlavi regime, 1925-1979, risked annihilation but were able to hold a peaceful relationship with the Islamic government (Galichian, 1995). Currently over 100,000 Armenians reside in Iran (Galichian, 1995). Although prosecuted at times, Armenians do not seem to have experiences similar to Jews or Baha’is while they reside in Iran; “The Jews and the Baha’is have experienced the most discrimination among the three minority groups in Iran” (Bozorgmehr, 1992, p. 394). Although it may seem as though they have an easier time living in Iran, the process of immigration for Armenians, however, is analogous to that of Jews and Baha’is in that they cannot directly immigrate to the U.S and must stay at another country until given an American Visa.

**Zoroastrians**

Zoroastrianism is one of the world's oldest living faiths and dates back 3000 years in Iran (Foltz, 2011). Similar to other minority groups in Iran, Zoroastrians dealt with forced conversions and persecutions (Foltz, 2011). According to official figures, there are currently 20,000 Zoroastrians living in Iran (Bozorgmehr, 1992). Reports from 2009 show that Zoroastrians experience discrimination in schools or workplace and in property management and ownership (Foltz, 2011). Beginning in the 1960’s, emigration of Zoroastrians started and it increased in 1979. Zoroastrians, as well as Iran's other religious minorities use assistance programs such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) to immigrate to the U.S. (Foltz, 2011).

**Muslims**

Muslims make up 98% of Iran’s population (Hassan, 2007). According to the center for immigration studies, Iran is among the top five countries with high numbers of
Muslims immigrating to other countries (Pipes & Duran, 2002). Iranian Muslim immigrants usually come from the middle/upper class families and are the most secular (Bozorgmehr, 1992). Pipes and Duran (2002) stated that Muslim immigrants, in general, emigrate out of Islamic ruled countries because Muslim countries are disproportionately dominated by dictators. They further explained that people face tyranny, persecution, violent regime changes - as it was the case in Iran during the 2008 election - civil strife, and the possibility of war, all of which can motivate people to immigrate to other countries.

**Women and Sexual Minorities in Iran**

Regardless of the greater number of women and girls living in Iran, women have always been considered to be among the minority groups of the country (Amirmoayed, 2011). Women have been mistreated, disrespected, discriminated against, and abused for years and the Iranian government has ceased to protect women’s rights (Hassan, 2007). In a review of Osanloo’s book, *The Politics of women’s Rights in Iran*, Amirmoayed (2011) illustrated that women are being oppressed by the Islamic regime in Iran. In a study on 400 married women involved in domestic violence, Meybodi and Hassani (2009), discovered that approximately 46% of women had been exposed to various types of domestic violence by their partners. Previous studies showed that according to cultural and religious beliefs women were responsible for their abuse; the current attitude affects women’s legal rights in Iran (Koss, 2000; Kim & Motsei, 2002; Garrusi, Nakhaee & Zangiabadi, 2008). Women and girls are subject to arrest, incarceration, and lash punishments on a daily basis because they do not follow the laws of Islamic modesty (Kheirkhah, 2003).
Sexual minorities compose a large number of the relatively young Iranian population (Sanei, 2010). Sanei (2010) reported that Iran’s atmosphere and environment allows for the open and legal abuse and violence against sexual minorities (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT)). LGBTs are treated as culprits and seen as diseased, criminals, or corrupt agents of Western culture. Under Iranian law, all same-sex acts are prohibited and considered illegal; Iran’s security forces, including police, rely upon discriminatory laws to harass, arrest, and detain individuals whom they suspect of being gay (Sanei 2010). In interviews with more than 125 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Iranians inside and outside Iran over the past five years, discrimination and violence against this population has been documented (Sanei, 2010). Under the Iranian law anyone who partakes in same-sex relationships, whether consensual or not, is susceptible to capital punishment (Sanei, 2010).

Experience of persecution, discrimination, and imprisonment can be traumatic and affects the individuals’ process of immigration (Lars, Suraj, Jon, Bernadette, & Edvard, 2010). For instance the imprisonment of Jews as spies, discrimination against Bahai’s, Christians, and Zoroastrians, and women and sexual minorities along with witnessing civil turmoil in Iran since the 2008 elections can all be considered traumatic events which may affect the self-esteem of immigrating individuals.

The Type of Immigrants and the Process of Immigration

Immigrants vs. Refugees

In order to understand the experience of Iranian immigrants it is necessary to distinguish between refugees and immigrants. A refugee is defined as a person who is outside their country of origin or habitual residence because they have suffered
persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or because they are a member of a persecuted social group (Rosenberg, 2010). An immigrant is someone who has citizenship in one country but leaves to live permanently in another country (Bozorgmehr, 1992). Kunz (1973) denotes a difference between refugees and immigrants and explains that the former usually immigrate in greater numbers and frequently due to political upheaval whereas the latter leaves his/her country with some funds and a prior knowledge about the new country, and does so before the deterioration of a situation in his/her country. Bozorgmehr (1992; 1998) believed that one’s motivation to immigrate is a key factor in the process and adaptation to life after immigration. Bozorgmehr delineated between three different groups of immigrants: the first group are exiles or political refugees who often immigrate for political and religious reasons; the second group are economic immigrants, they leave their country of origin for better economic and employment opportunities; and the third group consists of social migrants who move from one country to another in pursuit of education or a simple change in lifestyle. An analysis on the Iranian immigrant populations residing in the U.S. showed that 40.1% of participants were exiles or refugees, 54.5% were immigrants, and 5.4% were other (Bozorgmehr, Sabagh, & Sabbagh, 1988). The observed data showed that only 27% of participants could be known as pure refugees characterized through identification of religious or political reasons for their decision to emigrate (Fathi, 1991).

Bozorgmehr (1992) reported about one half of Bahai’ and Jewish Iranians in Los Angeles can be classified as refugees based on their motivation for leaving Iran. Most Iranians described their migration experience as mainly sociological (Fathi, 1991; Bozorgmehr, Sabagh, & Sabbagh 1988; Bozorgmehr, 1992). The available data further
implies that factors such as social freedom and lifestyle play an important role in immigrants/refugees motivations for leaving and their experiences post-migration (Pedraza-Bailey, 1985b). The process of immigration is not simple; in the absence of an American embassy in Iran, immigrants have to go to a third country to obtain a U.S. visa (Bozorgmehr, 1998). Currently the majority of immigrants immigrate to the U.S. through the help of HIAS, originally established to help Jewish refugees but now assists all religious minorities. Under HIAS Iranian immigrants are first taken to Vienna under the protection of the Austrian Embassy before being relocated to the United States; a process that may takes months (Melamed, 2005; Foltz, 2011, p. 81). They undergo a case by case evaluation of individual migrants to have proof of persecution beyond reasonable doubt in the country of origin (Bozorgmehr, 1992). This may be an unpredictable and stressful process which can create a sense of helplessness that can be considered traumatic and produce psychological distress (Lars, Suraj, Jon, Bernadette, & Edvard, 2010) and psychological distress could in return affect self-esteem (Perez, 2005). Bozorgmehr (1992) reported that religious minorities were in a better position to prove fear of persecution and therefore had a better chance for getting a visa. After the events of September 11, 2001 with the attack in New York, the situation for Iranian immigrant seeking American visas has been exacerbated and demands more time and proof, elongating their stay in Austria (Phulwani, 2003).

Immigration and Trauma

In the last two decades Iranian immigrants have left Iran for prosecution and imprisonment, lack of educational and equal life opportunities, and civil turmoil with the possibility of war, after the initiation of Iran’s Nuclear program and the recent 2009
elections and fear of war (Amirmoayed, 2011; Bozorgmehr, 1992; Bozorgmehr, 1997; Foltz, 2011; Hassan, 2007; Kazemzadeh, 2011). According to Lars and colleagues (2010) incidents that the immigrant had gone through in the country of origin, which may consist of torture, suffering, witnessing killing, discrimination, imprisonment and prosecution, that may have influenced his/her decision to immigrate are considered traumatic. Pertinent to Lars’ (2010) definition, it can be assumed that Iranian immigrants have experienced trauma (Lars, Suraj, Jon, Bernadette, & Edvard, 2010). A research study conducted among 3,019 adult immigrants from Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam living in Oslo in 2002 showed that traumatic experiences prior to immigration are most strongly associated with psychological distress; for instance anxiety, depression, and adjustment difficulties (Lars, Suraj, Jon, Bernadette, & Edvard, 2010). Reilaikd and Lauterbach (2008) reported that self-esteem is often lower among people who have experienced trauma; lower self-esteem was considered to be a decrease in a sense of personal worth. Zarnegar (1997) stated that 25% of the general immigrant populations consisted of school-aged children. Persson and Rousseau (2012) reported that some refugee and immigrant adolescents are at increased risk for psychological problems, emotional and behavioral symptoms. Perez (2005) believed that psychological distress may affect self-esteem. Boden, Fergusson, and Horwood (2008) conducted a longitudinal study on 1000 New Zealand immigrant young adults and reported that lower levels of self-esteem at age 15 were associated with greater risks of mental health problems, substance dependence, and lower levels of life and relationship satisfaction at ages 18, 21, and 25.
The National Institute of Mental Health defined psychological trauma as frightening thoughts and feelings which set forth extreme behavior, such as intense fear or helplessness, withdrawal or detachment, lack of concentration, irritability, sleep disturbance, aggression, hyper-vigilance, and/or flashbacks (http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-violence-and-disasters-parents/what-is-trauma.shtml, 2009).

According to the available data, trauma could be defined as either a negative event that produces distress or the distress itself (Giller, 1999; Briere & Scott, 2006). Briere et al., (2006) states “an event is traumatic if it is extremely upsetting and at least temporarily overwhelms the individual’s internal resources” (p. 4). According to Briere et al. (2006) the process of immigration and acculturation can be considered traumatic. There are three kinds of trauma, as they pertain to immigration; pre-migration trauma, post-migration trauma, and cultural trauma as it relates to the overall narrative of the immigrant’s life (Giller, 1999; Briere & Scott, 2006). Pre-migration trauma includes the incidents that the immigrant had gone through in the country of origin, which may consist of torture, suffering, witnessing killing, discrimination, imprisonment and prosecution, that may have influenced his/her decision to immigrate (Lars, et al., 2010). Research shows the majority of Iranian immigrants emigrated out of Iran due to political pressures and imprisonment, prosecutions based on religion, social injustice and fear, all of which are considered traumatic (Organista, Marin, & Chun, 2010; Kheirkhah, 2003). Lars et al. (2010) study with 3,019 adult immigrants revealed that “experience of torture and imprisonment due to political reasons are the premigration traumatic events most strongly associated with psychological
distress” (p. 4). Lars et al. also reported pre-migration trauma as highly correlated with higher prevalence of psychiatric problems among all five immigrant groups.

Post-migration trauma refers to all the incidents and experiences of the immigrant population after they have left the country of origin (Larset al., 2010). This may include the new country of residence or, in the case of Iranian immigrants, residing in Austria until issued an American Visa. Waiting for an American Visa in an unknown country can create a sense of helplessness and lack of control over one’s life (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010) which are considered to be post-migratory traumas and are highly associated with psychological distress (Lars, Suraj, Jon, Bernadette, & Edvard, 2010). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in 2007, 44% of the general refugee population was under 18 years of age (Huemer, Karnik, Voelkl-Kernstock, Granditsch, Dervic, Friedrich, & Steiner, 2009).

