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Effect of Parental Seasonal Labor Migration on Children's Care and Educational Performance in Rural Nepal

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Abstract

This article focuses on the effect of parental migration on the care and educational performance of left-behind children of migrant families. This ethnographic study was conducted among the Kham people in Kankri, Rukum East district of the western mid-hill region of rural Nepal. Information was collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and living in the community in their setting. Income from parental labor migration provided families with food, clothing, access to basic health services, and investment in their children's education. Left-behind children lacked parental care with proper guidance and emotional support, so they started taking alcohol, Charash (marijuana resin), and showing violent behavior. Children from migrant households have school absences and poorer educational performance as they are required to help with household work and lack guided learning at home. Children lose interest in studying, and those who miss upper-class admission because of seasonal migration drop out of school and join the migration. Parents select private or government schools for their children depending on remittance, quality of education, network availability, and future opportunities. Parents who had hardships during their migration are determined to educate their children in school, but they do not provide equal educational opportunities for boys and girls. Seasonal migrant workers anticipate that their children will engage in seasonal work during school breaks so that they can contribute to their schooling costs.

Keywords: labor migration, left-behind children, parents, educational performance, Nepal.

1. Introduction

Rural people in Nepal have a long history of migration (Gurung, 2011). Migration remains an important livelihood strategy for millions of food-insecure and poor people across Nepal (WFP & NDRI, 2008), and it has contributed to alleviating poverty in one way (Chen et al., 2009). Sherpa (2010) mentions that almost half the population of the far-western and mid-western development regions migrate seasonally every year in search of work because of poverty and food insecurity. The majority of migration remittances are spent on daily living expenses, loan

repayment, house renovation, asset purchase, and only then on education (IOM, 2019). Sherpa (2010) conducted a study in mid-western and far-western Nepal and finds that migrants from India send only 18% of their earnings as monetary remittances to their families, which are further divided into expenditures related to clothing, food, health, loan repayment, and education. In recent years, there has been growing concern about the effect of migration on the educational performance of left-behind school-age children at the destination (Chen et al., 2009).

The positive effect of remittances received from migrants is that families can invest in their children's education. However, the study also revealed that children must spend time on household chores and fill labor gaps by dropping out of school (Rai & Dangal, 2021). The effects of migration on childcare are conflicting because remittances and material support may contribute to improving access to better child health care as these families are better resourced for health, nutritional and educational indicators, but children from non-migrant families receive care from both parents (Rai & Dangal, 2021; Zhou et al., 2015). According to Islam et al. (2019), remittances from parental migration give families more purchasing power for food and health care, which may aid in child nutritional development but harm psychological development because parents do not provide direct care to their children. Furthermore, Sapkota (2020) adds that left-behind children from migrant families face a variety of negative consequences, including issues related to the caring deficit, psychological problems, health, education, violent behavior, physical abuse, and anti-social activities due to a lack of encouragement from others at home, but the positive aspects include poverty alleviation, education quality improvement, better lifestyle, and access to health care services.

Less is known about how migration and remittances affect the educational performance of left-behind children (Kunwar, 2022), and it is crucial to identify the effect of parental migration on children's education and protection in developing countries (Dunusingha, 2020). Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of migration on the care and educational performance of children from seasonal migrant families in rural Nepal. The ethnographic study is linked with the theoretical model proposed by McKenzie and Rapoport. This model identifies three different effects of migration and remittance that affect a household's investment in human capital, namely the remittance effect, the disruptive family effect, and immediate substitution. According to Khan (2016) and Mckenzie and Rapoport (2006), this theoretical framework asserts that remittances reduce poverty, allowing families to invest in their children's education and care *(remittance effect)*. The absence of parents, on the other hand, disturbs the educational performance of left-behind children *(disruptive family effect)* and increases the likelihood that children may choose to become migrants rather than complete education because of migratory parents and migrant networks *(immediate substitution)*. The sections below describe the research methods, results, and discussion and conclude the paper.

2. Research methods

2.1 *Study area*

The field study was conducted in the Gabang, Saipatung, Budhadeda, Khabang, and Janga villages of Bhume Rural Municipality in the Rukum East District of western Nepal, where families have experienced migration. The majority of the population is inhabited by the Kham Magar, an indigenous community. The families are heavily involved in seasonal and pastoral migration in the designated area and labor migration in India.
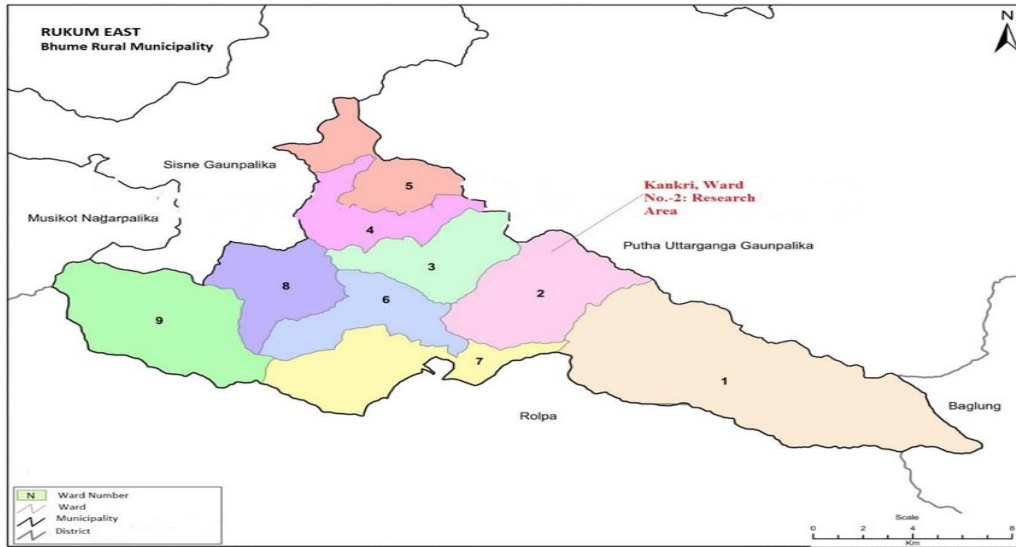
2.2 *Sampling*

