

**Hubert Jurjewicz**

## **THE PROBLEMS OF POLISH AND COLOMBIAN IMMIGRANTS EXPERIENCED DURING THE PROCESS OF THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL ADAPTATION TO THE HOST CULTURE IN USA**

### **PROBLEMY POLSKICH I KOLUMBIJSKICH EMIGRANTÓW DOŚWIADCZONYCH PODCZAS PROCESU ICH PSYCHOLOGICZNEGO I SPOŁECZNO-KULTUROWEGO DOSTOSOWANIA DO KULTURY W USA**

**Abstract.** The cultural aspects of the problems of immigrants in the new country have gained much attention of acculturation researchers in the recent decade. This study analyzes the psychological and social adaptation issues of immigrants to the United States. The study focused its analysis towards Polish and Colombian immigrants. The conceptual framework of the study was based on Berry's acculturation strategies and Ward's dimensions of acculturation. The study employed a qualitative research design. Primary data collection instrument of the study was semi-structured interviews. There were 136 research participants living in Diocese of Paterson, New Jersey with sixty eight from Polish origin and sixty eight from Colombian origin. The sampling method used was snowball sampling. The purpose was to investigate their problems from psychological perspectives as well as socio-cultural perspectives. The researcher analyzed the issues in the light of four acculturation strategies of assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. The researcher also analyzed the issues using the variables of psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation. For psychological adaptation, the variables used were coping styles, life changes, social support, and personality. For socio-cultural adaptation, the variables used were length of stay, language fluency, and interaction with local people. There were some significant patterns found in the study. Participants who immigrated by

choice were inclined towards assimilation, while those immigrated forcefully were inclined towards separation. Language proficiency in English was found as the biggest barrier in the acculturation process. The social support was positive if the cause of immigration was to join the family in the new country. It was negative if the cause of the immigration was better prospects. Families treated the immigrants as ignorant to the family and people also labeled them as unpatriotic. Time also plays an important role and the problems of acculturation reduce when the length of stay increases. Mixed trends were found in interaction with local people. Polish participants described their interactions as positive, while Colombian participants had concerns about it. Social policy implications of the research include measures in mental health and education.

**Streszczenie.** Kulturowe aspekty problemów imigrantów w nowym kraju zyskały wiele uwagi badaczy akulturacji w ostatnim dziesięcioleciu. Niniejsze badania analizują psychologiczne i społeczne problemy adaptacyjne imigrantów w Stanach Zjednoczonych. Badania koncentrują się w swojej analizie na przykładzie polskich i kolumbijskich emigrantów. Ramy koncepcyjne badań były oparte na strategii i metodzie akulturacji *Berryego* i wymiarów akulturacji *Warda*. Badania miały wymiar projektu badawczego. Podstawowym narzędziem do zbierania danych z badania były pół-strukturyzowane wywiady. W badaniach uczestniczyło 136 ankietowanych żyjących na terenie diecezji Paterson, New Jersey. Badania zostały przeprowadzone w październiku 2014. Sześćdziesiąt osiem osób było polskiego pochodzenia i sześćdziesiąt osiem z pochodzenia kolumbijskiego. Sposób dobierania próbek wykorzystywany był metodą kuli śnieżnej. Celem było zbadanie ich problemów z perspektywy psychologicznej, jak i perspektyw społeczno-kulturowych. Badacz przeanalizował kwestie w świetle czterech strategii akulturacji: asymilacji, separacji, integracji i marginalizacji. Badacz przeanalizował również kwestie przy użyciu zmiennych i adaptacji psychologicznej, adaptacji społeczno-kulturowej. Adaptacji psychologicznej, zmienne użyte zostały style radzenia sobie, zmiany życia, wsparcie społeczne i osobowości. Adaptacji społeczno-kulturowej, zmienne wykorzystywane były długość pobytu, znajomość języka i interakcji z lokalnymi ludźmi. Zauważono kilka istotnych zależności w badaniu. Uczestnicy, którzy wyemigrowali z wyboru zmierzali w kierunku asymilacji, podczas gdy ci którzy nie wyemigrowali z własnej woli, zmierzali w kierunku separacji z nową kulturą. Znajomość języka angielskiego okazała się największym problemem w procesie akulturacji. Wsparcie społeczne było dodatnie kiedy przyczyną imigracji było przyłączyć się do rodziny w nowym kraju. Odbiór był negatywny, jeśli przyczyną imigracji były lepsze perspektywy. Poprzez akulturację lub asymilację z nową kulturą, część rodzin spo-