Huemer et al. (2009) explained that refugee minors are a highly vulnerable group; they have lost the support of familiar and familial social networks and are left isolated and forced to deal on their own with the demands of life in a foreign environment thus more likely to struggle with psychological distress and PTSD symptoms, referring to the assumption that their migratory experience is traumatic (Boylan, 1991; Desjarlais, Eisenberg, Good, & Kleinman, 1995). Furthermore, living alone, poor knowledge of the new language, no employment, and low sense of coherence are considered to be traumatizing and are strong risk factors for long standing psychiatric illness (Lars et al., 2010). In regards to post-migration trauma other factors such as discrimination, not
having close friends, unemployment, and delays in educational goals can exacerbate the experience of trauma and result in higher reporting of anxiety and depression (Lars et al., 2010).

Stereotypical messages by the media in the host country can be experienced as traumatic (Lien, Thapa, Jon, Kumar, & Hauff, 2010). Mass media is greatly influential and “informative” in the way people hear and learn about other countries, populations, cultures, and most importantly immigrants (Keshishian, 2000). Categorization of people based on ethnicity may reflect their worth; immigrants are easy targets for mockery, discrimination and stereotyping (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010). Iran was portrayed as the primary enemy of the U.S. during the 1980s and the new source of instability in the Near East (Keshishian, 2000); an image that has been revisited recently due to the nuclear activities supported by Iran’s president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (Mobasher, 2006).

Gudykunst and Kim (1997) argued that the mass media, particularly the news media, affects the public emotional mood about target groups, leading to social segregation and discrimination. Several studies demonstrated that the messages portrayed by the American mass media regarding Iran and Iranians were limited and incomprehensible; nevertheless they negatively impacted the American’s view of Iranian immigrants and Iranians in general (Altheide, 1985; Larson, 1986; Mowlana, 1984; Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1995). Gudykunst and Kim (1997) believed that mass media of the host society are important elements in immigrants’ acculturation. Unfortunately the media characterizations and stereotyping of Iranians caused Americans to push Iranians away, creating the sense that they do not belong in the U.S and that they are not accepted, an experience that was traumatizing (Keshishian, 2000). Keshishian (2000) further
explained that being treated as unwelcomed immigrants negatively affected and delayed the Iranian immigrants’ acculturation process.

Another form of post-migration trauma is known as cultural trauma or trauma related to ethnic identity formation among immigrants. Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Semelser, and Sztompka (2004) defined cultural trauma as “a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon the consciousness of members of a collectivity, and changes their identity fundamentally and irrevocably” (p. 2). In other words, for any traumatic social crisis to emerge at a collective level, it must first be represented and conceived as a cultural crisis or cultural trauma; which in the case of most Iranian immigrants is true, whether they were subjected to discrimination due to the hostage situation in 1979 or the suspicions placed on Middle easterners in 2001 or Nuclear developments in Iran in the past recent years. Mobasher (2006) reported the result of such events affect the way Iranians are portrayed and in turn treated in American society; the aftereffect of such experiences result in loss of identity and cultural pride, cultural alienation, and identity crisis all of which are considered traumatic and may delay acculturation (Keshishian, 2000). Ansari (1988) came across similar results; he indicated that the anti-Iranian reaction is so widespread in the U.S. that it forced Iranian- Americans to misrepresent their ethnic identity. Media plays an important role in the formation and acceptance of ethnic identity (Ansari, 1988).

Adolescence, Young Adulthood, and Identity Development

Twenty-five percent of the national immigrant population consists of school aged children, adolescents, and young adults. Adolescence is considered to be the period between ages 13 and 18; young adulthood is 20 to 24 years of age. Adolescence is a
period of tremendous adjustment for child and parent (Perez, 2005); experiences include not only physical growth and change, but also emotional, psychological, social, and mental (Marcell, 2007; Farver et al., 2007). Erikson’s psychosocial stages will be used to help define adolescence and young adulthood. Erikson’s psychosocial stages are: trust vs. mistrust (birth to 1 year), autonomy vs. shame and doubt (1 to 3), initiative vs. guilt (3 to 6), industry vs. inferiority (6 to 12), ego identity vs. ego diffusion (12 to 18), intimacy vs. isolation (18 to 24 years), Generativity vs. Self-absorption (Middle-aged Adult to Older Adulthood), and Integrity vs. Despair (Marcell, 2007). This section will focus on stages number four, five, and six (age ranges include 6 years old to 12 year olds) (Marcell, 2007).

Erikson’s psychosocial theory of development considers the impact of external factors, parents and society on personality and identity development from childhood to adulthood (Marcell, 2007). During the industry vs. inferiority stage, this encompasses competence, the child is capable of learning, creating and accomplishing numerous new skills and knowledge, thus developing a sense of industry. This is also a very social stage of development and experiences of unresolved feelings of inadequacy among peers can result in serious problems in terms of competence and self-esteem in later developmental stages (Erikson, 1968; Marcell, 2007). As the world expands a bit, the child’s most significant relationship is with the school and neighborhood, although parents continue to play an important role (Erikson, 1968). During the Erikson’s fifth developmental stage the adolescent must struggle to discover and find his or her own identity, while negotiating and struggling with social interactions and “fitting in”, and developing a sense of morality and right from wrong. It is during this stage that the adolescent
develops a sense of self (Erikson, 1968). The dialectical model of development explains that development occurs in a context, not only guided by physical or biological factors that take place within the adolescent, but also by psychological, cultural, and external factors (Brems, 2008; Lerner, Skinner, & Sorrell, 1980).

According to Erikson’s model, development is a never-ending process; it is influenced by the individuals’ experiences in their greater context and environment. Age-relevant cultural factors impact a child’s development; changes in cultural values and upbringing— for instance due to immigration—significantly affect the child’s development (Farver et al., 2007). According to Erikson, it is during identity vs. role confusion stage that the child looks for a sense of independence and personal efficacy, integrating interests and skills into a whole identity (Brems, 2008). Identity formation may be regarded as a process of linking parts together. Internal images and feelings that the individual possesses about her/himself are gradually united and perceived as a functioning whole. This whole may differ at various times and places, but will still be experienced as a coherent and stable internal core once the identity has reached a certain level of maturity (Adamson & Lyxell, 1996).

Exploration of identity is a critical part of an adolescents’ life where they revisit who they are and speculate on what they value, their place in the society, and priorities in life (Marcia, 1994). Erikson believed that unhealthy or incomplete development in the Identity vs. Confusion stage can lead to negative lifelong consequences, one of which would be the inability of the individual to establish a sense of self (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010). Schwartz and Pantin, (2006) suggested that the two primary mechanisms underlying identity development include the integration of externally presented elements
and the differentiation of oneself as a unique individual, i.e. the integration of external and internal experience. Research shows both proximal and distal contextual factors interact with individuals' internal sense of identity development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Umavia-Taylor, Bhanot, & Shin, 2006; Umana-Taylor & Guimond, 2010). To better understand the process of identity formation one must take into account the psychosocial context, which includes family, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and culture, which influence how individuals organize their experience and negotiate issues related to self-definition (Rosenthal & Feldman, 1992; Swenson & Prelow, 2005).

Erikson described identity as a subjective sense of wholeness and "progressive continuity" that evolves out of an exploration of one's abilities, interests and options. He proposed that individuals face identity crises, or situations that cause individuals to reevaluate and renegotiate aspects of their identity (Erikson, 1968). The identity crisis is resolved by the reconciliation of various identities that have been imposed upon oneself by family and society, and the need to assert control and seek an identity that brings satisfaction to oneself. Erikson argued that the ability to successfully negotiate an identity crisis is an essential factor to individuals' mental health and well-being (French et al., 2006). It is important to remember that the conflict between adolescents and their parents that arises from disagreements associated with normal age-related changes may be higher among immigrant than nonimmigrant families which may further impede healthy identity development (Farver et al., 2007).

Research has indicated that the misrepresentation of Iranians by the media and being mistreated by the American society results in confusion and loss of identity in Iranian immigrants; such experiences affect identity development, ethnic identity
development, and the acculturation process (Ansari, 1988; Keshishian, 2000; Mobasher, 2006). Research shows that other factors such as lack of control over one’s life (i.e. the choice to immigrate or not) will affect their identity development and the way they relate to the new culture and themselves (Meeus, Helsen, & Vollebergh, 1999; Organista, Marin, & Chun, 2010). Schachter (2005) explained that the basic structure of identity and its developmental course are contingent on the ongoing interaction between the individual and his or her social context and thus may vary across different cultural contexts. Immigrant youths not only have to deal with the anxiety provoking tasks of regular and expected adolescent development but they also have to tackle the differences in cultural context and how they interact within those context which further complicates the process of identity formation (Farver et al., 2007; Abu-Sbaih, 2011). Perez Foster (2001) suggested that the experience of immigration and the process of acculturation take a great toll on the individual’s identity and sense of well-being; the multidimensional process of acculturation increased the already rambunctious emotions experienced in adolescence and may influence self-esteem. Learning to fit in and acquiring new skills after immigration are very challenging tasks for adolescents. A commonly held assumption among today’s youth is that of needing to know how to do something before they receive any instructions on the topic; when the adolescent is left to figure out how to live in an unfamiliar context where even his parents may not be helpful ties directly into a child’s self-esteem and identity (Pledge, 2004). As children and adolescents grow, change, and develop, they remain vulnerable to suggestions from others (Cohen and Harnick, 1980; Goodman, Ruby, Bottoms, and Aman, 1990); their vulnerability and openness to take into account peer differences can cause a sense of grieving for
differences they attain (Pledge, 2004).

Although the impact of parents on identity development is significant, interactions with peers heavily influence social development (Pledge, 2004). Research on 1870 immigrant and nonimmigrant students, 12 and 15 years old, showed that immigrant kids are highly victimized by their peers (Strohmeier and Dogan, 2012). The interactions between friends and their perception of their peers influence the individuals’ identity development, self-esteem, social behaviors, and psychological adjustment (Berendt, 1998). The process of acculturation impacts identity development and makes the task of creating a coherent identity more difficult for immigrant adolescents (Farver et al., 2007; Schwartz, Montgomery, and Briones, 2006); healthy identity development allows for the better formation of EI and individuals with a positive EI tend to have higher self-esteem (Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006; Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992).

**Ethnic Identity**

Verkuyten and Nekuee (2001) used Tajfel’s (1981) definition of Social Identity and described that social identity is a part of an individual’s self-concept derived from the knowledge, value, and emotional significance attached to group membership. Social identity involves the extent to which individuals identify with a group and internalize its ideals (Schwartz & Pantin, 2006). Social identity theory posits that group identity is an important part of the self-concept. Individuals generally attribute value to the groups to which they belong, and derive self-esteem from their sense of belonging (Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Chen, Roberts, & Romero, 1999). According to Phinney (1996), Ethnic Identity (EI) relates to an individual’s perception, knowledge, feelings, and attitudes associated to one’s ethnic group membership which includes their cultural heritage.
Ethnic group membership is crucial in the development of identity; individuals' interpretation and understanding of their ethnicity and the degree to which they identify with their ethnic group affects identity development and acculturation (Markstrom-Adams, 1992; Umana-Taylor & Fine, 2001; Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Stracuzzi, & Saya, 2003; Farver et al., 2007). A sense of EI is dependent on the extent to which individuals have explored the personal significance of belonging to their ethnic group, and the extent to which individuals value and are proud to belong to that group (Phinney, 1993; Schawrts & Pantin, 2006; Abu-Sbaih 2010). Geographic relocation and discrimination through social media leads immigrant youths to question their belonging and sense of pride in their EI (Schwartz & Pantin, 2006). Research indicates that individuals with a clear sense of EI experience positive psychological adjustment; a lack of clarity about one's self and place in society may lead to poor self-concept, poor self-esteem, and the potential for identity disorders (Phinney et al., 1990; Farver et al., 2007; Abu-Sbaih 2010).