Information was obtained from 35 people who were themselves experienced seasonal migrants. The field study was conducted in four different phases. Among them, 19 individuals were male (54%) and 16 were female (46%). The first phase of the field study for data collection occurred in April-May 2021, the second phase in August-September 2021, the third phase in March-April 2022, and the fourth and final phase in November 2022. During these periods, interviews and observations were conducted. After explaining the purpose of the study and obtaining consent from all participants, the participants were purposively chosen and interviewed. However, pseudonyms are used to protect and maintain the participants' privacy.

2.3 *Research design and tools*

This study applied a relational ethnographic qualitative research approach, which consisted of in-depth interviews, participant observation, and living with the community members in their natural environment to collect data. Relational ethnography focuses on the processes and configurations of interactions among agents, actors, or institutions rather than groups or places. Therefore, fieldwork demonstrates linkages, associations, and interactions among people, migration, educational performance, and the care of left-behind children. In-depth interviews were conducted with diverse migrants of different ages, educational backgrounds, and economic and social statuses. The interviewees included pastoral migrants, seasonal migrants to India, short-term job seekers in construction and industries, and the migrants' family members. The required interview guideline was prepared, and the interviews were expanded as necessary. Observations were conducted to determine how families care for their children and support their education. During the field trips and study, researchers learned about the family's background, daily life, seasonal migration reasons and condition of the left-behind children. The assistance of the gatekeeper from the local community made it easy to introduce the researcher to the villagers, so facilitating conversations, interviews, and translations with the locals.

2.4 *Data analysis and interpretation*

In-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and discussions were recorded using an audio recorder, while field observations and field visits were recorded in a notebook that was

organized and safely archived. After information gathering and field research were completed, all interviews, observation notes, and memos were translated and transcribed into the proper format. The data was then coded to assess and construct the themes. Based on the gathered data, a theoretical or thematic analysis was conducted on the best-represented participant narratives, and the outcome was validated using observation, key informant interviews, and field notes.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 *Migration trends and their impact on education and care of the left-behind children*

Jaquet et al. (2019) and Sapkota (2018) discuss several types of migration, such as internal, international, seasonal, and labor migration. Comparably, four types of migrations are found in the study area, such as international labor migration, seasonal labor migration to India, internal labor migration within the country, and pastoral migration within the specific local region with their cattle supported by a small portion of agricultural activities. Those who can pay for the cost of travel, documents, and agency services prefer migrating to Malaysia and Gulf countries from the Kankri. Short-term seasonal migration as a livelihood option is pursued by both male and female members of the family. Outmigration takes place based on the season of the year, which will contribute to the livelihoods of the families by earning cash and reducing food consumption in the family. The seasonal migration to India is mostly connected with labor work in the construction field, farming, marijuana plantations, and harvesting. Internal seasonal labor migrants are involved in road construction, house construction, masonry work, and hydroelectricity construction within the country. In pastoral migration, also known as transhumance migration, local people migrate to a specific place during a fixed time for cattle rearing and marijuana cultivation, with minimal agricultural activities such as corn, beans, potato, and wheat plantations.

Migration has monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits (Piché, 2013), which will impact the care and educational performance of left-behind children. The positive side of migration is that parents or older siblings of the family have the earning opportunity to provide food, clothing, and support their children and younger siblings for school education. Deepak Gharti (30 years old), who worked in India and Malaysia, explains that:

> *"Our agriculture production was not enough to feed our family, and there was no opportunity to earn cash income. I followed my brother-in-law to work in the hydroelectricity construction field and later migrated to Malaysia because I needed money for the care and education of my daughter. I could support my family for subsistence living, basic health expenses, and schooling costs."*

Migration has decreased the number of school students in the origin areas but increased in destination emerging towns. Intra-migration increased the number of students in lowland schools and decreased in the highland areas in Kankri. Ganesh Budha Magar (34 years old), an intra-village migrant and primary school teacher explain:

> *"In my village, families are migrating to the nearby town for the school education of their children. This has decreased the number of students in the primary school where I work as the school headmaster. I had meetings with parents and political leaders and organized a campaign to enroll and continue school. Our school also changed teaching methods and introduced a new class, Kindergarten, between early childhood development and grade one, which has helped us to mitigate further student dropouts."*

One of the positive outcomes of migration is that migrants have donated some amount of money to the school fund. This locally raised fund will help the school appoint one local teacher

from internal resources. Migrants also supported local government schools with sports equipment and blackboards. Bhangintha Budha (43 years old) a local resident, said that:

> *"I worked in India as a seasonal migrant in the marijuana plantations field, then went to Saudi Arabia for seven years. After my return, I could make my small contribution to the school by purchasing two blackboards and contributing cash to the local school's fund in my village. Two of my friends also donated money to the fund for local schools and clubs."*

Migration affects the health, physical and emotional care of the children left behind by migrant parents. Migration has contributed to food, clothing, and the school education of the children. Remittances have also helped families send children to schools in their small hometowns, district cities, and other major cities in the country. However, children lack parental care, discipline, emotional support, guidance, and a sober lifestyle. Dunusingha (2020) finds that left-behind children's protection is at risk in mother-migrant households because mothers are involved in several ways to improve children's educational achievement and protection, and their absence at home exposes children to greater physical and physiological risks. Children who have had to accompany their parents while they migrate seasonally suffer from illnesses such as pneumonia, colds, and diarrhoea as a result of the unsanitary conditions in which they live in the working areas, and it is difficult to take them to health centers. According to Birendra Budha Magar (43 years old), a health post employee:

> *"Children from migrant families are not receiving enough care and guidance from their parents, so children, especially teenage children, start smoking, consuming alcohol, taking Charash (marijuana resin), and showing violent behavior such as disobedience, quarrelling, and being involved in stealing."*

As a result of migration, families have been able to meet their basic needs for food, clothing, support for their children's education, and access to health care. Former students who migrated for employment also contributed to the school financially and in kind. On the other hand, left behind children lack parental care, discipline, guidance, and emotional support.

