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## Challenges faced by Latin American Immigrant Youth in Kentucky

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### Abstract

Out of all the immigrants, the Latino immigrants from the Central and South America constitute the largest group "The Utilization of Mixed Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment. There are approximately 39.9 million foreign-born individuals in the United States in the year 2010 and a majority of them come from Latin America, Asia and the Afro-Caribbean basin. Immigrant youth face a variety of challenges of which struggling to receive the necessary education primarily due to poverty and also have difficulty finding employment thereafter. The purpose of the study is to determine if there is an association between education levels and unemployment statuses among the Latin American immigrant youth in Kentucky. The data for education levels would be collected from selected college campuses in Kentucky. The data on unemployment levels would be obtained from the Kentucky Workforce Development Cabinet. The data would be analyzed using chi-square to determine if any significant association exists between the two chosen variables.

Challenges faced by Latin American Immigrant Youth in Kentucky

### **Introduction**

Latin American immigrant youth in America face a lot of challenges such as difficulty in getting education due to poverty and also seem to have trouble finding employment. According to a report "The Utilization of Mixed

Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment a majority of the Latin–American immigrant children perform poorly in schools and have high drop–out rates which ultimately seem to be associated with a resulting increase in drug usage and violence and also in the long run seem to have difficulty finding employment.

Besides having difficulty getting education and having employment, they also have difficulty accessing the preventative healthcare services, face a lot of stress associated with migration, discrimination, strained parent–child relationships, experience cultural and language barriers (Fry, 2003). It is reported that socio–economic status, parents having blue–collar jobs, strained relationship between parents and children, stress associated with immigration, culture and language barriers etc are considered to be factoring in to poor education and unemployment levels among the Latin American immigrant youth

"The Utilization of Mixed

Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment. The paper attempts to look at the association between education and unemployment among the Latin–American immigrant population in Kentucky.

### **Literature Review**

### **Education among Latin American Immigrant Youth**

In a recent report, the Hispanic immigrant youth were found to be less likely to complete high-school and were reported to have the highest dropout rates or were underrepresented in various advanced courses pertaining to science, mathematics and other educational programs" *The Utilization of Mixed*

*Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment .* Hispanics were less likely to complete high school and the dropout rates were specifically high among the 16–24 year old foreign born Latinos. Latino immigrant children were also more likely to attend schools that largely served low-income and minority students with few available resources. According to a report by Kohler & Lazarin (2007) when it came to higher education, only 24.7% of Hispanics aged 18–24 were enrolled in postsecondary educational institutions. Those that were enrolled were less likely to receive their bachelor's degree accounting to just 12 percent, when their black counterparts totaled to 17.7 percent and whites to 30.5 percent. Hispanics were reported to have higher chances of receiving financial aid, 63 percent of the Hispanic undergraduates received some form of financial aid but the aid for Latinos in higher education seemed to be less than that offered to the black and white students" *The Utilization of Mixed*

*Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment.*

However most of the Hispanic immigrants are unauthorized and so they cannot really claim the financial aid for their children even though they meet the eligibility criteria and conditions. In the year 2011, there were reportedly 11.1 million unauthorized immigrants living in America " *The Utilization of Mixed*

Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment. A history of illegal immigration and the related glitches seem to be an obstacle in investigating further in to the problem of less funds being allocated to the immigrant children. There are few studies and surveys that have been conducted that would enquire why these disparities exist despite the fact that Hispanics are more likely to receive the financial aid for education than the other races, yet they seem to be allocated with less funds that their black and white counterparts therefore leading to increased dropout numbers. There is little or no information on why disparities exist in the amount of funding that the government issues to the Hispanics, Blacks and Caucasians. It is surprising that currently there are few surveys and studies have been conducted to investigate the question of why there is a discrepancy and inequality even though the Hispanics are the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority in the Unites States today according to the U.S Census Bureau.

According to an interesting article by "The Utilization of Mixed Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment language is one of the educational barriers for the Latin American immigrant youth. Language barrier is a major hindrance for the Latin-American immigrant youth in getting the education. The Spanish speaking US-born Latin Americans seem to have difficulties overcoming the language barriers and only few districts and schools offer assistance for students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Hence a majority of the immigrant youth is left unable to comprehend

what is being taught and lack access to the basic courses that are a prerequisite to succeed in the school system. The administrators of the schools reported that they lacked funds needed to extend the ESOL curriculum and are unable to afford hiring certified teachers.