**Iranian American Ethnic Identity**

Do Iranian immigrants have an ethnic identity that they are proud of? Do they self-identify as belonging to the ethnic group of “Iranian” or not? Why would Iranians deny their cultural heritage? And what are the ramifications of such decisions for adolescents and young adults? Research suggests that tense US–Iran relations influenced the way the members of the second generation self-identify which influenced their EI. Second generation Iranian immigrants are more likely to assert a Persian identity which de-emphasized association with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the post-9/11 era. (Bozorgmehr, 2000; Mobasher, 2006).
Various research on the influence of media indicated that the American media presented all Iranians as another ethnic group “falling within the parameters of the politically charged axis of evil,” (Bavifard, 2008, p. 3); these messages in turn influenced the way Iranians were treated in the U.S and discouraged many Iranians to identify as Iranians and to hide or disown their EI (Sabagh & Bozorgmehr, 1994; Mostashari & Khodamohseni, 2004; Daha, 2011). A study conducted by Daha (2011) on 55 Iranian-American adolescents showed that when adolescents were asked about their ethnicity and their EI, 82% of the participants answered that they labeled themselves Persian; 2% identified themselves Iranian; 9% said, “Persian and Iranian interchangeably”; 5% identified themselves as Iranian American; and another 2% labeled themselves as American. Tajfel (1981) stated that part of an individual’s self-concept and self-esteem is derived from the knowledge, value, and emotional significance attached to their group membership; he explained experiencing embarrassment in regards to one’s ethnic group and EI may negatively affect the individual’s self-concept and self-esteem (Tajfel, 1981; Keshishian, 2000; Mostofi, 2003; Schwartz, Zamboangab, Weisskirchc, & Rodriguez, 2009; Lars, Suraj, Jon, Bernadette, & Edvard, 2010; Broderick and Blewitt, 2010; Daha, 2011). Verkuyten and Nekuee’s (2001) research on Iranian refugees residing in Netherlands showed an association between higher cultural respect resulting in higher self-esteem and a positive correlation to better coping with the stress of acculturation. Hence one can infer that a positive sense of cultural heritage and value may affect self-esteem ratings and the acculturation process.

It is important to keep in mind the significant impact of families on development and to remember that the western culture promotes autonomy and independence which
maybe against the individuals’ original cultural values (Farver et al., 2007; Jalili, 2005). The Iranian culture promotes a collectivistic view of life where respect and loyalty are important cultural values (Jalili, 2005). The acculturation process creates a generational and cultural gap between children and parents which affects identity development, the individuals’ respect for their original culture and impacts ethnic identity development (Verkuyten & Nekuee, 2001; Zarnegar, 1997; Hajizadeh, 2009; Schwartz & Pantin, 2006; Abu-Sbaih, 2011). Additionally, there is a strong correlation between EI and self-esteem (Lavish, 2008; Farver et al., 2007; Schwartz, Montgomery, and Briones, 2006; Phinney & Rosenthal, 1992).

The Role of Family: Iranian Families

For most people family is the first and the most important social unit, it is the context in which an individual begins to perceive himself/herself in relation to others (Zarnegar, 1997). Various researchers defined family as an “organized system” and the individual as the “contributing member” and suggested that studies investigating the role of family and its influences on children, and individuals in general, should focus on the development of children within their parental dyad and the family culture (Watzlawick, Bavelas, & Jackson, 1967; Andofli, Angelo, Menghi, & Nicolo-Corigliano, 1983; Minuchin, 1985). According to the literature the adolescent’s sense of self-esteem is also formed and influenced by the family unit (Thomas, 1973; Satir & Baldwin, 1983; Zarnegar, 1997). In 1967, Coopersmith stated that family acceptance leads to higher ratings of self-esteem in adolescents and young adults; he demonstrated that parental acceptance consists of the ability of parents to love and approve of their child and allow for the independence of the child. Similar results were obtained by Martin (1975)
suggesting parental acceptance is the key factor in healthy child development (Coopersmith, 1967; Martin, 1975; Kolevzon & Green, 1984; Bakken & Romig, 1989; Zarnegar, 1997).

Family, as an institution, together with religion and politics, has always been a building block of Iranian society (Azadarmaki & Bahar, 2006). In the Iranian culture, family plays an important role; in Iran the individual’s total life is dominated by the family and family relationships (Gable, 1959 as cited by Jalili, 2005). Family is regarded important because it is considered to be connections for positions, security, influence, and power. Although the Iranian family has undergone major transformation within the last 30 years in Iran and in the process of immigration and acculturation, family relationships remain important even for Iranian families in the United States (Jalili, 2005; Azadarmaki & Bahar 2006). Minuchin (1974) suggested that all families have a set of invisible rules that guide the way family members interact; in the Iranian family loyalty to the family unit is an unspoken rule that affects all aspects of the individuals’ life (Jalili, 2005).

Young immigrant Iranian adults experience conflict between their desires for independence and their strong sense of duty and loyalty to their families (Jalili, 2005). This difference in cultural values puts stress on the parental relationship and may influence the acculturation process, identity and development, and affect self-esteem (Zarnegar, 1997; Abu-Sbaih, 2010). A common cause of parent-child struggles is the difference in rates of acculturation (McGoldrick, 1998). Some family members often conform to one mode of living, whereas others- usually parents- follow another, which creates an environment for internal conflict. There is a noticeable generation gap between parents who grew up in Iran and their children who grow up in the United States; a
different set of values are respected by parents and their children. For instance parents’
may resent their child’s not respecting their authority as much as they respected their own
parents’ authority (Jalili, 2005). It is somewhat difficult for the Iranian family to adapt to the
new lifestyle where, for instance, individuality is valued over loyalty to the family unit (Azadarmaki & Bahar 2006; Jalili, 2005; Azadarmaki, and Ghaffari, 2004). The
differences in values and behaviors between parents and their children make the Iranian family prone to intergenerational conflict (Verkuyten & Nekuee, 2001). Based on the works of Minuchin and many other family therapists, Zarnegar (1997) proposed that changes in the family structure, for instance due to immigration and acculturation, can create changes in an individual’s inner experience of him/herself. Often the result are children who attempt to dissociate themselves from the old culture, ridicule their parents, and reject other aspects of the culture; in turn parents become resentful of these changes and blame the new culture, which further drives parents and their away from each other (Jalili, 2005).

Jalili (2005) explained there is a better chance of cultural adjustment for the children if the family has a strong and positive sense of its cultural identity and heritage, as well as an openness and flexibility to add on new values. Children’s ability to cope with their new environment depends considerably on their parents’ ability to adapt, in spite of their conflicting loyalties and anxieties. In line with Jalili’s (2005) findings, a study on Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands showed that higher cultural self-esteem is linked to better management of the stress of acculturation (Verkuyten & Nekuee, 2001). According to the available data it could be said that Iranian parents with a positive cultural identity have an easier time adapting to change which in turn allows for a better
acculturative experience for children and the family. This section focused on the role of family in the process of immigration and acculturation. The next section will review the life of the adolescent and how immigration and acculturation affect adolescent development, in particular identity development and its relation to adolescent global sense of self-esteem/self-confidence.

Parental Influence on Identity Development, EI Development, Acculturation, and Self-Esteem

Iranian families have undergone extreme changes in the last two centuries; albeit the changes and the westernization of the Iranian family and culture have not affected the importance of the family unit in the Iranian culture (Azadarmaki & Bahar, 2006). Family is of high significance in contrast to other social institutions because of the “role it plays in modernizing individuals in Iran” (Azadarmaki & Bahar, 2006, p. 2). Parents have played an important role in their children’s lives and their decision making which provided them with a sense of authority. Industrialization and urbanization along with the changes that accompany immigration and the many stressors of the new culture have influenced and threatened the Iranian family’s stability (Jalili, 2005). The American culture promotes individuation and greater expression of freedom in contrast to loyalty to the family unit and the family has to face the differences between their collectivist culture and the more individualistic culture (Jalili, 2005; Donato, Aguilera, & Wakabayashi, 2005; van de Vijver & Phalet, 2004). The change in values and the process of acculturation often creates conflict between the adolescent’s desire for independence and their strong sense of duty and loyalty to family (Jalili, 2005). Jalili (2005) explains that parents lose their sense of authority and the generational gap between parents and
adolescents widens creating conflict between the two generations. Sluzki (1979) also reported that the process of acculturation is more rapid for immigrant children than their parents, this growth difference creates and compounds the generational gap. Jalili elucidated that often “some family members adhere to one mode, whereas others follow another, which often leaves the family prone to internal intergenerational conflict” (p. 459). Hajizadeh (2009) conducted a study on 109 undergraduate students between the ages of 18-21 and studied the relationship between immigrant parents and their children and the influence of the intergenerational gap on self-esteem. Hajizadeh’s results showed that the acculturation gap between parents and their children was positively correlated with an intergenerational gap; the available literature supports the notion that the intergenerational acculturation differences in immigrant families may be related to higher levels of intergenerational conflict (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, & Lieber 2007; Lee, Choe, Kim, & Ngo, 2000; Vega, Khoury, Zimmerman, Gil, & Warheit, 1995).

Furthermore Hajizadeh explained that the intergenerational conflict was positively related to self-esteem. Hajizadeh reported that the “culture specific intergenerational rifts are considered possible risk factors for psychological difficulties for adolescents” (p.12).

Researchers have mentioned that adolescence is a period marked by important changes in many realms including biological, social, and cognitive development (Hill, Bromell, Tyson, & Flint, 2007); this period is accompanied by recognition and development of intrapersonal and interpersonal changes which affect identity development (Hall & Brassard, 2008). Research shows that the achievement of an integral sense of EI has a positive influence on psychological adjustment and well-being (Farver, Xu, Bhadha, Narang, & Lieber, 2007). As immigrants, adolescents are faced
with the task of exploring not only their sense of identity but also the understanding of their EI and the integration of both into one coherent narrative; for many this task could create potential identity confusion and conflict (Abu-Sbaih, 2011). He explains that an individual's sense of EI is influenced by many factors, the most central of which is considered to be one's family. A group of researchers used the term Familial Ethnic Socialization (FES) to explain that parents are often the primary vehicles for their children's understanding of culture and belonging (Hughes, Bachman, Ruble, & Fuligni, 2006).

Abu-Sbaih (2011) delineates that parents directly and indirectly teach their children and provide opportunities for exposure and active participation in the traditions pertaining to their ethnic heritage. The manner in which parents walk their children through the process of EI exploration influences the child’s identity development (Abu-Sbaih, 2011). Baumrind's (1971) three parenting styles (permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian) are based on the degree of emotional support and structure given to children. Research on parenting and family dynamics (Rosenthal & Feldman, 1992) suggests that parenting style (PS) affects the quality of attachment and parent-child bond. Attachment theorists further suggest that secure attachment is a precursor for competency with respect to psychosocial functioning, providing individuals with the necessary resources with which to engage in the process of identity formation and consolidation (Lopez & Gover, 1993; Reich & Siegel, 2002). The results of Abu-Sbaih’s study (2011) suggests that across ethnic groups and across immigration generational status, specific cultural values and norms, as well as the experiences throughout the immigration process affect parenting style. Parenting style and the quality of the parental relationship greatly

Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama (1999) researched Asian American immigrants and found that they report lower on ratings of self-esteem in households where parents relied on old parenting styles after immigration. Farver et. al (2007) noted that when adolescents were allowed more freedom of expression to practice and integrate western values into their cultural values they had higher self-esteem. Verkuyten and Nekuee (2001) also mentioned that adolescents will have a better chance of cultural adjustment if the family has a strong and positive sense of its cultural identity and heritage along with a flexibility to accept and adapt to new values. Abu-Sbaih’s results further implies that “FES is the strongest predictor of EI exploration and commitment, suggesting that families who emphasize the importance of their ethnic heritage raise children who are more knowledgeable about and feel more strongly connected to their ethnicity, thereby strengthening their EI” (p. 62). Zarnegar (1997) conducted a study on 240 Iranian Jewish participants (80 children and 160 parents) and researched the relationship between Iranian Jewish family structure, level of parental acculturation, and level of self-esteem in second generation immigrant children. Zarnegar’s findings indicated that there was a significant relationship between children’s self-esteem and parental and family cohesion and adaptability; furthermore Zarengar suggested that a higher degree of intergenerational/acculturation gap should be expected especially during the adolescent years (p. 22).