3.2 *Seasonal labor migration, school attendance, and educational performance*

Temporary and seasonal migrations are quite prominent in developing countries where it plays a crucial role in household survival, especially in rural areas (Shah, 2021). Lean seasons can occur as a result of agricultural downturns, and seasonal or temporary migration is an important coping strategy for a large number of poor rural households in developing countries (Shonchoy, 2015). Seasonal migrants have often been employed in seasonal jobs, such as planting, harvesting, and pruning, warehouses, restaurants, and construction sites (Plewa, 2013). Low-income families from the study area migrate seasonally to India, Nepali cities, and hillside pastoral lands for marijuana plantations, herb collections, construction work, and seasonal agricultural activities.

Children who migrate with their parents or remain in the source village without one or both parents, face hindrances to educational progress (Shah, 2021). Mckenzie and Rapoport (2006) mention that family migration depresses educational attainment affecting school attendance and completing fewer total years of schooling than children in non-migrant households because they need to work in the household work or are not valuing education due to future migration plans. Regarding school attendance, one school teacher (Nishan, 21 years), and a high school student (Aakash, 18 years), respectively say:

> *"Children of parental seasonal labor migrants to India have a higher absence rate in school than the children of intra-village migrant families. Intra-village migrants*

> *leave their children at home for school education while parents migrate to the pastoral land."*

> *"We had difficulty maintaining our agricultural activities and attending school while my elder brother was in Malaysia and my elder sister was working seasonally in India. As a result, our parents occasionally asked us to assist them with agricultural work or to look after cattle, which caused us to be absent from school."*

Seasonal migration has not only increased low school attendance but also led to the poor educational performance of the students in class and on the final examination. School students who missed the class as they joined their parents or whose parents are migrants have found it difficult to understand the lesson or have forgotten what they studied in the class. This has resulted in a loss of study interest and poor performance in the examination. A secondary school teacher (Bimal, 25 years) explains that:

> *"Many students who migrate to work seasonally or miss class because their parents migrated forget what they learned; they also lack parental supervision and a learning environment at home."*

Similarly, Sharma and Dangal (2019) mention that both children who dropped out of school and school-enrolled child laborers were found to be spending a large portion of their earnings on education, be it their own or that of their siblings. This can be explained by the fact that a majority of children who had dropped out of school still had younger siblings enrolled in school. Students who migrated seasonally to earn money for their families failed examinations, missed out on upper-class admission, and became international labor migrants. Especially for boys, labor migration serves as a backup plan in the event of failing the high school examination (Chiang et al., 2012). When we inquired about school dropout, a school dropped-out person (Shyam,25 years), shares his story:

> *"I followed my village friends to find a job as a laborer and worked for six months. I returned to my village for upper-class admission, but I missed the admission deadline. It was a waste of time to stay at home, so I decided to increase my age in the documents to acquire a passport and landed in Dubai."*

While earning from migration allows families to continue their children's education, there is also absenteeism and poor performance in the classroom. Rai and Dangal (2022) also mention that the majority of students who migrate for seasonal work drop out because they missed the school admission time, and some are more concerned with earning money than studying.

3.3 *Parental migration and choice of private and government schools*

When rural parents decide to migrate, they consider the impact of that decision on family members and whether to enroll their children in local urban public schools, rural public schools, or private schools (Wang et al., 2017). Working poor parents also have the option of sending their children to a low-cost budget private school in Nepali cities (Chen, 2012). Suppramaniam et al. (2019) find that choice of school is made on the environment of the school, the quality of education, future options for their children, and the income level of the parents. The remittance from the earnings of parental migration has played a significant role in deciding to enroll children in a public government school or private English medium school (profit-making school). Families in Kankri migrated to the lowland areas (known as Bang in local dialects) from the hillside to send children to better-resourced government schools. Those who migrated to the countries like Malaysia, Gulf countries, and Nepali cities and have stable incomes send their children to the private English medium school available in their locality. One of the former private English school teachers (Madan, 30 years) explained that:

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> *"Quickly generated remittance from seasonal migration and earnings from the Gulf Country's employment enabled families to finance the education of their children in private schools. Around 75% of the students enrolled in English medium private school where I was a teacher were children of intra-migrants, whose family members are involved in international migration."*

Likewise, family networks and friends' circles play a role in selecting schools for the children. Those who studied outside of their village suggest sending their children to comparatively better-resourced government schools in the other cities or getting them enrolled in English medium private schools available in the region. Families also dream of having their children learn English so that they can later get jobs in bigger cities. Families have a perception that those who speak better English and Nepali are smart and well educated as the Kham people speak their dialects and are not fluent in the Nepali language.

Farre et al. (2018) mention that migrant households are the most likely to switch to private schools from public schools. Migrant households want to make a strong foundation for their children's education and later they want their children to go to public schools when they reach grades eight to ten, by considering the cost and priority given to employment by the government of Nepal to those who studied at public schools. One of the government secondary school teachers (Ganesh, 34 years) says:

> *"Migrant families make choices about schools for their children based on their income and hope for the future employment of their children. Migrant households also consider the rising cost of their children's education for higher classes in school and switch them from public government schools to private English schools and back again."*

Thus, it was found that migrant parents choose the type of school for their children's education depending on their remittances, financial stability, and support from other migrated family members and switch schools to decrease the costs and take advantage of government-provided opportunities.