The American government should recognize the importance of the immigrant Hispanic students as the Latin–American immigrant population seems to be growing in the U.S. Having qualified teachers who are proficient in both English and Spanish will decrease the cultural and language barriers experienced by the immigrant Latin–American children in schools and help them understand better and there by decrease the dropout numbers" *The Utilization of Mixed Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment.*

Educational institutes should improve and promote the quality of education for the immigrant Latinos by incorporating rigorous academic coursework right from the beginning so as to reinforce the importance and value of education in them and decrease the dropout rates" *The Utilization of Mixed*

*Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment.* More research based information needs to be collected on effective instruction for the Latin–American immigrant population as they constitute a substantially diverse student population in terms of culture and language. Educational programs could be bilingual initially during the transitional phase to both teach the Hispanic children English while teaching essential fundamental content in Spanish until they become more familiar with and proficient in English.

### **Unemployment among Latin American Immigrant Youth**

Unemployment is another major challenge faced by the immigrant Latin American youth in the U.S. This ethnic group had an unemployment rate of 11.5 percent, reaching a peak of 13.1 percent in the year 2010" The Utilization of Mixed

Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment.

Only 58.9 percent of the Latin-American population aged 16 years and above seemed to be employed in the year 2011. An interesting observation is that the Latino-teens' participation was at a rate of 37.1 percent in the year 2007 but that had dropped substantially to 28.3 percent in the year 2011. This could mean that the number of Latino teens started going back to school and decline in the rates of their participation in the work force reflects them being in schools. And the labor force participation of the Latin American immigrant youth aged 20-24 reportedly increased from 71.1 percent in 2010 to 72 percent in 2011. Even with this the increase in the labor participation rates, there was an even larger increase in the proportion of the 20-24 year olds who remained in school. Those that remained in school accounted to 39 percent in the year 2011 as compared to the rate of 24.2 percent in the year 2007 " The Utilization of Mixed

Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment.

Yet the drop-out rates among the Hispanic youth still remains higher when compared to the youth of other ethnicities. The available literature does not provide much information on why the Latin American immigrant youth population still has the highest dropout rate when there is a decline in the rates of them joining the workforce.

Unemployment rates have been reportedly low among the Latin–American immigrant youth that had a Bachelor’s degree; it was 5.7 percent when compared to their White counterparts, which was 3.9 percent "The Utilization of Mixed

Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment. The rate of unemployment was 10.3 percent, higher among those individuals who had very few years of schooling or only have had a high–school degree. Those who received proper education were less likely to be unemployed. The foreign born Latino youth seemed to have great difficulty with employment than all the other ethnic groups including the native–born Latinos. Supplemental data shows that the states that had highest number of Latino residents like California, Texas, Florida had highest number of unemployed Latino youth. One hypothesis is that higher unemployment is due to lower rates of available jobs in a particular geographical area. However the available literature does not answer the questions of why large states like California, Texas which otherwise seem to grant employment opportunities fall short in providing employment for the Hispanic immigrant youth. Is it because of their lack of education, or communicative skills or cultural barriers?

The employed Latinos seem to be either self–employed accounting to up to 6.1 percent compared to 7.4 percent Whites" The Utilization of Mixed

Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment. And most of the employed Latinos were likely to be working for the private sector. The report by the United States Department of Labor

states that the Latinos were less likely to be working for the government. Latino employment saw growth in the years 2011, 2012 primarily in the retail trade and professional business industry boosting the employment rates from 58.3 percent in the year 2011 to 59.4 percent in the year 2012. The positions in the healthcare industry going to the Latinos in the year 2011 account to 10.9 percent only. Latinos primarily worked in the construction and manufacturing industries "The Utilization of Mixed

Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimated that the employment rates of the Hispanic immigrants in the construction industry will grow 2.9 percent annually by the year 2020.