Schawrtz (2006) explained that identity confusion is a relative lack of self-knowledge, self-direction and responsibility, representing either the lack of a consistent
and workable sense of self or the inability to integrate the various elements of one's identity into a whole that is consistent across situations and over time. As it was noted earlier Iranian adolescents change the way they identify their EI based on context, situation, and the people they are around. According to this definition by Schwartz and Pantin (2006) one can assume that Iranian adolescents are confused about their EI and have not integrated the various elements of their identity into a coherent narrative that is consistent across situations and time. This in turn may create confusion and affect acculturation and self-esteem in both adolescents and young adults (Rosenberg, 1965; Bachman, 1970; Abu-Sbaih, 2011).

**Acculturation and self-esteem**

Although the literature on Iranian immigrants is limited, studies with other minority groups can be used to shed light on the process of acculturation and language competency for the Iranian community. The first step in understanding the topic of immigration and acculturation would be to define the term, acculturation: adjustment to culture, in a socially defined aspect. In 1936 a group of researchers defined acculturation as “the 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” (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, p. 150). Since 1936 many other researchers have defined acculturation in similar ways. In 2006 another group of researchers defined acculturation as cultural adaptation among immigrants and immediate descendants (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006) and within the same year Robbins, Chatterjee, and Canda (2006) explained that the process of acculturation
included altering one’s lifestyle and adapting to a new environment, with dissimilar and diverse cultural norms, behaviors, and values from one’s original culture.

In 2010 Berry and Sabatier described that the process of acculturation can be broken down into four different categories: assimilation, integration, marginalization and separation (AIMS) and therefore acculturation can be defined in terms of levels of acculturation with each level having a different impact on the ratings of self-esteem. Berry (2003) defined:

1) Assimilation: the desire of the immigrant to decrease the significance of the culture of origin and to identify, interact, and accept the host culture.

2) Integration: when an individual maintains the original culture and incorporates aspects of the new culture; engagement with both cultures. Integration is otherwise termed as Biculturalism.

3) Marginalization: when an individual has little to no involvement in maintaining the original culture or learning about the host culture.

4) Separation: when an individual strongly associates with the culture of origin and avoids interacting or learning about the host culture.

The result of Berry and Sabatier’s study (2010), on 718 second generation adolescents born in the country of settlement from various ethnic groups, indicated that youths with higher levels of integration showed higher self-esteem than youths who were marginalized. Those youth who were in the assimilation and separation category fell in the middle ranges. Consistent with prior research, Wang, Schwarts, and Zamboanga (2010) conducted a study on one-hundred and ninety-nine Cuban college students and
reported that orientation and incorporation of the American culture while maintaining ties to the Hispanic culture (integration) results in increased levels of self-esteem.

Unsurprisingly the experience of immigration and the process of acculturation take a great toll on the individual’s identity and sense of well-being (Perez, 2011). Berry (2006) proposed that as a result of living in a new society and interacting with a new culture immigrants have to deal with series of stressors, engage in various coping strategies, and eventually adapt in the new society. Similar to Berry’s (2006) proposal, Wang et al. (2010) claimed that integrated/bicultural individuals deal better with acculturative stressors hence demonstrate more favorable mental-health outcomes. Earlier research showed similar results; Birman (1998) noted that bicultural individuals tend to show increased psychological well-being, greater sense of self-worth, and lower levels of depression. LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993) suggested that bicultural individuals have a “strong and stable sense of personal identity and ethnic identity” which are significant elements in acquiring competence in the new culture (p. 409). LaFromboise et al. (1993) believed that “people who develop bicultural competencies exhibit better physical and mental health” (p. 409).

In a study on linguistic acculturation and the effects of context on self-esteem, Perez selected the participants from 33 public schools in various parts of the country, with diverse levels of urbanization, racial/ethnic compositions, and economic diversity and found that context combined with level of acculturation can affect an individual’s well-being. The author further explained that immigrant youths experienced a downward adjustment and that, the multidimensional process of acculturation increased the already rambunctious emotions experienced in adolescence and may influence self-esteem.
Perez’ (2011) results were similar to earlier findings that suggested self-esteem has been shown to be positively associated with acculturation; this study did not specify which level of AIMS was associated with self-esteem (Moyerman & Forman, 1992; Sam, 2000). Moradi and Risco (2006) rendered comparable findings and suggested that biculturalism was the greatest predictor of self-esteem among Central American women; according to the data they described that there was a significant positive relationship between acculturation and self-esteem in Latina adults.

In line with the discussed studies was a research study done by Boden, Fergusson, and Horwood (2008), which explored the relationship between self-esteem ratings and later life outcomes in adulthood; the study selected 1,265 individuals born in New Zealand and assessed the participants at age 15 using the global measure from the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (1981). Boden et al., (2008) suggested that, as it was assumed, low self-esteem had been affiliated with an increased risk of psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, conduct/antisocial personality disorder, and suicidal ideation. It was noted, as well, that low self-esteem was associated with lower levels of general life satisfactions, more specifically relationship satisfaction, and a more negative perception of one’s relationship quality and social group interactions.

In a different study by Wang, Schwartz, and Zamboanga (2010), 199 Cuban-decent adults were selected to participate in exploring the relations among acculturation, acculturative stress, and psychosocial functioning among Hispanic adults. They defined acculturative stress according to a decrease in psychological, physical, and social functioning of adults who are in the process of acculturation. They explained that such patterns in health seemed to relate to the experience of acculturation.
According to the available literature, it would not be difficult to assume that the process of acculturation and language acquisition is rather stressful; Smokowski and Bacallao (2007) believed that higher rates of acculturation stressors were linked to lower levels of self-esteem. Other research agreed with the findings of Smokowski and Bacallao and reported that self-esteem has been observed to be positively affiliated with biculturalism (Moyerman & Forman, 1992; Sam, 2000).

While the previously discussed research mainly focused on the Hispanic population, similar outcomes have been observed in other ethnicities; in a study with Asian adolescents, acculturation seemed to be significantly associated with self-esteem (Rhee, Chang, & Rhee, 2003). A research study by Trickett and Birman (2005) focused on adolescents from the former Soviet Union, they were interested in the process of acculturation and its effects on school performance in refugees; the authors annotated that the school represents the primary setting in which individuals first confront the majority American culture. School is considered to be a broad context for acculturation because for many it is the place for language acquisition, cultural learning through peer relationships, cultural norms and expectations. The authors alluded to the fact that school is also the locus of cultural conflict and acculturative stress. Since school is considered a multidimensional context and is the place for social learning and interaction, it affects the individuals’ identity which may affect self-esteem (Erikson, 1968).

In a different study participants were selected from schools and in the context of educational settings where acculturation and language competence play important roles in the success of the students and in turn their perceived sense of global self-esteem (Trickett & Birman, 2005). One hundred and ten first-generation, high school attending
Soviet refugee adolescents with an average age of 16, with a history of at least 6 years of residence in the United States, were selected to participate in this study. The Language, Identity, and Behavioral Acculturation (LIB) Scale (Birman & Trickett, 2001) was used to assess acculturation. The authors concluded that higher levels of acculturation to the American culture were positively correlated with school adaptation. The observed patterns were confirmed through a correlation that exhibited higher achievements in grades, fewer absences, and an increased sense of school belonging (Trickett & Birman, 2005), leaving one to assume that such individuals could have better life satisfaction as compared to their less acculturated peers.

**Linguistic Acculturation**

Immigrating to a new country embeds many challenges beyond the stressful process of leaving one’s country and life behind. An important and crucial aspect of acculturation is linguistic acculturation; while most available research does not separate linguistic acculturation from the overall process of acculturation, it is important to look at this particular aspect as a distinguished factor. Many adults immigrate to the United States with little or no knowledge of the English language, making the process of adapting to the new life more difficult, hence creating a new level of anxiety that can affect their self-esteem. In a previously discussed study on Hispanic adolescents, Perez (2011) explained that language acquisition could be considered another level of acculturation, called linguistic acculturation; the author clarified that linguistic acculturation affected self-esteem. She suggested a complex relationship between linguistic acculturation and emotional well-being.

In a study specifically on Iranian immigrants, Safdar and Lewis (2007) compared
two groups of Iranian immigrants in the United States and Britain according to their educational levels. Safdar and Lewis were interested to know whether or not being acquainted to the English language prior to immigration would make a difference in the immigrant’s ratings of self-esteem and overall acculturation experience. The authors determined that the Iranian-American group who reported having a higher level of education had a much better overall experience because prior knowledge about the country they immigrated to and knowledge of the language spoken allowed for more access to resources, than the other group, which could enable these immigrants to adapt to their new society of settlement better.

Prior research established that regardless of the increasing numbers of immigrants, public attitudes toward immigrants are mostly negative and immigrants with a nonnative accent are more prone to discrimination (Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998; Kessler & Freeman, 2005; Quillian, 1995; Simon & Lynch, 1999). A nonnative accent is referred to as the identifier and the reason behind most stigmatization of immigrants, it also serves as an indication that the individual is not a native speaker (Kinzler, Dupoux, & Spelke, 2007) and, further implies that one does not speak the language fluently, regardless of one’s actual competence (Lindemann, 2002). Lack of perceived language fluency and competence in speaking the host country’s language, in turn, has a number of negative consequences some of which range from psychological distress to economic difficulties (Lindemann, 2002; Wated & Sanchez, 2006).

Previous research focused mainly on factors such as age at arrival of the immigrant, and length of residence in the host country, to predict accent strength in a nonnative country. A study done by Flege, Munro, and MacKay (1995) on the factors
that influence accent strength and the perception of others in regard to how strong the accent of a nonnative speaker is, suggested that age at arrival affects accent strength. The result of the study suggested that the critical period to learn a language fluently and without an accent ranges from 3.1 to 11.6 years with a Mean of 7.5. In line with these results Lenneberg (1967) suggested that overcoming a nonnative accent seems to be rather difficult if the second language was acquired after puberty. To support the assumption that language acquisition and linguistic acculturation do affect self-esteem, Gluszek, Newheiser, and Dovidio (2010) studied 117 nonnative English speakers and found out that age of learning predicted accent strength and that accent strength negatively influences self-esteem, social identity, and ratings of social belonging.