3.4 *Parent's attitudes towards migration and school education*

Parents play a vital role in educating their children and those who perceive positively that there can be future returns from education are more likely to send their children to school compared to those who want an immediate economic return (Sharma & Dangal, 2019). One important motivation for families migrating to urban areas among rural households having members abroad is the search for a better education for their children (Acharya & Leon-Gonzalez, 2019). Parents who migrated for employment have gone through various trials, toils, and difficulties because of their illiteracy and unskilled capacity. They have a greater realization of the value of education and a determination that they will educate their children. Shreeman Budha, a 60-year-old person who has been involved in seasonal migration for several years mentioned that:

> *"I realized the importance of education during my employment search and decided to send my children to school for education. My earnings made it possible to purchase land for agriculture and continue supporting the school education costs of four children."*

However, it is found that families do not give equal priority to the education of their children. Those intra-village migrants maintaining residence in two places left their daughters with their grandparents enrolling them at the village schools where quality and resources are poor, while their sons are enrolled in comparatively good schools in the small towns. It is also found that sons are enrolled in private English medium schools while daughters are enrolled in public government schools. Tandukar et al. (2015) find from their study in Rolpa, the neighboring district

of this present study location, that there was no direct gender discrimination by the school but gender discrimination as parents opted to send girls to public schools, which are far cheaper than private schools, and the evidence is that the number of girls was higher in public schools. Parents cannot still see the return on their investment in educating their daughters. One of the primary school teachers (Harka Budha, 43 years) mentions that:

> *"Apart from my teaching profession, I run small shops with my wife in a roadside town. My daughter lives with her grandparents and attends public schools in the village while my son attends a private English school."*

While the earnings of the migrant husband are not good, the wives in the family have to decide to either work extra or decide to migrate for seasonal work so that they can pay for their children's education. The wife of the seasonal migrant husband (Dipti Roka, 22 years old) says:

> *"My husband is in India and has a hearing problem. I am concerned about him because he transports cement on the construction site and may involve in an accident due to his hearing impairment. Since his earnings are not good, he asks me to send our only son to a public school, but I am determined to send him to a private English school in our small town so that he will have a good future. I run a small shop, do agricultural work, and also migrate seasonally to India, leaving my son in a relative's house."*

Parents who are supporting their children's education also expect that their older children will migrate for seasonal work to earn for themselves so that they can pay their school expenses and support their younger siblings. It is also the intention of the parents that they do not want to go into additional debt because of taking loans from local money lenders for their children's education costs. For example, Sharmila Roka (22 years old) a senior secondary female school student who has just returned from India said:

> *"During a family discussion about studies in my family, my parents stated that if I wanted to continue my education, I must earn it. I thought of taking this challenge so that my parents do not need to borrow money from local lenders. I went to Kullu in India and earned around rupees 40,000 which was enough to pay the due fees for grade twelve, purchase clothes for my parents, and have a small portion of savings for my new enrollment."*

Migrant parents have more awareness and determination to send their children for education, but they are not giving equal opportunity to both male and female children. Parents expect that if their children can work seasonally available jobs, then they will permit them to migrate so that they can support themselves for the cost of school education.

4. Conclusion

Parental migration and its effect on left-behind children's care and educational performance is a globally growing concern. This study aimed to explore how parental labor migration affects the care and educational performance of children left behind among migrant families in Kankri, Rukum East district of western Nepal. The remittance received from parental labor migration has helped families to provide food, clothing, access to health services, and invest in the education of their children. Adversely, children from migrant families lack parental care and discipline. They develop smoking and alcoholic behaviors and perform poorly in school because of low school attendance, improper learning environment at home, and lack of educational guidance. The migration of families is increasing the number of students in new emerging towns, while in remote areas, rural schools are facing a low number of students. Many students who accompany their parents on seasonal migration or engage in seasonal earning work perform poorly in class, lose interest in studying in favor of earning, and those students who miss the upper-class admission time become labor migrants. Likewise, migrant parents select private or

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government schools for their children based on their income, quality education and networks, and switch schools considering the future opportunities for their children. As the less educated parents suffered during their migration, they had the realization and determination to send their children to school for education. Parents who are involved in seasonal migration expect their children to be involved in seasonal work to earn money so that they can support the cost of their younger siblings and their studies.

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Affective Filter: Mexican English Learners in Chicago

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Abstract

Moving to a foreign country with a different language can be a challenging experience. Adapting in a foreign environment involves a cultural and thus linguistic effort. There are many factors that affect language learning in these situations, and one of them is the affective filter. The affective filter refers to the emotional factors that impact the language learning process. The following research shows the different challenges and perspectives towards English learning and cultural adaptation from three different participants. The participants are Mexican people of different ages and backgrounds that had recently move to Chicago and this leaded to their necessity of learning the English language. The research was carried out with a qualitative paradigm and a narrative inquiry. Data was collected through narrative interviews. It was found that the participants presented different opinions towards their processes of moving to an English speaking country and learning the language, however there were some patterns such as the impact on their identities and the feeling of safeness when using their L1.

Keywords: affective filter, identity, cross-cultural adaptation, language learning.

1. Introduction

Many people have the necessity to move from one place or country to another to find new academic, work, scientific, commercial or even social opportunities. When they move from one cultural context to another, they face new challenges in the whole process of adapting to a new culture. This adaptation brings with it the necessity to learn the host language, and what this might represent to immigrants. "They find themselves straddled between two worlds, the familiar milieu of the home culture and their new locus in the host society, and recognize that many of their previously held beliefs, taken-for-granted assumptions, and routinized behaviours no longer relevant or effectual" (Kim, 2012: 623).