tykała się z odrzuceniem, ze swoich członków rodziny w krajach rodzimych. Dobre wejście w nową kulturę, było odbierane przez znajomych pozostających w kraju rodzinnym jako oznakę braku patriotyzmu z własnym krajem, szczególnie widoczne u Kolumbijskich emigrantów. Czas odgrywał również ważną rolę i problemy akulturacji zmniejszały się proporcjonalnie do długości pobytu w USA. Stwierdzono różne tendencje w socjalizowaniu się lokalnymi ludźmi. Polscy uczestnicy opisali interakcję z amerykańską kulturą i ludźmi urodzonymi tutaj jako pozytywną, a kolumbijscy uczestnicy mieli obawy co do tego i woleli pozostawać w grupach ludzi którzy wywodzili się z tej samej kultury (np. forma spędzania wolnego czasu tylko, lub przeważnie wśród hiszpańskojęzycznych przyjaciół lub rodziny). Skutki polityki społecznej badania obejmują środki metody i plan działania w zakresie zdrowia psychicznego i edukacji.

## Introduction

Acculturation has become an important area of study in the recent history. It refers to those changes that occur when people come in contact with culturally dissimilar people, social influences, and groups. These changes may happen due to any intercultural contact. However, the term acculturation is commonly used for those individuals who live in countries other than their countries of birth. These may include immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. In the study of acculturation, these people are assumed to be permanently settled in the new country<sup>1</sup>. Brisset et al. (2010) states that acculturation refers to the psychological and cultural changes that occur when different cultural groups come in contact with one another. They emphasize a distinction between socio-cultural adaptation and psychological adaptation. Socio-cultural adaptation relates to behavioral adaptation. It describes how successful an acculturating individual is in managing day to day life in the culture of the new country. Social learning paradigm explains the socio-cultural adaptation. Psychological adaptation relates to emotional and affective adaptation. It describes the feelings of satisfaction and well being with transitions. Stress and coping models can explain the psychological adap-

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<sup>1</sup> S. J. Schwartz et al., *Rethinking the concept of acculturation: Implications for theory and research*, „American Psychologist”, v. 65(4), 2010, doi:10.1037/a0019330.

tation. The key variables for studying psychological adaption are life changes, personality variables, and social support. They key variables for studying socio-cultural adaptation are cultural distance, language ability, cultural identity, and cultural knowledge<sup>2</sup>.

Schwartz et al. (2010) describes Berry's model of acculturation. Berry emphasized that migrating to a new country does not mean that an immigrant will discard values, belief systems, and practices of the country of origin. His model described two dimensions of culture. The first dimension is called heritage culture retention, and the second dimension receiving culture acquisition. These two dimensions generate four categories of acculturation. He named these categories as assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. Assimilation means discarding the heritage culture and adopting the receiving culture. Separation means retaining the heritage culture and discarding the receiving culture. Integration means retaining the heritage culture and adopting the receiving culture. Marginalization means discarding the heritage culture as well as receiving culture.

Another model that had a strong impact in acculturation research is Ward's model of acculturation. Ward proposed two dimensions of acculturation as psychological adjustment and socio-cultural adaptation. She created a distinction between these two dimensions. She emphasized that although the dimensions are interrelated, different factors explain these dimensions<sup>3</sup>. The conceptual framework of the current study is based on both the models of Berry and Ward.

Sam & Berry<sup>4</sup> state there is a difference between the process of acculturation and adaptation. The better adapted people are those who have integrated into new society. According to Berry's model of acculturation, integrated people are those who neither rejected the heritage culture nor discarded the receiving culture. Integrated

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<sup>2</sup> C. Brisset. Et al., *Psychological and sociocultural adaptation of university students in France: The case of Vietnamese international students*, "International Journal of Intercultural Relations", v. 34(4), 2010, doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2010.02.009.

<sup>3</sup> A.R. Gurung, *Multicultural Approaches to Health and Wellness in America*. ABC-CLIO, Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books?isbn=1440803501>.