The available literature has limited information on how the rehabilitation programs can be made accessible to the Latin-American immigrant youth. Programs such as the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) – Adult and Dislocated Worker program provides staff-assisted services to the participants and helps them find employment. The Latinos constituted more than 11 percent of the total 3 million participants, 77,000 of which began employment. Those that exited the program still remained unemployed. DOL's Job Corps, Wagner-Peyser, YouthBuild programs help more and more Latino immigrant youth with transition, especially focusing on those individuals with a history of poverty and prolonged unemployment. These programs provide career guidance services, testing, job referrals. The employed Latinos who have unethical work environments in high-risk, vulnerable



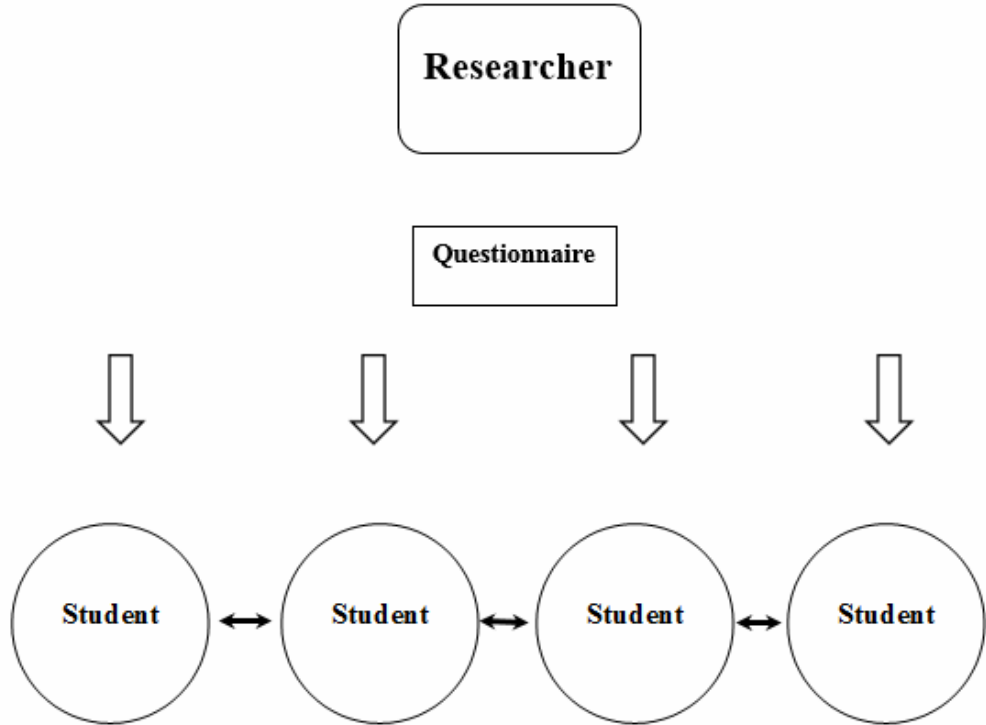
conditions are also helped by the Department's age and Hour Division. The Department of Homeland and Security also came to a mutual understanding with the illegal immigrant population stating that if they are willing to cooperate with the law enforcement and in the prosecution of crimes, nonimmigrant visa applications of those immigrants who also happened to be victims of crime will be certified.

Though there are several programs whose goals are to provide the needed help for the Latin American Immigrant Youth, there are several limitations to do so. Nation-wide campaigns such as "We can Help" which use Spanish and English bilingual publications and announcements should be made more accessible to those Hispanic groups who fall below the poverty line and cannot otherwise contact the helping agencies. There is not much information on how targeted these programs are towards the Latin American immigrant youth or on how effectively they are being propagated.

### **Design**

In an effort to propose a solution to the research questions, an amalgamation of experimental research and focus groups would likely be used. Both qualitative and quantitative research is essentially needed to answer the research questions. By doing so, the researcher would be attaining the ability to work on the factors that are being tested. The qualitative research method would make an attempt to investigate which factors seem to influence the Latin-American Immigrants from getting education and in finding employment through interviews. The researcher will gather the responses of the participants from the questionnaires that will contain

open and broad ended focus group questions. Intensive interviewing sampling methods with an ease of convenience would be employed in this study.



Number of students: 10

Number of selected Universities in Kentucky: 8

Age of the students: 18-23 years

Race of the students: Latin Americans

### **Hypothesis and research question statement**

The study aims to investigate if there is an association between education and unemployment status among the Latin-American

immigrant youth in Kentucky. The research question therefore is “Is there an association between education levels and unemployment status among the Latin–American immigrant youth in Kentucky?” Null Hypothesis – there is no association between education and unemployment status among the Latin–American immigrant youth in Kentucky. Alternative hypothesis – there is an association between education and unemployment status among the Latin–American immigrant youth in Kentucky.