Even though researchers such as Anderson (1994), Edwards (2009), Kim (2012), Krashen (1981), between others, have been working on the development of theories about cross-cultural adaptation, foreign language learning, and second language acquisition, they are a lot of different ideas and perceptions about how individuals adapt. In order for the process of adaptation to happen, communication is key, and to be able to communicate individuals need language. However, it has been proved that language learning process is a complex one, and that not only linguistic and cognitive factors affect it, but also affective factors may impact how the process is carried out and to what extent language is successfully learnt (Laine, 1988).

The following paper will explain and discuss the impact of the "affective filter" in second language learning and cultural adaptation. The topic will be approached specifically from the perspective of Mexican immigrants living in Chicago. A literature review with relevant concepts to the topic such as "affective filter", "identity", and "cross cultural adaptation" will be presented, as well as the methodology used for the aims of this research.

2. Literature review

Some concepts such as affective filter, identity and cross-cultural adaptation, which are relevant for this research and related to the affective filter in second language learning and acquisition will be discussed in the following part of the paper. Previous literature regarding these topics was revised and cited in this paper in order to obtain a wider perspective about it.

2.1 *Affective filter*

When it comes to learning or acquiring a language studying and explaining cognitive factors is considered vital to understand this process. However, there are other factors that are necessary to explore to have a wider perspective of everything that influences second language acquisition. Affective factors often prove to be decisive on the extent to which a language is acquired successfully.

The affective filter hypothesis was proposed by the linguist Stephen Krashen (1985). This theory suggests that language learners might be distracted by emotional factors in language learning process. It is possible that learners would not be able to absorb what they should because of feelings that they have towards the language, what the language represents, or even to what the language is attached to. The "filter theory", in summary, argues that "affective variables act to block input from the LAD (Language Acquisition Device); that filter strength can vary according to personality, the relationships between the acquirer and the source of input, and the acquisition situation; and further that the filter strength increases markedly at about puberty" (Krashen, 1981: 101-102). The term can actually be tracked back to Dulay and Burt (1977), in the form "socio-affective filter", later "affective filter", and then just "filter". The term has been shortened, but the essence of the concept is the same; "the part of the internal processing system that subconsciously screens incoming language based on what psychologists call "affect": the learner's motives, needs, attitudes, and emotional states" (Dulay et al., 1982: 46).

Krashen (1986) mentions motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety in the "affective filter hypothesis" as three categories of variables that play a role in second language acquisition. In essence, when feelings or emotions such as anxiety, fear, or embarrassment are elevated, it becomes difficult for language acquisition to occur. According to Krashen (1981), when language learners are anxious, input may not reach the acquisition part of the brain. Macintyre (1995) has concluded that, "language learning is a cognitive activity that relies on encoding, storage, and retrieval processes, and anxiety can interfere with each of these by creating a divided attention scenario for anxious students" (p. 96).

Further, when self-confidence and motivation are low, students may have more difficulty in learning a language. Brilliant (1995) found that immigrants who had negative emotions related to their moving to the United States progressed slower in their learning of English than their counterparts who had more positive feelings towards their move. The effect that affective filter has on learners can be potentialized by their social background. People who move to a foreign country and are forced to learn the language in order to survive can perceive the language learning process to be strongly attached with the culture mimicry, and thus develop

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negative emotions towards the change. Learning another language does not necessary means acquiring its culture, nor changing your identity (Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

2.2 *Identity*

The author Laine (1988) defines identity as "A person's feeling of sameness, integrity, unity at different times, places, and situations" (p. 11). A person's identity is a core part of what the person is and the role he/she plays in society. The identity of people is formed by external factors such as their culture, gender, ethnicity, social class, and social background in general; and internal factors such as their personality, thoughts, feelings, interests. The author Block (2007) argues that "identities are about negotiating new subject positions at the crossroads of past, present, and future. Individuals are shaped by their socio-histories but they also shape their socio-histories as life goes on" (p. 27). This mean that individuals are affected by their experiences, as well as the experiences affect individuals.

The concept of identity is strongly related to culture, since the further is considered part of the first one. For this reason, it is a crucial concept when talking about immigration. According to Block, when a learner is in a foreign country, a foreign-language mediated identity is developed as a survival tool. In other words, people can mediate and adopt different identities according to their social necessities.

The relation of identity with language learning is a topic which is still central concern to many scholars in the field of language education and applied linguistics. There is work, for example, on identity and pragmatics (Lo & Reyes, 2004; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009), identity and sociolinguistics (Joseph, 2004; Omoniyi & White, 2007; Edwards, 2009); and identity and discourse (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Wodak et al., 2009; Young, 2009). Identity is an extremely wide topic and its relevance cannot be ignored. Having an identity can give you a sense of belonging. The author Kurp (2021) mentions that "identity plays an important role in empowering individuals to exercise their rights and responsibilities fairly and equitably in a modern society, and it is imperative for social, economic and digital inclusion." For this reason, dealing with identity is one of the main issues of immigrants all over the world.

2.3 *Cross cultural adaptation*

Millions of people change home each year looking for better opportunities and crossing cultural boundaries. The Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) defines the word "immigrant" as "a person who has come to a different country in order to live there permanently." This permanency on the country brings as consequence a personal transformation for the individual, in which the challenge of adapting the original cultural perimeters towards a new reality is a big one.

The term "cross cultural adaptation" refers to "the process of internal change in individuals so as to be able to function in an unfamiliar culture" (Kim, 2012: 1). The author Anderson (1994) claims that "cross cultural adaptation is a case of a common process of environmental adaptation" (p. 293). It is a complex, dynamic, and evolutionary process an individual undergoes. Kim (2012) claims that it has multidimensional and multifaceted forces interacting simultaneously (p. 379). This means that it is a process that impacts almost every aspect of an individual's life, and it can be perceived as an all-encompassing phenomenon.