<sup>4</sup> D.L. Sam, J.W. Berry, *Acculturation when individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds meet*, "Perspectives on Psychological Science", v. 5(4), 2010, doi:10.1177/1745691610373075.

people are better adopted than those who acculturate through assimilation, separation, or marginalization. Badea et al. (2011) argues that identification with the country of origin plays an important role in the determination of acculturation decisions. The dynamics of acculturation is such that there is a dominant group and an acculturating group. The dominant group has greater power and influence. The acculturating group undergoes various forms of adaptation.

Lu et al. (2011)<sup>5</sup> studied 214 Chinese immigrants migrated to Australia. They investigated predictors of acculturation strategy. These include language proficiency, work experience in the host country, education experience in the host country, and social support at the workplace. The findings showed that Chinese immigrants have a preference towards their home culture. However, proficiency of English language and social support systems were found conducive for acculturation. The study of acculturation process requires deep and diverse thinking. Chirkov<sup>6</sup> states these attributes are rare in the discourse of the acculturation for three reasons. First, the acculturation researchers employ positivistic and quantitative approach that is not suitable for comprehending this process. Second, researchers do not employ working models of culture. Third, the study of acculturation process requires analyzing critically obtained knowledge and achieved results. This study takes into consideration all these three aspects.

## 1. Immigration to the United States

Over the past 50 years, there has been a substantial increase in the immigrants in the United States. There were 40.4 million immigrants in U.S. in 2011, as compared to 9.7 million in 1960. These immigrants are classified as naturalized U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, and unauthorized immigrants. The immigrant population

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<sup>5</sup> Y. Lu, R. Samaratunge, C.E. Härtel, *Acculturation strategies among professional Chinese immigrants in the Australian workplace*, "Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources", v. 49(1), 2011, doi:10.1177/10384111110391709.

<sup>6</sup> V. Chirkov, *Critical psychology of acculturation: What do we study and how do we study it, when we investigate acculturation?*, "International Journal of Intercultural Relations", v. 33(2), 2009, doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2008.12.004.

that was 5.4 percent of the total population in 1960 increased to 13 percent of the U.S. population in 2011. Between 2000 and 2011, a 30 percent increase was witnessed in the flow of immigrants. Immigrants coming to U.S. have a diverse skill set. Sixty eight percent have a high school diploma. Eleven percent has a master or doctorate degree. There were 8.4 million undocumented persons in U.S. in 2000. As of 2011, the figure went up to 11.1 million. In 2011, 8.5 million legal permanent residents acquired the eligibility for naturalization. In 2012, the number of naturalized people was 757,434<sup>7</sup>. According to 2014 estimates, the net migration rate of U.S. is 2.45 migrants per 1,000 population. U.S. ranks 40 in the world in terms of net migration rate (CIA World Factbook, 2014)<sup>8</sup>.

The number of immigrants arrived from Poland pre-1980 period was 119,428. During the period 1980-1989, the number of Polish arrived was 96,380. During 1990-1999, the count of immigrants was 142,749. During the period 2000-2010, the number of immigrants stood at 111,473. Hence, there are variations in the flow of Polish immigrants in different periods. The share of Polish immigrants arrived in 2000 or later is 23.7% of the total immigrant population. The number of immigrants arrived from Colombia pre-1980 period was 113,147. During the period 1980-1989, the number of Colombians arrived was 121,961. During 1990-1999, the count of immigrants was 170,799. During the period 2000-2010, the number of immigrants stood at 242,441. There are variations in the flow of Colombian immigrants in different periods. The count has increased substantially in the period 2000-2010. The share of Colombian immigrants arrived in 2000 or later, is 37.4% of the total immigrant population<sup>9</sup>.

This study aims to analyze the problems related to the psychological and socio-cultural adaptation of Polish and Colombian immi-

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<sup>7</sup> A. Garcia, *The Facts on Immigration Today*. Center for American Progress, Retrieved from <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/report/2013/04/03/59040/the-facts-on-immigration-today-3>.

<sup>8</sup> CIA, *World Factbook. United States*. Central Intelligence Agency, Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>.