Other research suggested that acquiring a native-like accent in a nonnative country is extremely difficult and accent strength greatly affects the perception of the listener of that person (Derwing & Munro, 2009; Munro & Derwing, 1999). In other studies it has been proposed that language constitutes an important element of one’s identity (Cargile & Giles, 1997) pointing to the fact that language and communication difficulties, due to a nonnative accent, can affect the perception of the speaker and create a lack of sense of social belonging, therefore causing a lower rating of self-esteem by the individual ((Derwing, 2003; Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010). Gluszek and colleagues (2010) were interested in researching the relationship between accent strength and social psychological orientations of nonnative English speakers in the United States. Gluszek et al. (2010) further investigated how accent strength may predict speakers’ perceptions of communication challenges and lack of social belonging. One hundred and seventeen nonnative English speakers were recruited from a Northeastern U.S. university, most of
whom were either undergraduate or graduate students. Participants identified with
different cultures such as Asian, Hispanic/Latino, European, African, and Middle-
easterner. The variables assessed in the research included (a) demographic questions
related to predictors of accent strength, (b) a cultural identification measure, (c) a set of
items assessing communication challenges, and (d) a measure of lack of social belonging
in the United States. Consistent with previous research, their results indicated that age of
learning and length of residence predicted accent strength. In addition, the authors
proclaim that strength of identification negatively predicted other- and self-perceived
accent strength, and negatively affected the individuals’ sense of social belonging and
thereof their self-esteem.

When an individual with a nonnative accent is stigmatized through overt or implicit
messages, her/his self-perception is negatively influenced (Stephan & Stephan, 1985;
Derwing, 2003). The individual, in turn, may “experience anxiety in intergroup
interactions” and is more likely to “avoid situations in which they think they may
experience stigma, and be less likely to initiate conversations (Stephan & Stephan, 1985;
Derwing, 2003). Additionally these individuals are perceived to experience negative
psychological outcomes such as anxiety and depression (Stephan & Stephan, 1985;
Derwing, 2003) which in turn postpones acculturation.

Self-Esteem

The concept of self-esteem comes from Cooley’s (1902) idea of the “looking-
glass self”. This model explains that self-esteem is socially constructed through
interactions with significant others (parents, peers) and more generalized others in the
larger socio-cultural context (Mead, 1934; Michaels, Barr, Roosa, & Knight, 2007).
Michaels et al. (2007) further explains Cooley’s concept and notes that self-worth/self-esteem is developed through a process of reflected appraisals; self-esteem is a person’s sense of self-worth and value. Braden (1969) declared that there are three key components to self-esteem; 1) self-esteem is a significant aspect of healthy human development and functioning, which was later confirmed by Michaels et al. (2007), 2) Self-esteem arises automatically from within based upon a person’s beliefs and consciousness, and 3) self-esteem occurs in conjunction with a person’s thoughts, behaviors, feelings and actions (Cherry, 2013; Branden, 1969; Maslow, 1987).

Self-esteem was discussed in the works of Abraham Maslow. Maslow’s (1987) concept of “Hierarchy of Needs” depicted self-esteem as one of the basic human motivations and believed that self-esteem is a necessary element in achieving self-actualization. Michaels et al. (2007) noted that global self-worth is affected through the five domains of self-esteem: scholastic competence, athletic competence, physical appearance, behavioral conduct, and social acceptance.

Research has revealed that high levels of self-esteem are associated with life satisfaction, happiness, healthy behavioral practices, perceived efficacy, and academic success and adjustment (Harter, 1987; Huebner, 1991; Lipschitz-Elhawi & Itzhaky, 2005; Rumberger, 1995; Swenson & Prelow, 2005; Yarcheski & Mahon, 1989). Furthermore, longitudinal research has provided evidence that childhood self-esteem influences adult functioning (Werner & Smith, 1992). Conversely, low levels of self-esteem have been linked to negative developmental outcomes such as depression, posttraumatic stress symptoms and anxiety, conduct problems and delinquency, academic difficulties, substance use, and suicidal behaviors (Michaels, Barr, Roosa, & Knight, 2007; Aunola,
Stattin, & Nurmi, 2000; Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt, & Caspi, 2005; Lengua, Long, Smith, & Meltzoff, 2005; Lewinsohn et al., 1994; Lewinsohn, Rohde, & Seeley, 1993; Pottebaum, Keith, & Ehly, 1986; Richardson, Bergen, Martin, Roeger, & Allison, 2005; Schroeder, Laflin, & Weis, 1993; Warheit et al., 1995). It is important to note that self-esteem is a concept distinct from self-efficacy, which involves the belief in future actions, performance or abilities.

The association and impact of acculturation and language proficiency on self-esteem has been the subject of multiple research studies. Research showed that language proficiency was strongly associated with acculturation and acculturation was highly relatable to self-confidence; furthermore, positive ethnic identity positively correlated with higher acculturation ratings (Lavish, 2008; Holmstrom, 2012; Clemet, 1986). When an individual does not speak a language fluently or speaks the language fluently but with a nonnative accent, the individual becomes prone to peer and social victimization and social avoidance which negatively impacts self-esteem (Strohmier & Dogan, 2012; Perez, 2011; Felge, 1995). Accent strength affects socialization and people’s perception of the individual and negatively influences their self-esteem (Fledge, 1995; Perez, 2011; Gluszek, Newheiser, & Dovidio, 2010).

Referring to the five domains of self-esteem discussed by Michaels et al. (2007) it is important to remember that scholastic competence and social acceptance may be highly dependent on language proficiency, accent strength, and levels of acculturation. It can be inferred from the data presented that the process of acculturation may specifically affect scholastic competence, behavioral conduct, and social acceptance; furthermore acculturation has been strongly associated with a positive sense of ethnic identity,
CHAPTER III

METHOD

In order to conduct this quantitative research study, permission was requested and received by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at California State University Northridge (CSUN).

Participants

Participants for this study were selected based on their age, ethnicity, and residency status. Participants were eligible if they were a first generation immigrant from Iran and immigrated after the age of six years old. Those that were either born in the United States or immigrated to the United States before the age of 6 were not eligible. The required age range for participants was between the ages of 18 to 30. Forty-four of the participants fell on the 18 to 25 age range and 23 belonged to the age range of 26 to 30. The resulting sample consisted of 35 females and 32 males who participated in the study and 14 participants who did not specify their gender but were included in data analysis. Participants were asked about level of education; 15 people reported having an AA degree, 33 BA/BS degrees, 11 MA/MS, and 7 people reported having had some college education. Participants were required to specify their ethnicity; 16 people stated their ethnicity as Iranian, 27 as Persian, 4 as Middle-easterner, 4 as Iranian-American, and 14 as White/Caucasian.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Age Range**
- 18-25: 44
- 26-30: 23

**Marital Status**
- Single: 59
- Married: 4
- In a relationship: 2
- Divorced/separated: 0

**Educational Level**
- AA: 15
- BA/BS: 33
- MA/MS: 11
- Some college: 7

**Ethnicity**
- Iranian: 16
- Persian: 27
- Iranian-American: 4
- White: 14
- Middle-Easterner: 4

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**Recruitment**

The majority of the participants volunteered to participate in the study by using an on-line data-collection platform. Sixteen students were approached on various university campuses, where a high number of Iranians attend, to fill-out a paper questionnaire. Out of 81 participants, 30 were from schools in the UC system, 13 from schools in the CSU system, 7 from Los Angeles area colleges, and 7 from other various universities. Twenty participants did not include a school. Furthermore 20 people were randomly selected from an email list generated by the researcher and received the link, 10 completed the survey.
Procedure

A questionnaire was created and sent to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the California State University Northridge (CSUN) research committee for approval. Once approved by CSUN the protocol was sent to University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) for approval and to allow for conducting research on campus. Both institutions approved the study procedures and informed consent was obtained before any data were collected (see Appendix A and B).

Participants were approached on campuses, as well as through online services such as facebook or email and were asked to fill out a questionnaire (see Appendix C). A paper-pencil questionnaire was available to be filled out for participants approached in schools; questionnaires administered in schools were asked to be filled out at the time of distribution and not allowed to be taken for later returns. Participants were approached in libraries or computer-labs and were first asked whether or not they were born in the United States, if the answer was no then the participant was asked if they would be interested in participating a study conducted on Iranian Immigrants and was told how long the survey might take. If interested, participants were asked to read and sign the adult consent form (see Appendix D). Next they were given the questionnaire to fill out on their own.

An on-line version of the questionnaire was created on Survey-Monkey and was available for those who were interested in participating in the study through on-line services. A direct link to the questionnaire from survey-monkey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/56QBHkz) was posted on facebook on multiple occasions; furthermore people were sent personal or mass messages containing the link.
(see Appendix E). Participants volunteered based on their interest in the study and their eligibility. Some participants were selected from an email list, from which 10 completed the survey. Questionnaires administered online allowed the participants read the informed consent and to check a box on the Adult Consent Form which then directed them to the questionnaire website. There were no formal instructions given to participants but they were debriefed after completion of the questionnaire; for those completing the on-line questionnaire, participants were given the option to email the researcher for more information.

**Instruments**

Participants were asked to fill out a one-time questionnaire composed of 62 questions broken down into 6 sections of personal information, language, acculturation, personal relationships, self-efficacy, and self-esteem/self-confidence. The number of questions in each section was not evenly distributed. On top of the first page, starting with personal relationships, a disclaimer was provided that described to the participants what the survey expected: “The questions on this survey inquire about feelings of your personal self-confidence in regards to your experience of immigration and life adjustments in the United States. Please keep in mind that filling out the survey requires reflection on your personal past and your awareness of your present experiences.”

Two questions were repeated throughout the survey; the questions asking about marital status and ethnicity. Both questions were once asked allowing the participant to write in their answers and later to check a box. The answer boxes displayed 4 options and the options varied in wording from one category to the next. For instance, in the personal information section the available options included “Not at all difficult, Somewhat
difficult, Moderately difficult, Very difficult”. The sections on language, acculturation, personal relationships, and self-efficacy displayed these options: “Not at all, Somewhat, Moderately, Mostly”. Although it is important to mention that the language section may have included items such as choosing between “Farsi, English”, “does not apply”, or terms such as “Iranian, Iranian-American”. The self-esteem section adopted a different scale and was worded similar to the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale. For instance, “Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree”.

The section focused on personal information asked questions such as: age, gender, and ethnicity, name of school, marital status, and educational backgrounds. The section on language required participants to relay information about their current and past experiences and covered questions such as: “When I came to the United States my perception of my accent negatively affected my self-esteem” and “My current perception of my accent negatively affects my self-esteem”. Acculturation was assessed using questions like “How often do you watch Iranian TV or movies?”, “How often do you read and write in Farsi?”, “I am as happy as when I was younger and adjusting to life in the United States”, “As you adjust more to life in the United States, would you say socializing with English speaking people has become more enjoyable?”, and “Do you think it is easier to get accustomed to life in a new country when you immigrate at a young age (7 years old or younger)?”.

The category on personal relationships focused on questions such as: “It is difficult for me to accept newly arrived Iranians as close personal friends” and “It is hard for me to make friends because I don’t feel like an American”. Self-efficacy was evaluated by asking questions that focused on a global sense of competency; for instance
“When I came to the United States I felt that I was a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others, including Americans”, I currently feel more competent as a person than when I first immigrated to the United States”, “I felt competent when I first started school in the United States”, and “I currently feel competent and successful in school”. The last section focused on self-esteem and/or self-confidence and asked “I felt that I was a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others when I first came to the U.S?”,” “I think age at immigration affects self-esteem of immigrants” and “On the whole I am satisfied with myself”.