Through continuous interaction with the different aspects of the new cultural environment, our internal systems undergo a progression of changes as we integrate culturally acceptable concepts, attitudes, and actions. In the author's Kim (2012) words "we become fit to live in the company of others around us who share a similar image of reality and self" (p. 382). The author also talks about two important concepts that appear in the process of cross-cultural

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adaptation: acculturation and deculturation. Acculturation is defined as "the process of acquiring a new culture's symbols and practices by an individual whose prior cultural learning has taken place elsewhere" (Kim, 2012: 623). Deculturation, on the other hand, refers to "the process by which individuals at least temporarily suspend, or unlearn over time, some of the symbols and habitual practices of one's native culture and replace them with new symbols and practices of the host culture" (Kim, 2012: 623). Both of these processes are present when moving to another country and learning the language, because language is a core part of culture and interaction. Acculturation, however, is not a process in which new cultural elements are simply added to prior internal conditions. "As new learning accumulates, some deculturation also takes place" (Kim, 2012: 624). It is not only about adopting new cultural experience and knowledge, but is to learn the balance and mediate between the new culture and your previous culture. It is to be able to put in pause your cultural practices to be able to mimicry in the new ones. For this reason, it can be seen that both of the processes, acculturation and deculturation, interact in daily practices simultaneously and alternately with each other.

The existence of predicaments in which immigrants' groups and ethnic minorities find themselves as "victims" are caused because they have to deal with the contradictions between their internal identity and the external world. This kind of issue comes with the big issue of communication between cultures. Communication is the necessary tool without which adaptation cannot take place. Cross-cultural adaptation occurs as long as the individual remains in interaction with the host environment. When the processes of acculturation and deculturation are done successfully, individuals develop what is called to be a 'intercultural identity', which is "a psychological orientation toward self and others that is no longer clearly and rigidly defined by either the original cultural identity or the identity of the host culture" (Kim, 2012: 628). It is the optimal adaptation path.

3. Methodology

The methodology used for this research will be stated in the following part of the paper.

3.1 *Context and participants*

This research has 3 participants. They are Mexican people who recently moved to Chicago after living all their lives in Mexico. The first one is a Mexican 44 years old woman who needed to move to Unite States 8 months ago because of her husband's job. She is a stay-home mom with 3 children. She has studied English before but she has never had the necessity to really use it. The second participant is a 44 years old man who moved 8 months ago to Chicago because of a job opportunity. He is a chemical engineer who has English knowledge, however has never exercised his profession in a complete English environment before. The third participant is an 18 young adult who is studying college in the Indiana University. He has been living in the United States for 3 years now, because his family had to move due to his father work. He had studied English before, but he was not advanced in the language until he moved out of Mexico.

3.2 *Research questions*

The present study addressed the following research question:

- How do affective factors influence the English language learning and cultural adaptation processes of a group of Mexican migrants in Chicago?

3.3 *Qualitative approach*

Teherani et al. (2015) define qualitative research as "the systematic inquiry into social phenomena in natural settings. These phenomena can include, but are not limited to, how people experience aspects of their lives, how individuals and/or groups behave, how organizations function, and how interactions shape relationships." The aim of qualitative approach in research is for the researcher to examine the reason(s) why certain events occur, how do they occur, and what does the event(s) meant for the participants of the study. "We use qualitative research as an umbrella term to refer to several research strategies that share certain characteristics" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Strategies such as collecting, narrating, reflecting, and analyzing people, places, events, conversations and social phenomena that concern the study. These authors also state five main characteristics every qualitative research needs to be: naturalistic, descriptive, concerned with the process and not just the product, inductive, meaningful. Qualitative researchers study individuals' understanding of their social reality. The authors Fossey et al. (2002) mention that "qualitative research aims to address questions concerned with developing an understanding of the meaning and experience dimensions of humans' lives and social worlds". Qualitative research cares about participants' perceptions, and it provides the opportunity to obtain a more accurate picture of the events.

3.4 *Narrative inquiry*

According to Salkind (2010: 869) "Narrative research aims to explore and conceptualize human experience as it is represented in textual form." The emphasis is on storied experience. Its main purpose is to achieve an in-depth exploration of the meanings people assign to their experiences. Dowling (2015) argues in his book 'Ricoeur on time and narrative: An introduction to temps et reˊcit' that time is organized and experienced narratively; narratives bring order and meaning to the constantly changing reality. Also, narrative plays an important role on how we perceive ourselves. Salkind (2010) mentions that "we create stories of ourselves to connect our actions, mark our identity, and distinguish ourselves from others" (p. 869). He also mentions that "narrative research orients itself toward understanding human complexity, especially in those cases where the many variables that contribute to human life cannot be controlled" (Salkind, 2010: 870).

One of the most important advantages of narrative research is that it can produce data that includes participants' wishes, conflicts, goals, opinions, emotions, worldviews and morals, all of which are open to the gaze of the researcher. However, because of its subjective nature, it may lack reliability. This because people might change or create the stories according to the circumstances.

Regarding the procedure narrative research is usually done with small groups of participants to obtain rich and free-ranging discourse. It begins with a conceptual question which is planned to illuminate people's experience. "The narrative researcher creates "experience-near" questions related to the conceptual question that might be used to encourage participants to tell about their experiences" (Salkind, 2010: 871). Narrative research questions tend to focus on individual, developmental, and social processes that reflect how experience is constructed.

3.5 *Narrative interviews*

For the aim of this research, the inquiry tool used is one-to-one interviews to the participants through virtual sessions via the platform Zoom. A semi-structured interview guide was utilized to collect the data. Conceptual questions were previously prepared, however questions asked during the interviews were personalized in order to deepen the information acquired.

According to Francis (2018: 282) "the semi-structured interview guide allowed the researcher to let the participants tell their story and gave the participants the freedom to share whatever elements of their experience they chose to."