<sup>9</sup> S. A. Camarota, *Immigrants in the United States, 2010: A Profile of America's Foreign-Born Population*. The Center for Immigration Studies, Retrieved from <http://cis.org/2012-profile-of-americas-foreign-born-population>.

grants in U.S. The study explored the problems in the light of acculturation models of Berry and Ward. The study also explored these problems in the light of acculturation strategies. The researcher was interested in knowing the specific patterns of acculturation and adaptation employed by Polish and Colombian immigrants. The researcher used qualitative research techniques for analyzing the issues. The data collection instrument was semi structured interviews from Polish and Colombian immigrants in the U.S., living on the territory of Diocese of Paterson. The interview questions were designed to know the experiences of the process and problems of migration in United States. The analysis of the data resulted in themes related to migration experience of the research participants. The research focused on patterns of adaptation of Polish and Colombian immigration in the light of conceptual models of acculturation.

## **2. Research**

### **Method**

The researcher in this study interviewed a middle sample size. Hence, the aim of the study was not to generalize findings to the population of immigrants, migrated to U.S. The main objective of the study was to gain insight into the experiences of the interviewees as communicated by them. The grounded theory research design is appropriate for these situations where data is analyzed by means of individual interviews. Grounded theory approach is a method of qualitative research. The theory is appropriate for giving conceptual labels to the data, creating a theoretical model, and placing interpretations on the data (Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009)<sup>10</sup>.

### **Instrument of Data Collection**

The data collection instrument was semi-structured interviews.

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<sup>10</sup> Z.G. Kim, A. Eves, C. Scarles, *Building a model of local food consumption on trips and holidays: A grounded theory approach*, "International Journal of Hospitality Management", v. 28(3), 2009, doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2008.11.005.

The researcher selected this method of data collection, because the dynamics of acculturation are very complex, and it is through qualitative analysis, new insight and emerging themes can be explored. The researcher formulated ten interview questions so that the interaction with the interviewees can be made focused and standardized. The questions were related to experiences of migration and problems of adaptation.

### **Population and Sample**

The population of the study consisted of all Polish and Colombian immigrants settled in U.S. The research participants comprised of 136 people. Among them, 68 participants were Polish immigrants and 68 participants were Colombian immigrants. Within Polish and Colombian immigrants, 34 participants were male and 34 participants were female. The participants ranged from 28 years to 70 years of age. All participants had obtained at least masters degree from their country of origin. The work experience of the participants in the home country ranged from 4 years to 7 years. The work experience of the participants in the host country ranged from 5 years to 25 years.

### **Sampling Method**

The sampling method used for the study was non-random sampling. Within non-random sampling, the researcher used snowball sampling. In snowball sampling, data collection is initiated with the people, the researcher can locate. The researcher then asks initial participants to provide information about other members of the population whom they happen to know. This sampling method is useful in situations when the target population is difficult to locate such as migrant workers, homeless individuals, and undocumented immigrants<sup>11</sup>. The researcher was able to locate twenty Polish and twenty Colombian immigrant. The other participants were located through the contacts of these initial participants.

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<sup>11</sup> E. Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research*. Cengage Learning, Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books?isbn=0495812242>.



## **Reliability and Validity**

Reliability of the research refers to the consistency of the results. If the research is reliable, the research instrument will give the same result in repeated trials. Reliability types include inter-observer reliability, internal consistency reliability, and test-retest reliability. Validity defines the accuracy of the research instrument. If the research is valid, the research instrument will address its designed purpose. Validity types include construct validity, content validity, and criterion validity<sup>12</sup>. The researcher ensured reliability of the study through internal consistency reliability and test-retest reliability. The validity was ensured through content validity.

## **Confidentiality**

The researcher ensured complete confidentiality and privacy to the research participants. The confidentiality was maintained by codifying the responses and removing the actual names from the data of interviewees. All the data of the research was kept in a locked cabinet, and the researcher utilized the information only for the purpose of the research. Since the researcher used snowball sampling method, the initial participants were aware about other participants of the study. Hence, the researcher signed an undertaking with them that they would not disclose the names of the participants to anyone not involved in the research process.

## **Data Collection Method**

The interviews were conducted either through phone or video chat. The duration of the interview ranged from 50 minutes to 70 minutes. The interviewer used 10 planned interview questions as a guide during interview. The responses were codified and common patterns and major themes were developed.