Since there was no valid test that included all of the mentioned variables, an adaptation of the Rosenberg self-esteem Scale along with an adaptation of the Language, Identity, and Behavioral Acculturation (LIB) Scale were used to assess the study variables (Hagborg, 1993; Birman & Trickett, 2001). In addition to the two modified scales mentioned above, an adaptation of the Acculturation Scale for Iranians originally structured by Shahim (2007) was employed to assess the participants’ acculturation level. The questions were worded simply to allow participants with different language competency to partake in the study.

**Data Analysis**

In total 81 people participated in the study but only 66 completed surveys were used for data analysis. Data were analyzed using frequencies and the Pearson Correlation. Frequency is the number of occurrences of a repeating event; in statistics it refers to the number of items occurring in a given category (http://publib.boulder.ibm.com/infocenter/spssstat/v20r0m0/index.jsp?topic=%2Fcom.ibm.spss.statistics.help%2Fidh_ttin.htm). Frequencies were used, for instance, to figure
how many people identified as Persian vs. Iranian or how many students from the CSU system vs. the UC system completed the survey. Frequency tables allowed for comparing answers of participants within the same question. For example, when asked “Do you think it would be hard to immigrate to the United States as a teenager?”, 23 people answered it would be “Moderately difficult”. The frequency tables provided cumulative percentages as well; for instance 23 participants would translate approximately into 34%.

The Pearson Correlation was implemented to further analyze the data. In statistics, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (sometimes referred to as the PPMCC or PCC) is a measure of the correlation (linear dependence) between two variables $X$ and $Y$, giving a value between +1 and −1 inclusive. It is widely used in the sciences as a measure of the strength of linear dependence between two variables (http://publib.boulder.ibm.com/infocenter/spssstat/v20r0m0/index.jsp?topic=%2Fcom.ibm.spss.statistics.help%2Fidh_ttin.htm). Even though correlation does not imply causation, it provides a possible relationship between variables. For instance a correlation of 0.216 between language and acculturation is not a strong relationship. The closer the calculated value is to 1, the stronger the relationship.

Furthermore, an Independent Samples t-test was used to analyze possible differences between men and women. An Independent Samples T-test is an inferential statistical test that determines whether there is a statistically significant difference between the means in two unrelated groups (https://statistics.laerd.com/statistical-guides/independent-t-test-statistical-guide.php).
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

The current study sought to examine the effects of age of arrival to the United States on factors such as acculturation, language, personal relationships, self-efficacy, and self-esteem reported by Iranian immigrants. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlations, otherwise known as Bivariate Correlations, and Independent T-tests. Pearson Correlations were used to examine the relationship between variables; the Independent T-test was conducted to test the differences between two gender groups and see possible differences on scores on the different categories.

Pearson Correlations

The first hypothesis stated that the younger the individual is at age of immigration, the easier the process of acculturation will be, hence resulting in higher self-esteem ratings among Iranian-American immigrants. Bivariate correlations were conducted to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between age of arrival and language, acculturation, personal relationships, self-efficacy, and self-esteem (see Table 1). Correlations indicated that there was a positive and significant correlation between age of arrival and the language scale (r = .47, p < 0.01). Correlations showed that there was a significant and positive correlation between age of arrival and personal relationships (r = .36, p < 0.01). Correlations displayed significant and positive relationship between language and acculturation (r = .216, p < 0.05). Furthermore correlations illustrated a significant positive relationship between personal relationships and self-esteem (r = .23, p < 0.05). Correlations did not indicate a significant relationship between age of arrival and self-esteem ratings in Iranian-American immigrants.
Pearson Correlations

The second hypothesis stated that the longer the length of residency in the United States, the higher self-esteem ratings will be for Iranian immigrants (see Table 2). Correlations showed that there was a negative significant relationship between length of residency in the U.S and language (r= -.404, p< 0.01). The negative relationship between language and length of residency indicates that the longer an individual has lived in the U.S, the higher their ratings would be on the language scale. There were no significant correlations between self-esteem and length of residency.

Independent Samples T-Test Examining Differences Between Genders

The third hypothesis was that there will be differences in the ratings of Iranian immigrant men and women on all categories. An Independent T-test was conducted to compare the means of participant scores between the two gender groups on the five categories of language, acculturation, personal relationships, self-efficacy, and self-esteem (see Table 3). The results of the Group Statistics illustrated that the means of all categories were higher for women than men. That is, women generally, on average, score higher on the language, acculturation, personal relationships, self-efficacy, and self-esteem scales than men. For instance, examining the language category and comparing the individual scores of men and women it is apparent that women score higher than men. More specifically, for example when the two groups were asked “when I came to the U.S. I was confident in my lingual abilities”, 45.7% of women reported “somewhat” confident compared to 28% of men. The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was used to determine if two gender groups have about the same or different amounts of variability between scores. The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances indicated that variances
were not significantly different (sig. is greater than 0.05); that is, the variances are approximately equal (see Table 4). This means that the scores for male participants do not vary much more than the scores for female participants. The results of the Independent samples T-test showed a significant difference between men and women on the acculturation, personal relationships, and the self-esteem scales (sig (2-tailed) is less than 0.05). If sig (2-tailed) is less than 0.05, then we can assume that the results are not due to chance alone. However, on the language and self-efficacy scale sig (2-tailed) is greater than 0.05, meaning there are no significant differences between men and women.
Table 1

*Bivariate Correlations*

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<th></th>
<th>Language Scale</th>
<th>Acculturation Scale</th>
<th>Personal Relationships</th>
<th>Self Efficacy</th>
<th>Self Esteem</th>
<th>How old were you when you immigrated?</th>
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<td>.312</td>
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<td>.131</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.121</td>
<td>.159</td>
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* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).
Table 2

*Bivariate Correlations*

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*Means (T-test) Group Statistics*

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*Independent Samples Test*

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CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of acculturation on the self-esteem ratings of Iranian immigrants residing in the United States. The study focused on various factors such as language, acculturation, personal relationships, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. The goal was to examine possible relationships between the mentioned variables and to explore the different dimensions of the acculturation process on self-esteem. A sample of Iranian immigrants, mainly residing in the greater Los Angeles area were targeted for this study. Research showed that large concentrations of Iranian Americans live in the state of California, particularly around Los Angeles, Orange County, La Jolla, and San José (http://iranpoliticsclub.net/library/iran-population/index.html).

The study focused on three main questions; the effects of age of arrival on self-esteem, length of residency and gender differences in the overall ratings of participants on each scale and their ratings of self-esteem. First I was interested to know whether or not age of arrival, in other words age at which the individual immigrated, affected the acculturation process and negatively influenced self-esteem ratings in Iranian immigrant adults. The results did not yield any significant relationship between age of arrival and self-esteem ratings of Iranian immigrant adults. However, the results showed that there was a positive relationship between age of arrival and linguistic acculturation. Meaning, the younger the age of immigration is, the better the ratings of the individual is on the language scale. It is important to note that language acquisition could be considered another level of acculturation, called linguistic acculturation (Perez, 2011). One can
assume that individuals who rate positively on the linguistic acculturation scale, rate positively on the acculturation scale as well. Research with Hispanic youth has suggested that more acculturated youth are those who have a better sense of mastery of the English language; furthermore these individuals tend to report higher self-esteem when it comes to interacting with friends and classmates (Perez, 2011).

Wang, Schwartz, and Zamboanga (2010) reported that individuals who are proficient in the English language, and do not face pressures to maintain their mother tongue, seem to experience lower acculturative stress. Other research suggested that higher acculturative stressors were linked to lower levels of self-esteem (Smokowski & Bacallao, 2007). Lenneberg (1967) suggested that foreign accents cannot be overcome easily after puberty. Felge, Munro, and MacKay (1995) commended that individuals who learned a second language before the age of 6 do not seem to have a nonnative accent. Previous research supported the results of the current study, that younger age at immigration is positively related to linguistic acculturation. The results of the current study showed a positive relationship between language and acculturation. Birman and Trickett (2001) concluded that higher levels of acculturation to the American culture were positively correlated with school adaptation. Needless to say satisfactory school work is dependent on language skills supporting the positive relationship between acculturation and language in this study.

Furthermore the results of the current study showed that there was a significant and positive relationship between age of arrival and personal relationships, possibly suggesting that younger immigrants grow up to report positively on ratings of personal relationships. Gluszek, Newheiser, and Dovidio (2010) reported that age of learning a
new language predicted accent strength and that accent strength negatively influences self-esteem, social identity, and ratings of social belonging. It was also noticed that there was a positive relationship between personal relationships and self-esteem. The results of the current study suggest that individuals who have better relationships, score higher on the self-esteem variable. Previous research conveyed that happiness and life satisfactions, healthy behavioral practices, perceived efficacy, and academic success are associated with high levels of self-esteem (Harter, 1987; Huebner, 1991; Lipschitz-Elhawi & Itzhaky, 2005; Rumberger, 1995; Swenson & Prelow, 2005; Yarcheski & Mahon, 1989).

Another purpose of the current study was to determine whether or not length of residency would affect the ratings of individuals on the varying self-esteem scales. The results did not yield any significant relationships between length of residency and self-esteem in Iranian immigrants. The findings of the current study are in contrast to previous research on Latina adults indicated there was a positive relationship between acculturation and self-esteem (Moradi & Risco, 2006). Furthermore, there were no significant relationships between length of residency and acculturation in Iranian immigrant adults. Previous research on Iranian immigrants showed that higher ratings on the acculturation scale was positively related to the number of years they had spent outside of Iran which was not a finding in the current study (Shokouhi-Behnam & Chambliss, 1996).

Looking at the ratings of participants on the question “As you adjust more to life in the United States, would you say socializing with English speaking people has become more enjoyable?” 38 individuals, (56%), reported “Mostly”. This may suggest that length of residency affects ratings on the acculturation scale. Additionally when participants
were asked “Do you think it is easier to get accustomed to life in a new country when you immigrate at a young age (7 years old or younger)?” 51 individuals (76%), answered “Mostly”. Such results may suggest that, although the overall ratings of participants did not show a significant relationship between acculturation and length of residency, their scores on each question may suggest otherwise.

According to the results of the current study, there was a negative relationship between length of residency and language. This may convey that the longer an individual resides in the U.S., the lower their ratings of discomfort would be on the language scale. In other words, difficulty with language skills decreases as the individual spends more time in the U.S. When participants were asked about their confidence in lingual abilities when they first immigrated and their current ratings, 40% reported “Not at all” confident in the beginning stages of immigration compared to 56% who reported currently “Mostly” confident in their language skills. Referring back to the positive relationship between early age of arrival and positive perception of language skills, it is worthy to note that learning a second language at a younger age correlates with a less nonnative accent, hence a more positive personal perception (Flege, Munro, & MacKay, 1995).

Thirdly, it was predicted that the two gender groups would score differently on all the scales. Examining the means collected through averaging the scores on the scales, women scored higher on all the scales. Women scored higher on the self-esteem than men, when specifically looking at the means of the group statistics. For instance, when men and women were asked “I felt that I was a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others when I first came to the U.S?” 25.7% of women reported “strongly Agree” compared to 18.8% of men. Even though the means of the group statistics indicated that
women score more positively on all the scales, looking at the variability of scores between men and women, it is clear that the groups do not significantly vary from each other. A possible explanation for the difference in the means could be explained by examining other factors. For instance, research on Jewish Iranian women living in the United States indicated that higher scores on the acculturation scale were related to the changes in women’s gender roles that allowed for more assertiveness, and lower ratings of psychological symptoms (Sazan, 1994).