Prior to the interviews, the research question and the purpose of the study were discussed with the potential participants. When beginning the interview participants were asked to proportionate their names, ages, scholar grade, city of origin, and their currently living location. Also, they were asked if they preferred the interview to be in English or in Spanish.

4. Analysis and discussion of results

Analysis of narratives revealed four themes. Relevant excerpts of the text that emerged from their answers have been included. Participants were given an alias to protect their identities (participant 1, participant 2, and participant 3). After careful analysis of the interviews, the four themes that emerged were as follows:

1. Perspectives of adapting to a new culture;

2. Difficulties of learning and using the language;

3. Personal identity;

4. Expectations vs reality of living in USA.

4.1 *Perspectives of adapting to a new culture*

When adapting to a new culture people face situations that deviate from the familiar and internalized original cultural script (Kim, 2005). This can be perceived as a challenging experience. Participant 1 mentioned that for her, adapting was a really tedious process.

"The process was quite long…the visa documentation was difficult as well as finding and renting a house, and even having a car. You need to have a record or background in order to obtain all of those things, and we didn't have any. I felt overwhelmed of having many things to do to start having a life here, and in a different language it was harder to do them."[1]

As it can be observed, the participant felt this process as something arduous and demanding. This because of the nature of the process and its bureaucracy, but also because of the fact that she had to use the English language and get used to do procedures and other activities never done before by her in English almost overnight.

Further, participants 2 and 3 also share a similar opinions towards the process. Both of them mentioned that the challenges and the difficulty of the moving process exceeded their expectations.

"To be honest, it's been a very intensive, very different experience. I would say that even beyond that I expected…" (Participant 2).

"Moving to an English speaking country is a very difficult experience…you feel like you know what to expect but you really have no idea" (Participant 3).

Further participant 3 also added:

"My new culture is very interesting; I feel that I compare it to my first culture everyday".

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[1] Original in Spanish. Translation by author of this article.

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This action of comparing all the time the two cultures can be interpreted as a coping mechanism toward the extreme change he has just lived a few years ago. He has lived in a Mexican culture his complete life and from one day to another he needed to change or adapt all of his cultural practices to the new culture's ones. It is reasonable that he feels this necessity of comparing cultures, almost as a nostalgic reaction.

Another concept strongly related to culture is religion. Two of the participants showed concern about their religion practices being changed to another language.

"One of the most difficult things was the topic of religion. For me it is very important to live my faith in Spanish and to educate my children to pray in Spanish…it is difficult for children and teenagers to be interested in religion, and even more when it is in a different language" (Participant 1).[2]

"In the beginning I started going to the church in English, but I needed a change. So, I decided to go to mass in Spanish, because it's tough enough to have a strong faith and all religious matters in your heart and in your mind, in your own language. It was very challenging trying to do that in English" (Participant 2).

It is interesting to see how even though the questions made in the interview were not related with religion, participants automatically related the concept culture with the concept of religion. This is understandable because at the end of the day, religion is a fundamental way in which humans experience and understand the world, as it is culture. Their feelings and confidence towards the English language interfere on how they live their faith.

4.2 *Difficulties of learning and using the language*

One of the first concerns of the participants using the English language was their accent and pronunciation. However, there was a noticeable division in participants' opinions. While participant 1 felt insecure about her accent, participant 2 actually embraces his accent. This can be interpreted as their perspective towards American people's opinion about Mexicans. Participant 1 shared:

"In Spanish we use different muscles to pronounce words that the ones we use in English. Pronunciation is difficult and I have a very marked accent because my mouth is not used to move for English. Even though I know all the words I want to say, sometimes I do not say them well because I want to be fluent and people do not understand me".[3]

As the excerpt suggests, the participant feels worried about her pronunciation and accent. This can lead to her being worried about native speakers noticing she is Mexican. It can be assumed that she feels uncomfortable or not safe enough when using English, even though she has the content knowledge because she has learnt English before, she has not practiced enough with English speakers in order to feel confident with her pronunciation. Speaking is a crucial part of language learning and cultural adaptation. The author Goh (2007: 1) mentions that "besides the role that it plays in communication, speaking can also facilitate language acquisition and development."

On the other hand, participant 2 mentioned:

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[2] Original in Spanish. Translation by author of this article.

[3] Original in Spanish. Translation by author of this article.

"I've been feeling safe…all the community is very used to the Hispanic accent. We have very clear that we have a different accent and they realize that. And I have found a lot of people very open, very comprehensive about the difference, almost everyone is open to understand."

As observed in the excerpts, one of the participants feels judge about having a Mexican accent, while the other feels comfortable to have one. It is not a factor of confidence diminishment for participant 2, which can be one or the main reason why participant 1 chose to do the interview in Spanish, and participant 2 in English.

Regarding the amount of English that participants uses in a daily basis, participant 1 mentioned:

"After being a complete weekend speaking in Spanish in my house, on Monday my English is all rusty…then throughout the week it gets better and better, but then the cycle repeats and the next Monday my English is not that good again."[4]

This answer conducted to a follow up question which was 'How was the dynamic in her house regarding language use?'. This with the objective of inquiring how does language was approached in her personal life or inner circle, to see the extent of the importance of Spanish in her daily life. Participant 1 then answered:

"In my house we speak Spanish, because I am educating Mexican children."[5]

As it is noticeable this comment is closely related to cultural factors. Participant 1 seems to understand and actually perceive as integrated concepts language and culture. The authors Mazari and Derraz (2015: 353) suggest that "the formulation of cultural meanings is through the language of the community…language represents the most important means to acquire the culture and to share it with others". It can be understood that for participant 1 using Spanish in her house is like teaching the Mexican culture to her children. For her it is important that even though they are in a foreign country, her children are still in touch with their Mexican roots. This is certainly an expression of the affective filter towards the use of the language. She might feel that allowing English in her house and family dynamic is parallel to losing their native culture to the new one in which they are now.