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<sup>12</sup> D.P. Andrew, P.M. Pedersen, C.D. McEvoy, *Research methods and design in sport management. Human Kinetics*, Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books?isbn=073607385X>.

## **Results**

The analysis of the interviews resulted in 4 main themes that describe the process of socio-cultural and psychological adaptation of Polish and Colombian immigrants. The main themes were causes of immigration, Berry's four factor analysis, Psychological adjustment, and Socio-cultural adaptation.

### **Causes of Immigration**

The 136 research participants described different causes for immigrating to U.S. These include economic factors, family ties, perception of U.S., and political conditions of the home country. The participants who stated economic factors as their cause of immigration were of the opinion that they have better growth prospects in U.S. The economy of U.S. is strong and has the potential of sustaining severe pressures and tough conditions. Also, the country is leading in terms of technological advancement, knowledge society, and digital revolution. Many leading companies of the world have their headquarters in U.S. Hence, there are good opportunities of applying the skill set in the most advanced sectors of the world. The participants who stated family ties as their cause of migration were of the opinion that their families are their main priorities, and they prefer to live together at one place. Since their relatives are already settled in U.S., therefore they also opted for migration.

The participants who stated perception of U.S. as the cause of migration were of the opinion that U.S. is considered as the world power, and the think tanks of the U.S. lead the future directions of the world at the economic, political, and strategic level. Hence, they feel pride and privilege to have the U.S. citizenship and would like to associate themselves with the privileged community of the world. The participants who stated political conditions as the cause of immigration were of the opinion that U.S. has one of the best democracies in the world. The political system of the country is stable, and the country has true and functioning democracy. Poland is now a democratic country, but it was under the influence of communism and

Soviet Union up till 1989. It has improved its image from the communist country to a democratic country. However, influences of the communism have not completely vanished from the country. The democracy in Colombia has also faced several controversies. The former president Uribe served the country for two terms. However, when he intended to serve for another term, he was barred from seeking re-election. In August 2014, Manuel Santos assumed the office of the presidency. The participants opined that due to these political instabilities in the country, they opted to migrate to U.S.

### **Berry's four factor analysis**

Berry's model of acculturation defines four classifications of acculturation; Assimilation, Separation, Integration, and Marginalization. Out of 136 participants, none of the participants categorized them into marginalization. Seventy three participants stated assimilation, thirty eight participants stated integration, and twenty five participants stated separation as the acculturation process in their cases. The participants who stated assimilation as the strategy of acculturation were of the opinion that when a person enters the new country, it becomes very difficult for them to be associated with the culture and traditions of the home country. Participants said that when they entered U.S., they had an intense feeling of nostalgia. They missed their home country very much. Polish participants stated that were so used to speaking in Polish that they found a lot of difficulty in communicating in English. The food and cultural traditions were quite different. In the case of Colombia too, the majority of the population speak Spanish language. Hence, they faced a language barrier in the new country. Participants however opined that it was a temporary phase. With the passage of time, they assimilated into the culture of new country. They got used to of their traditions, language, culture, and food in such a way that they felt part of it. The assimilation process resulted in losing the memory of the culture of home country.

The participants who stated separation as their acculturation strategy were of the opinion that the country of birth can never be forgotten by a person. The place where a person is brought up

becomes the part of a person's permanent memory. Also, the people with whom a person lives for many years are so closed to one's heart that it becomes difficult to close your eyes from the past. Both Polish and Colombian participants in this group said that they would never allow them to forget the culture of their home countries. They will respect the laws, regulations, and procedures of the new country. However, within the ethical and legal limits, they will stick to the cultures and traditions of their home countries.

The people who stated integration as their acculturation strategy were of the opinion that wherever a person lives, it is always a new learning environment for him. Cultures and traditions of two countries are not always mutually exclusive. It is possible to embrace the cultures of both countries simultaneously. Hence, this group of participants was of the opinion that they will embrace the cultural realities of the U.S. However at the same time, they will keep retaining their cultural identities rooted in Polish and Colombian culture.