Furthermore, the results of the independent samples T-test revealed some differences between the two gender groups on the acculturation, personal relationships, and the self-esteem scales. Meaning, the obtained differences are not just due to chance. Ghaffarian (1987) compared the ratings of Iranian men and women on an acculturation scale and found that generally Iranian men were more acculturated than Iranian women, possibly because of their greater experience of self-determination.

Although the current research study has been conducted to compare men and women and their ratings of self-esteem, the results are very contradictory. Previous research on adolescents’ self-esteem suggested that males score slightly higher on the self-esteem scale than females (Bachman, O’Malley, Freedman-Doan, Trzesniewski, & Donnellan, 2012). Another study on self-esteem ratings of females throughout childhood to adulthood suggested that males, on average, reported lower self-esteem than females (Strange, Neuenschwander, & Dauer). As evident by the available literature, self-esteem scales slightly vary between the two gender groups, sometimes with males scoring higher and vice versa, possibly supporting the variability in the scores of the current research study.
Limitations

The findings of this study should be interpreted in light of several important considerations and limitations. First it is important to note that this study used a self-made questionnaire to include multiple variables which may affect the validity and the reliability of the results. Another limitation of the study is that the majority of the participants were not randomly selected but rather chose to take-part in this study. In other words, the gathered results may be more generalizable to immigrant individuals who participate in more social and experimental activities compared to those who do not take initiative. A third limitation is the lack of clear questions that test the relationship between the variables as reported by the participant.

Despite these limitations, the current results contribute to research on acculturation among the Iranian immigrant population residing in Los Angeles. These findings can shed light on the importance of considering multiple dimensions of acculturation on everyday choices and activities and how they may or may not influence self-esteem of Iranian American immigrants.

Implications

The findings of the current study underscore the need to better understand the effects of immigration, the process of acculturation, linguistic acculturation, and age on the self-esteem ratings of Iranian immigrants. Evidence from this study showed that there is positive relationship between age of arrival and language skills, better language skills are highly related to higher acculturation, and that those factors highly influence personal relationships which in turn affect self-esteem. Clearly, more research is needed to test the strength of the relationship between such factors and to determine the benefits, or
drawback, of the relationship between immigration, acculturation, and self-esteem.
Furthermore, it is important to study the differences between Iranian immigrant men and
women and their experience of immigration and acculturation. It is also important to
figure out how men and women process their experiences and such experiences affect
their ratings of social belonging to both their original and the host culture.

**Recommendations for Research and Practice**

*Future Research*

The results of this study provide some information about the perception of Iranian
immigrants in regard to the process of acculturation and how it affects their ratings of
personal relationships and their overall sense of self-esteem. While this study focused on
different variables, future research can focus on how context may influence each variable.
Furthermore, the effects of the Iranian family and their perception about acculturation
and biculturalism should be taken into account.

This study was conducted using a quantitative questionnaire; future research
could be conducted by implementing both a questionnaire and the administration of
detailed interviews on a random sample of the participant pool. A personal interview may
allow for a more detailed explanation of possible differences between the ratings of men
and women. Furthermore, the administration of an interview will allow for a closer look
at how individuals assess their ethnic identity and the impact of their perception of EI on
the acculturation process.

The current study asked participants to reflect back on their experiences as
adolescents and to answer the questionnaire. In addition, this study could be a
longitudinal research project where Iranian immigrants are asked to participate in the
study once as adolescents and later as adults to compare the effects of immigration and acculturation in two different developmental stages.

*Practice Implications*

The results of this study can be used by practitioners, teachers, marriage and family therapists, and other mental health professionals working with immigrants, specifically Iranian immigrants. It is important for such professionals to be aware of the stressors involved in the process of immigration and acculturation and the effects of the Iranian culture on the experiences of the individual. This study provides information about immigrant adults in different contexts, how and if they relate to other Iranians versus Americans, and how such factors affect acculturation, language, personal relationships, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. It is important for therapists to be informed about the importance of the clients’ perception and expectations of language competency and accent strength. It is also necessary for practitioners to be aware of the impact of Ethnic identity in the development of an adults’ whole identity and their overall sense of self-esteem (Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Chen, Roberts, & Romero, 1999). In promoting a safe and open environment for learning, teachers and programmers should be informed about the differences between and within cultural groups. For practitioners working with Iranian immigrant families, expectations and perceptions about acculturation should be taken into account. They should also consider the difference between the rate of acculturation in adolescents and adults and the difficulties that may arise from this generational gap.
References


Giller, E. (1999). What is psychological trauma?. Retrieved from


http://dx.doi.org/10.2753/IMH0020-7411390301.


located/AnswerViewer.do?requestId=518578.


Appendix A
Human Subjects Protocol Approval Form

California State University
Northridge

June 12, 2012

Treza Mirakhor
1226 S. Shenandoah St. #202
Los Angeles, CA 90035

Re: “The Effects of Acculturation on Self-Esteem Ratings of Iranian-American Immigrants” Research Protocol

Dear Ms. Mirakhor:

Enclosed for your records is a copy of the cover sheet of your approved Human Subjects Protocol Form. Please note that your project has been approved as exempt. If there are any changes to your protocol, you must contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects to ensure your project is still within the exempt guidelines.

If you have any questions, call this office at (818) 677-2901.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Selken, Compliance Officer
On Behalf of
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects

closure
1. Title of research
The Effects of Acculturation on Self-Esteem Ratings of Iranian-American Immigrants

2. Principal Investigator: Treza Mirakhor
Major or Department: Marriage and Family Therapy/ Department of Educational Psychology
Address: 1226 S. Shenandoah St. Apt #202 Los Angeles, CA 90035
Email Address: trezarsearch@yahoo.com

3. Name of Faculty Advisor: Dana Stone PhD Faculty Advisor ext. 2049

4. Co-Investigators: 1. ___________________________ Student: ☐ Faculty: ☐
2. ___________________________ Student: ☐ Faculty: ☐

5. Projected Dates of Data Collection:
Begin Subject Recruitment/Data Collection: May 2012 End Data Collection: August 2012


8. Check one: ☐ Unfunded ☐ Funded Name of Funding Source: Date (to be) submitted

9. History of Protocol: ☐ New ☐ Continuing (Previous Approval Date _____)

10. Existing Data: Will this study involve the use of existing data or specimens (Data/specimens currently existing at the time you submitted this project)? ☐ No ☐ Yes
If Yes, attach documentation indicating the authorization to access the data if not publicly available and if accessing from an agency outside of CSUN.

11. Subjects to be recruited (Check all that apply)
a. ☒ Adults (18+ years)
b. ☐ Minors specify age: _______
c. ☐ Cognitively or Emotionally Impaired Persons
d. ☐ CSUN Students
e. ☐ Others (describe): students from UCLA and SMC in addition to a random selection of people from an email list and online services such as Facebook.
f. ☐ Using existing data, no subjects will be recruited

12. Data will include (check all variables that apply): You must specify all of this information in the Project
Information form.
a. ☐ names of people h. ☐ marital status o. ☐ other, specify: education
b. ☐ email address i. ☐ income p. ☐ other, specify: education
c. ☐ street address j. ☐ social security number
 d. ☐ phone numbers k. ☐ job title
f. ☐ age l. ☐ names of employers
 g. ☐ gender m. ☐ types of employers
 g. ☐ ethnicity n. ☐ physical health report

13. Will subjects be identified by a coding system (i.e., other than by name)? YES ☐ NO ☐

14. Is compensation offered? YES ☐ NO ☐

15. If yes, describe (e.g., gift cert., cash, research credit). _______________________

CSUN Office of Research and Sponsored Projects
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, Revised

10/06
16. Number of Subjects: 100

17. Method of recruiting (elaborate in Section 2 of Project Information Form): Participants will be selected from 2 different four year colleges and one community college in southern California. Students will be approached outside of classrooms and libraries and will be asked to fill out the questionnaire; students will not be approached in classrooms. A subsection of the sample will be composed of individuals who have been randomly selected from an e-mail list; questions, or a link with the questionnaire, will be e-mailed to the selected sample briefly explaining the research and the process of random selection. A portion of data will be gathered from online services such as Facebook.

18. Will there be any deception (that is, not telling subjects exactly what is being tested)? YES ☐ NO ☑ (Provide justification for deception and explain how subjects are debriefed in Section 2 of the Project Information form)

19. Potential Risk Exposure (Check all that apply): No potential risks apply
☐ Physical ☐ Psychological ☑ Economic ☑ Legal ☑ Social ☑ Other, describe: _____________

20. Data Collection Instruments (Check all that apply)
   a. ☑ standardized tests
   b. ☑ questionnaire
   c. ☑ interview
   d. ☐ other (specify)

21. Recorded by (Check all that apply)
   a. ☑ written notes
   b. ☐ audio tape
   c. ☐ video tape/film
   d. ☑ photography
   e. ☐ classroom observation

22. Administered by (Check all that apply)
   a. ☑ in person (group setting)
   b. ☐ in person (individual)
   c. ☑ telephone
   d. ☑ electronic mail/website
   e. ☑ mail
   f. ☑ other (specify)

23. Findings used for (Check all that apply)
   a. ☑ publication
   b. ☇ evaluation
   c. ☑ needs assessment
   d. ☑ thesis/dissertation
   e. ☐ other (specify)

24. Are drugs or radioactive materials used in this study? YES ☐ NO ☑
   If yes, then list the drugs or radioactive materials used in Section 1 of the Project Information form and provide a detailed description of each, with justification for its use.

25. Are any medical devices or other equipment to be used in this study? YES ☐ NO ☑
   If yes, describe in detail the medical devices or equipment to be used in Section 2 of the Project Information Form.

26. Did you attach a copy of any questionnaire(s), survey instrument(s) and/or interview schedule(s) referred to in this protocol? YES ☑ NO ☐

27. Is a letter of permission for subject recruitment attached (if recruiting from an agency outside of CSUN)? YES ☑ NO ☐

28. SIGNATURES: Refer to page 1, General Instructions-letter D before signing.

Donna Stone PhD  3/28/2012  Tenee Hirakher Graduate  3-26-12
Signature of Faculty Advisor  Date  Student Investigator's Signature  Date
(Specify grad. or undergrad.)

CSUN Office of Research and Sponsored Projects
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, Revised

94
FOR SACPHS AND RESEARCH OFFICE USE ONLY

☑ Noted, exempt
☐ Approved, Minimal Risk
☐ Approved, Greater than Minimal Risk
☑ Approved, Expedited Review

Chair, SACPHS
Expedited Reviewer(s):

Date 5/8/12

date received
Appendix B

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP), Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Administrative Review for Human Research Studies Not Being Conducted by a UCLA Principal Investigator But Accessing UCLA Facilities, Patients or Personnel (Faculty, Staff, or Students)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE:
- Non-UCLA investigators involved in human research that seek to access any UCLA facilities, patients or personnel (faculty, staff or students) must complete this form and submit it to the UCLA IRB for a determination of whether proposed research involving human subjects falls within the UCLA IRB jurisdiction and/or whether UCLA is engaged in the research. Either case requires UCLA IRB review and approval or certification of exemption from IRB review.
- Submit one copy of the completed and signed form to the OHRPP by 1) mail or deliver to the OHRPP/IRB office at 11000 W. Sunset Boulevard, Suite 102, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694, or 2) fax to (310) 794-9565, or e-mail to irb@research.ucla.edu. You will be notified by e-mail of the results of this review.
- Call 310-825-7122 if you have any questions.