## Methods

### Variables

The dependant variable is education among the Latin–American immigrant youth. The independent variable is the unemployment status. Potential intervening variables include poverty; stress associated with migration, discrimination, strained parent–child relationships, experience cultural and language barriers, socioeconomic status. The findings in an article

"The Utilization of Mixed

Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment one fourth of the Latin American adolescents experience high levels of acculturative stress. Stress associated with migration and adapting to the lifestyle in America plays a major role in the lives of Latin American immigrant youth. Another article by "The Utilization of Mixed Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment low levels of family cohesion, increased parent–child acculturation conflicts high significant psychological effects on the Latin American adolescent youth. According to "The Utilization of Mixed

Methods To Study Consensus Building in Dual Diagnosis Treatment socioeconomic status is a major deterrent to dropping out among the Latin–American whites. All the intervening variables contribute to the challenges faced by the Latin American immigrant youth.

Demographic variables will include age, gender, knowledge of language, location.

### **Sampling**

The type of sampling that would be used is convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is the easiest form of non–probability sampling that involves the selection of readily accessible individuals for a study because of them being easily accessible. The participants will be carefully chosen from the target institutions and will be requested to sign the assent forms. The number of participants will be around 10 from each of the selected eight universities and the participants will be requested to mark the university they are from to ensure there is diversity among the academic conditions and environment. The preferred ages of the participants would be 18 through 23 years.

### **Ethics**

The research proposal would be submitted to IRB and to the school board for approval. The procedure would be explained to the students before the beginning of the study. The students will be told that this is a survey and involves discussion and participation of the students. The students will be given the questionnaires and they will be asked to fill in the questionnaires individually. Then they will be

engaged in a discussion that would involve the same questions. The purpose of the discussion will be to engage and involve all the students and to know what opinions, experiences and viewpoints the students might had or have. To ensure confidentiality, the names of the students will be removed prior to data entry from the interviews. No harm or suffering is anticipated. Students will be informed that confidentiality would be maintained throughout the study and after the completion of the study. Once the study is completed, the collected information would be discarded in a proper manner. There will be no violation of any privacy laws that might be otherwise be compromised if the students are questioned through emails.

### **Protocol**

The researcher will collect the data from the gathered college students. They will be approached by the researcher in the lecture halls and galleries and would be explained the purpose of the study. And then all the students will be given the questionnaires to be filled in and later the students will be divided into smaller groups and will be led by the research team to join in a discussion. . The respondents will be interviewed after they have filled in the questionnaire. They will be asked questions related to them being able to have access to receiving education and in seeking employment. All of their responses and conversations with the researcher will be audio and video recorded for the researcher to study and analyze their responses at a later time.

The first factor would be difficulties in obtaining education. The college students will be divided into groups and to create a more open and

friendly relationship and social ambience, the students will be asked to converse with one another. The researcher would facilitate and direct the course of their conversation and guide the flow of questions and responses. The questions would include asking the students if their financial situation dissuade them from continuing education. If the financial aid they are entitled to is not being received or if is insufficient. The students will be asked to tell what their fears are and what difficulties they face in schools on a daily basis being a Latin-American immigrant.

The researcher or the facilitator would complement the participation and on them being responsive, which would encourage the students to voice out their opinions and thoughts without any inhibitions. The suggested proposals of the students on what the educational institutes should do to improve and promote the quality of education for the immigrant Latinos will be gathered. The students are to be asked if by incorporating rigorous academic coursework right from the beginning, the importance and value of education in them would be reinforced and would it prevent them from dropping out of school. Their responses on the need to establish effective instruction for the Latin-American immigrant population will be recorded, as they constitute a substantially diverse student population in terms of culture and language in the U.S. The participants will be asked if educational programs being bilingual initially during the transitional phase to both teach the Hispanic children English language while teaching essential

fundamental content in Spanish until they become more familiar with and proficient in English will be helpful to them.