### **3. Adjustment to New Reality**

#### **Psychological Adjustment**

In psychological adjustment, participants were asked about their emotional and affective aspects. The questions are related to coping styles, life changes, social support, and personality. Most of the participants were of the opinion that their psychological well-being was greatly affected as a result of immigration. At the mental level, it resulted in a cultural shock. With the passage of time, its intensity reduced; however it was too painful initially. Participants were of the opinion that the personality of an individual has an important role in the assimilation process. It defines a person's unique adjustment to the environment. Some people have the innate abilities of adaptation. Hence, they quickly get adjusted to the new environment. However, if the nature of the person is not of being adaptive quickly, he faces difficulties in adjusting to the new environment. The other key determinant is the unique coping style of an individual. If a person is optimistic and has the characteristic of being happy in changing environment, he easily copes with the new environment.

On the other hand, if a person is resistant to change by nature, he takes a long time for adjustment.

The third key determinant is social support. The immigrants whose cause of immigration was family ties and united family experienced a strong social support, especially from their families. However, those immigrants who came to U.S. for better prospects or other reasons had mixed experiences towards the social support. Parents of some participants honored their decisions of immigration and supported their cause. However, parents of other participants did not like their decision of immigration. They stressed that looking after the family affairs and spending quality time with family are far more important than earning a little more money. They were blamed by their families and relatives of being too materialistic in their endeavors. Some participants told that they also faced the blame of being non-patriotic. People said that by leaving the country, they have opted to serve other country with their skill sets, and deprived the home country of their needed expertise. Participants complained that such people do not realize that they send valuable foreign exchange to the home country in terms of remittances to their families. Some participants also said that they are labeled as 'dual nationals' and the people say that they cannot be loyal to both countries simultaneously.

The fourth key determinant was life changes. Here participants said that they faced many life changes in their immigration. In U.S., the competition is very fierce and one has to compete with the best talents of the world to secure his position. A Polish participant said that the culture here is very straight forward as compared to the traditional European culture. The American society is a capitalist society in its entirety. One Polish participant who had witnessed both communist and the democratic period in the home country found the life in U.S. quite challenging.

### **Socio-Cultural Adaptation**

Socio-Cultural adaptation is related to learning culturally appropriate skills. The key variables in socio-cultural adaptation are length of stay in the new country, language fluency, and degree of interac-

tion with the nationals of new country. The work experience of the participants in the host country ranged from 5 years to 25 years. The length of stay of research participants in the new country was from 7 years to 30 years. The participants who had spent more than 10 years in the new country had fewer problems of socio-cultural adaptation than participants who had spent less than 10 years. It shows that time is an important factor in socio-cultural adaptation. If a person spends time in the new country, and builds the space to spend the adjustment duration, the chances are that the adaptation process will take place and result in a settled life of a person in the new country.

The official language in Poland is Polish, and Spanish is the official language in Colombia. Hence, the participants cited it as one of their most difficult problems in the new country. They not only needed to learn English as a second language, but also had to become proficient to excel in their workplaces. One participant opined that despite all the proficiencies acquired so far, it is never possible to express the feelings and emotions in the same way, one can express in his native language. The participants felt nostalgic and missed those days when they freely expressed them in their native languages. Another important factor in the socio-cultural adaptation is the degree of interaction with the nationals of new country. Polish participants stated that were comfortable in their interactions with the local people. They found them supportive and all-encompassing. However, Colombian participants said that they did not have good experience in interacting with the local people. They said that they found biasness in the local people towards foreign nationals. On one hand, they treated them as different people and preferred to interact with them with caution and restraint. On the other hand, due to recent economic downturn, they felt that foreign workers are not only reducing their employment opportunities, but also spoiling the job market by agreeing to be paid at lower wages than the local people.

Some participants stressed the role of social networking sites in the process of interactions. They felt that social media is very helpful in developing contacts. It enables them to build connections in the new country and know about the likes and dislikes of a person. It also helps them to stay in touch with their families at home. One partic-

ipant, however, is of the opinion that social media creates a virtual world and it can never replace the real world of face-to-face interactions. With so many friends and followers, one cannot spend enough time online with friends and followers. Hence social media contacts result in weak ties and not intimate relationships. Also, many organizations have blocked access to Facebook and Twitter during office hours. So, they get quite a small portion of their day time for surfing these sites. One participant praised the sharing features of social networking websites and said that whatever happens to him in U.S. and whatever place he visits, his family at home receives constant and quick updates from social media and he also gets instant feedbacks.