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<td>Educational Psychology</td>
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<td>310-691-0049</td>
<td><a href="mailto:trezamirakhhor@yahoo.com">trezamirakhhor@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330, Educational Psychology Department, # 3134</td>
<td>818-677-2049</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dana.stone@csun.edu">dana.stone@csun.edu</a></td>
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<td>Franz Hall, Powell Library, Moore Hall, and Ackerman Union</td>
<td>August 2012</td>
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Version 9-9-10
Provide a Brief Description of the Study:
The study is interested in investigating the effects of the process of acculturation and age of immigration on the self-esteem of Iranian-American immigrants.

Describe How UCLA Facilities, Patients, Employees Will Be Involved in the Study:
Students will be approached outside of classrooms and libraries and will be asked to fill out the questionnaire that consists of 51 questions.

Describe the Subject Population and the Recruitment and Consent of Subjects:
Participants will be Iranian immigrants between the ages of 18 to 35. Both males and females will be selected to participate in the study. All subjects will be asked to sign an adult consent form and will be provided with the Bill of Rights before they complete the questionnaire.

Include the Following Information About the PI’s Institution:
1. Has this study been reviewed and approved by a duly constituted IRB? □ Yes □ No Not yet approved. UCLA approval is required for CSUN’s IRB committee.
2. If yes, please provide the name of the Institution:
   a. What is the PI’s relationship to the institution? Marriage and Family Therapy Graduate student
   b. Please provide the following with this application, as appropriate. Check all that apply.
      □ Local IRB Approval □ Local IRB Protocol □ Local IRB Approved Consent Form (Not yet approved)
      □ Questionnaire, Survey or Interview Outline
3. If no, please provide in the space below the justification as to why local IRB approval was not received.
   Note: Without appropriate IRB approval it may not be possible to involve UCLA facilities and subjects.

Funding Source(s):
□ Federal Government
□ Other Gov. (e.g., State, local)
□ Industry
□ Other Private
□ PI Departmental Funds
□ Other:
Sponsor Name:

Review Type:
□ Exempt
Category: _______
□ Expedited Review
Category: _______
□ Full Committee*

* Will likely require additional approvals.

Principal Investigator’s Certification:
- I certify that the information provided in this application is complete and correct.
- I certify that I will follow my IRB Approved Protocol.
- I accept ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance of the project, and the protection of the rights and welfare of the human subjects who are directly or indirectly involved in this project.
- I will comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects in...
research.
- I will ensure that the personnel performing this study are qualified and adhere to the provisions of this IRB-certified protocol.
- I will not modify this protocol or any attached materials without first submitting an amendment to the previously approved protocol and receiving subsequent IRB approval as well as review at UCLA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treza Mirakhor</th>
<th>4/12/2012</th>
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<tr>
<td>Principal Investigator's Signature</td>
<td>Date</td>
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**UCLA Department or Clinic Head,** as appropriate: (Complete below or attach a letter of support)
- I am aware of the proposed research and the level of involvement with the departmental faculty, staff, students, and/or facilities.
- I agree that this researcher can access our clinic, personnel or patients as described in the proposal.

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<td>UCLA Department or Clinic Head Signature</td>
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**UCLA OHRPP Administrative Review Determination**

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<td>UCLA IRB review or certification of exemption from UCLA IRB review is</td>
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If full committee review was required at the PI's Institution or if there are any questions or concerns raised during the OHRPP administrative review, the UCLA OHRPP Director may also be required to review and approve this research. The OHRPP will arrange this process.

**UCLA OHRPP Director Review and Approval:**

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Appendix C

Online Participant Recruitment

Dear participant, you have been selected from an email list to partake in a research study to increase understanding the experiences of Iranian Immigrants acculturation and language acquisition. By clicking on the link below you will be directed to the Adult Consent Form which includes all necessary information about the project and a questionnaire. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you have any further questions about the study please contact the researcher, Treza Mirakhor at trezaresearch@yahoo.com

Thank you.
Appendix D

California State University, Northridge
Consent to Act as A Human Research Subject

The Effects of Acculturation on Self-Esteem Ratings of Iranian-American Immigrants

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand before deciding if you want to participate. A researcher listed below will be available to answer your questions.

RESEARCH TEAM
Researcher:
Name: Treza Mirakhor MFT Trainee
Department: Educational Psychology and Counseling
Telephone Number: 310-691-0049

Faculty Advisor:
Name and Title: Dana Stone PhD
Department: Educational Psychology and Counseling
18111 Nordhoff St.
Northridge, CA 91330-8265

PURPOSE OF STUDY
The purpose of this research study is to explore the effects of the acculturation process and experience on self-esteem of Iranian immigrants living in California.

SUBJECTS
Inclusion Requirements
You are eligible to participate in this study if you are at least 18 years of age but not older than 30 years of age and, you are a first generation Iranian American immigrant.

Exclusion Requirements
You are not eligible to participate in this study if you were either born in the United States or immigrated to the United States before the age of 6.

Time Commitment
This study will involve approximately 15 minutes of your time.
PROCEDURES

The following procedures will occur: Participants will be approached in classes and on campuses, as well as through online services such as facebook and will be asked to fill out a questionnaire. A paper-pencil questionnaire will be available to be filled out for participants approached in schools; an on-line version of the questionnaire will be available for those who are interested in volunteering in the study through on-line services. Questionnaires administered in schools are asked to be filled out as they are distributed and not allowed to be taken for later returns. There will be no formal instructions given to participants but they will be debriefed after completion of the questionnaire.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

This study involves no more than minimal risk. There are no known harms or discomforts associated with this study.

BENEFITS

Subject Benefits
You will not directly benefit from participation in this study.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION & COMPENSATION, COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT

Participants are allowed to withdraw from the experiment at any time. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. If you decide to withdraw from this study you should notify the research team immediately. The research team may also end your participation in this study if you do not follow instructions or if your safety and welfare are at risk.

Participants will not be paid nor are there any costs for participation in this research study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Subject Identifiable Data
All identifiable information that will be collected about you will be removed and replaced with a code. A list linking the code and your identifiable information will be kept separate from the research data.

Data Storage
All research data including any transcribed interviews will be stored electronically on a laptop computer that is password protected.

Data Access
The researcher and faculty advisor named on the first page of this form will have access to study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies you will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without your separate consent,
except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about you.

Data Retention
The researchers intend to keep the research data until analysis of the information is completed and research is published and/or presented and then it will be destroyed.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS
If you have any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the conduct of this research please contact the research team listed on the first page of this form.

If you are unable to reach a member of the research team listed on the first page of the form and have general questions, or you have concerns or complaints about the research study, research team, or questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact Research and Sponsored Projects, 18111 Nordhoff Street, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330-8232, or phone 818-677-2901.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION STATEMENT
You should not sign this form unless you have read it and been given a copy of it to keep. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with California State University, Northridge. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this consent form and have had a chance to ask any questions that you have about the study.

☐ I agree to participate in the study.
Appendix E

Questionnaire

The questions on this survey inquire about feelings of your personal self-confidence in regards to your experience of immigration and life adjustments in the United States. Please keep in mind that filling out the survey requires reflection on your personal past and your awareness of your present experiences.

3. Name of school attended or currently attending: __________________

4. Marital Status
   - Single
   - Married
   - In a relationship
   - Divorced/separated

5. Age: How old are you? ________

6. Gender: __________

7. Ethnicity: __________

8. Marital Status: ________

9. Educational level
   - AA
   - BA/BS
   - MA/MS
   - Some college education

10. How old were you when you immigrated? __________

11. How long have you been here? __________

12. Do you think it would be hard to immigrate to the United States as a child?
   - Not at all difficult
   - Somewhat difficult
   - Moderately difficult
   - Very difficult

13. Do you think it would be hard to immigrate to the United States as a teenager?
   - Not at all difficult
   - Somewhat difficult
   - Moderately difficult
   - Very difficult

14. Do you think it would be hard to immigrate to the United States as an adult?
   - Not at all difficult
   - Somewhat difficult
   - Moderately difficult
   - Very difficult

Language

15. I spoke English when I first came to the United States.
   - Not at all
   - Somewhat
   - Moderately
   - Mostly

16. When I came to the United States I was confident in my lingual abilities.
   - Not at all
   - Somewhat
   - Moderately
   - Mostly

17. I am currently confident in my lingual abilities now.
   - Not at all
   - Somewhat
   - Moderately
   - Mostly

18. When I came to the United States I thought I spoke English with a nonnative accent.
   - Not at all
   - Somewhat
   - Moderately
   - Mostly

19. I think I currently speak English with a nonnative accent.
   - Not at all
   - Somewhat
   - Moderately
   - Mostly
20. When I came to the United States my perception of my accent negatively affected my self-esteem.

   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly


   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

22. Does the perception of other Iranians about my accent affect my self-esteem?

   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

23. Does the perception of Americans about my accent strength affect my self-esteem?

   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

24. In what language do you usually think?
   Farsi  English

25. What language are you more likely to use when you communicate with your parents?
   Farsi  English

26. What language are you more likely to use when you communicate with your siblings?
   Farsi  English  Not applicable

27. What language are you more likely to use when you communicate with your spouse?
   Farsi  English  Not applicable

28. What language are you more likely to use when you communicate with your Iranian friends?
   Farsi  English

29. I enjoy speaking Farsi.

   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

30. I am as happy and confident about my lingual abilities as I was when I first came to the United States.

   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

**Acculturation**

31. How often do you watch Iranian TV or movies?

   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

32. How often do you listen to Iranian music?

   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

33. I enjoy American movies as much as Iranian movies.
Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

34. How often do you read and write in Farsi?
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

35. How often do you attend Iranian recreational events?
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

36. How often do you eat Iranian foods?
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

37. I have a hard time accepting American values.
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

38. I have a hard time accepting Iranian values.
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

39. I am as happy as when I was younger and adjusting to life in the United States.
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

40. As you adjust more to life in the United States, would you say socializing with English speaking people has become more enjoyable?
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

41. Do you think it is easier to get accustomed to life in a new country when you immigrate at a young age (7 years old or younger)?
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

42. I am able to do things as well as most other people. (I am able to speak English and live an American life as well as most immigrants).
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

**Personal/ Relationships**

43. Which ethnic group do you identify with?
   Iranian  American  Iranian-American

44. It is difficult for me to accept newly arrived Iranians as close personal friends.
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

45. It is difficult for me to accept Americans as close personal friends.
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

46. It is hard for me to make friends because I don’t feel like an American.
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly
47. The majority of my friends are Iranians.
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

**Self-efficacy**

48. When I came to the United States I felt that I was a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others, including Americans.
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

49. I feel more competent in my lingual abilities than when I first immigrated.
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

50. I currently feel more competent as a person than when I first immigrated to the United States.
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

51. I felt competent when I first started school in the United States.
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

52. I currently feel competent and successful in school.
   Not at all  Somewhat  Moderately  Mostly

**Self-esteem/ Self-confidence**

53. I think age at immigration affects self-esteem of immigrants.
   Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly agree

54. I felt that I was a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others when I first came to the U.S.?
   Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly agree

55. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others?
   Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly agree

56. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
   Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly agree

57. All in all I was inclined to feel that I’m a failure when I first came to the U.S.
   Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly agree

58. All in all I am inclined to feel that I’m a failure.
   Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly agree

59. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
   Strongly disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly agree

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60. On the whole I was satisfied with myself when I first came to the U.S.
   Strongly disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly agree

61. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
   Strongly disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly agree

62. On the whole I am satisfied with myself.
   Strongly disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly agree

63. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
   Strongly disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly agree

64. I certainly feel useless at times.
   Strongly disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly agree

65. At times I feel I am no good at all.
   Strongly disagree     Disagree     Agree     Strongly agree