Then the students will be asked what they think are the reasons that the unemployment rate among the Latin American immigrants is higher in the U.S. They will be asked and encouraged to have a discussion, and voice their thoughts. They will be asked if they have a sibling, a family member or any person they know that is a Hispanic immigrant and if is or was unemployed at any point of time in their life. They would be asked to discuss what the situation was without revealing any names or the relationship. They would be asked if being a foreign born Latino youth would make them have difficulty with employment than the other ethnic groups including the native-born Latinos. The students would be asked to put out their thoughts on the relative association between the rate of unemployment and the years of schooling or having only a high-school degree. Using a scale, one through ten, the participants will be instructed to rate themselves if and where they believe that having adequate financial aid, academic support through bilingual teaching programs and therefore receiving proper education will decrease the chances of being unemployed. The responses will be recorded and would begin to be coded.

After the responses are coded, the college students will be instructed to participate in a focus group study and the researcher would ask the students to discuss how they would react if the variables involved such as poverty, financial aid, bilingual teaching programs at schools and colleges were manipulated and improved. With all the responses and answers recorded throughout the

discussion and the focus group questions, the challenges faced by the Latin–American immigrant youth in receiving proper education and in seeking employment will optimistically be recognized. Focus group questions would help correctly interpret the results of the participants and they will help the researcher gather information and answers that are beyond the framed questions. This would be repeated in all the participating eight universities in Kentucky.

On completion of the school visits, the researcher would go to the Kentucky Workforce Development Cabinet online data base to collect the employment and unemployment levels of the Latin–American immigrants.

### **Data Analysis**

The data will be gathered from the students in the universities located in Kentucky and also from the Kentucky Workforce Development Cabinet online data base. A descriptive statistics of the study participants will be calculated based on the factors such as age, gender, knowledge of English language, residential location. Then the mean, median, range, standard deviation and variability will be calculated will be calculated for their knowledge of English language among the participants. And their knowledge of English language will be divided into categories and the frequency for each category will be calculated. Other demographic variable also will be divided into applicable categories and frequencies for each category will be calculated. The difficulties in getting and pursuing education will be further classified in to three categories; no difficulties, moderately



difficult and very difficult. The frequency of each category will be calculated. A descriptive statistics of unemployment levels will be calculated including mean, median, range, standard deviation and variability. Difficulty to find employment will be categorized into three categories; no difficulties, moderately difficult and very difficult and frequencies for each category will be calculated. Then the Chi square test will be performed between these categories of education levels and unemployment status to see if there is an association between the two variables.

### **Instrumentation**

The data from the study participants will be obtained mainly by the researcher and the assistants. The questionnaires will be filled in by the students providing their demographic information such as their age, gender, knowledge of English language, residential area. Questionnaires would focus on identifying the factors that influence the education and employment levels among the Latin American immigrant youth. The interviews and discussions will be timed and scheduled according to the schedule and sessions of the university.

Questions such as the following will be on the questionnaire with options such as – Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree:

1. Language is a barrier to succeed and complete education for the Latin American immigrant students.
2. Getting a degree will enable the Latin American students find employment.

3. Socioeconomic status might be a hindrance to finishing school.

The discussion afterward will involve focus group questions related to the questions asked on the questionnaires. In this section, the students will be asked to share what experiences they had or their family members had that are relevant to the questions asked in the questionnaire.

### **Description of the setting**

The study would take place in the eight selected college campuses in Kentucky. They are Eastern Kentucky University, Kentucky State University, [Morehead State University](#), [Murray State University](#), [Northern Kentucky University](#), [University of Kentucky](#), [University of Louisville](#), Western Kentucky University. The questionnaires will be administered to the students and the students will be asked to answer the questions accordingly.

### **Participants**

The number of participants will be ten undergraduate college students, both male and female. The students selected will be limited to the Latin American group of immigrants and will be from eight selected universities within Kentucky. The students will be aged between 18 through 23 years.

### **Study limitations**

The collection of data is through convenience sampling, so the sample might not be a true representation of the study population. The selected sample size is a total of eighty students, ten from the

eight selected universities across Kentucky. Therefore the selected sample population might be small and the results cannot be generalized to the entire Latin American immigrant youth in Kentucky. The geographical location also might be a limitation for the study as Latin Americans might be inhabiting other areas of the state and might be few in number in the selected eight universities. Other factors apart from education levels or unemployment status might also pose as challenges for the Latin American immigrant youth such as stress associated with migration, discrimination, strained parent-child relationships, experience cultural barriers and so on. However education levels and unemployment seem to be the major challenges faced by the Latin-American immigrant youth.

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