### **Discussion**

This study analyzed the problems related to psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation. The population of the study was Polish and Colombian immigrants. Hence, the two home countries in this study were Poland and Colombia and the new or host country was U.S. The study analyzed the acculturation models and acculturation strategies. The acculturation models used in this study were Berry's acculturation model of four acculturation strategies and Ward's model of two dimensions of culture.

In the Berry's model, the highest number of participants was inclined towards assimilation, next integration, and last separation. The researcher observed that participants inclined towards assimilation were those whose reason of migration was better prospects. The participants inclined towards separation were those whose reason of migration was family ties. The participants inclined towards integration were those who have higher capability of adaptation in their personality. Hence, it can be said that if the immigrants decide to migrate by choice, they tend to assimilate the receiving culture. If the immigrants are forced to migrate due to their families and relatives, they tend to separate with the receiving culture. Time plays an important role in the acculturation process. When a considerable time is spent in the new country, the adjustment problems reduce and person copes with the issues and problems of acculturation.

In the Ward models' psychological adjustment, it was found that personality plays an important role in the adaptation process. Coping styles also vary from person to person, and are an important determinant in successful psychological adaptation. Social support was found to be strong, when the immigrants joined their family as a result of the immigration. Social support was found negative, when the immigrants left their families as a result of the immigration. They were labeled as ignorant to the families as well as non-patriotic.

In the Ward's model socio-cultural adaptation, the key variables studied were length of stay, language fluency, and the degree of interaction. Language fluency came out to be the biggest barrier in socio-cultural adaptation for both Polish and Colombian participants. It was due to the fact that neither Poland nor Colombia has English as their official language. The length of stay was found to be strongly correlated with the socio-cultural adaptation. Participants were of the mixed opinion regarding interactions with local people. Polish people replied positively for these interactions; however Colombians had reservations about it.

#### **4. Social Policy Implications**

There are a number of social policy implications that emerge from this research. Due to the psychological and socio-cultural adaptation in acculturation process, immigrants find stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues. Public health professionals in the U.S. should raise these concerns at the relevant forums and find solutions that are in the best interest of all stakeholders. The United States is an attractive place of immigration for people across the globe. If the problems are not addressed, the foreign workforce with mental health issues may create problems for U.S. It is also a sign to the governments of Poland and Colombia to analyze the causes of immigration in their countries. If the reasons are family ties or better prospects, then governments can do little about it. A person who wants to join his family in another country will do so anyway, no matter what initiatives the governments of the home country take. However if the reasons are less conducive environment in the home country or the political instability, then it becomes the



responsibility of the governments to provide an enabling environment to their citizens. If a person migrates to another country, because he thinks that his talents will not be fully appreciated in the home country, then it is something that needs the attention of the respective governments.

Another implication is for the Polish and Colombian immigrants to rethink their decision of immigration. Also, the people who are planning to immigrate must do so after a thorough and careful analysis. In today's world, every country has its own issues and problems. U.S. is no exception. The employment opportunities are not enough to meet the demands of even local workforce. The foreigners never get the same environment as they get in their home country. Also, now countries are taking strict measures towards foreign workforce due to the threats of terrorism and extremism. Hence, a foreigner has to go through a strict scrutiny process when he travels to the new country. So, if the skills can be applied and used in the home country, it is advisable to reconsider the option of migration.

Another implication is related to language proficiency. Both Polish and Colombian participants cited language barrier as the most difficult problem in the U.S. Poland uses Polish and Colombia uses Spanish as the official language. Hence, English proficiency is lacking among the Polish and Colombians. To assist immigrants in this regard, English learning institutes specific to Polish and Colombian immigrants must be established in U.S. Also, a minimum score of English language must be set. If a Polish or a Colombian immigrant falls below this score, his immigration request should be reconsidered.

The immigration is a phenomenon around the world that occurs by choice as well as forcefully. Irrespective of the reason of immigration, it is the inner thirst of a human to improve his quality of life that persuades him to take these decisions. If the situation deteriorates, the mental health of the person gets disturbed, as the world of his dreams suddenly falls down. To assist people to accomplish their goals and dreams, it is the responsibility of all stakeholders to make the process of immigration as smooth as possible. The study of acculturation strategies and cultural adaptation dimensions help in pursuing this cause. Through the help of each other and understanding the dynamics of the issues, the world can be made a better place.

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