On the other hand, participant 3 mentioned that he prefers using English as much as possible to increase his proficiency. However, he has mixed feelings with this because of the fact of completely leaving out his first language (Spanish).

"I feel that I am getting better and better as I speak more English, but I had noticed that my level of proficiency in Spanish decreases. I sometimes struggle to come up with the words in Spanish for an object, an action, or simply a phrase".

This is a common situation for immigrants. Their necessity of using their second language to complete activities to survive and interact in the foreign country shores them to stop using their first language. According to (Liao, 2021) many immigrants must adopt a new language in place of their first one to "succeed" in America. This can be perceived as an emotional grief that can affect the participant perception towards the home or the new culture.

Regarding their English learning process, I could notice that the participants expressed similar ideas. Participant 1 mentioned the following:

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[4] Original in Spanish. Translation by author of this article.

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"There are many things that even though I studied English in Mexico are very different here. Many of the everyday expressions are not used…textbook English is very different from the English used here, so I don't feel completely prepared with the English knowledge I have yet."[6]

This supports the idea that self-confidence, which is part of our identity and emotional component, is something that impacts participants' performance in a daily basis. For this reason, participants might feel the necessity of going back and ford with the use of their first language in order to boost their confidence and not feeling out of the place or as a "textbook speaker" all the time.

Participant 2 added:

"Whatever I have learnt in the past has obviously helped me all the time. But now I'm learning just by listening and interacting with my colleagues at job. I know what are the words that I should use and which ones are not because of the context".

As it can be observed participant 2 expresses that his learning process is more focused to discourse. Now that he is living in a completely English environment he has the opportunity to understand how words are used in a real context, and even the level of formality needed in a conversation. He also mentions this part of 'learning by listening'. Which can conclude that the participant is no longer having an explicit or direct language learning, but more indirect by being immerse in the context. This can lead to the idea of acquisition. The participant now is not learning, but rather acquiring more English language knowledge.

Participant 3 also mentioned that the process is more inductive than learning English in Mexico. He even uses the words "being forced", which can lead to assuming that is not that he wants to use English for everything, but he has to do it.

"It is very different to learn English and having to use it in order to be able to communicate, and accomplish tasks… it forces you to think of what you're saying and how you say it, and if the other person understood what you were trying to say."

4.3 *Personal identity*

Concerning the consequences that language can have in the participants' identities, some excerpts of the narratives showed that speaking English is a crucial factor for participants feeling of sameness. The three participants agree on the idea that speaking two languages is having two different personalities. Participant 1 argued:

"I miss using Spanish. I am a very sarcastic person who likes to do jokes, and when I am speaking in English sometimes I do not get the chance to do them. My personality is not actually reflected when I am speaking English…I feel more me when I am speaking Spanish, so if the person to which I am talking to speaks Spanish, I prefer to use it instead of English."[7]

Further participant 2 added:

"I'm a guy that is always trying to make jokes during the day. I like to be happy to make jokes and it's very difficult when you change your language… it's a fact that it has impacted my personality or at least the perception that I let the people have about me."

The idea of changing your personality or not getting to be yourself can be a tough one. For this reason, speakers seem to avoid the use of the English language whenever they have the

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[6] Original in Spanish. Translation by author of this article.

[7] Original in Spanish. Translation by author of this article.

opportunity. It is almost as if the least they use English, the more they can be themselves. This can be problematic because at the end of the day, they are living in an English environment. Not having the feeling of 'selfness' can jeopardize their learning and adaptation process.

4.4 *Expectations vs reality of living in USA*

The findings suggest that participants were positively and also negatively surprised regarding their expectations of this experience. It was notorious the contrast of opinions participants had about USA before and after moving. As in every country, Mexican people have their constructed stereotypes about the American community. Some of them were expressed by the participants, such as:

"I didn't realize what racism really was until I got here" (Participant 1).[8]

Participant 1 expresses being surprised of how strong the social phenomenon of racism is in USA. Latinos still face overt and subtle racism and discrimination every day, sometimes this is not conceivable to people until they live it in a daily basis. This obviously can lead to having negative feelings towards the host culture.

"I was shocked when I notice that people here are actually taught about world history and social studies in general. I used to think they weren't because TV shows display Americans uninterested or even ignorants about other things that are not their country" (Participant 1).[9]

It can be observed that the perception of the participant 1 towards the American community was not a positive one. This might be because of the influence of media or even inherited thoughts. This might become an issue because it is strongly related to the feeling that the English language can produce in the participant, being the English language completely attached to the American culture. Having negative feelings or ideas regarding English can be an obstacle in the learning process or language performance.

On the other hand, participant 2 commented:

"There's a lot of things that have changed because from my experiences. I had the idea that the family here in general was more like destructed, more like a completely fallen down concept. And now I can tell you that it is not the case... They really value the time that the parents stay with the kids, the time that the kids stay with sports, the respect for the law, all the respect for their culture, for the customs, for everything."

By changing his perspective of the new culture to a positive one, participant 2 seems to be more open to the adaptation process, thus everything that may come with it including language acquisition.

5. Conclusion

Adapting to new culture is a complex and non-linear process. Participants faced many challenges related to cultural practices and language. How they face these challenges and the consequences of them has a great impact on participants' emotional component. Perceptions and feelings towards the host culture and its language strongly affects the extent to which participants are willing to change or adapt., this includes their willingness toward learning the language. However, as discussed in this paper, participants learning attitude was a facilitator to achieve the

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[8] Original in Spanish. Translation by author of this article.

[9] Original in Spanish. Translation by author of this article.

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language goals. Some of them are still working on the improvement of their idea of the host culture, but still all of the participants noticed an improvement in their language skills after moving to the foreign country. It can be seen, by their language use and outcomes, that the ones that had a positive perspective or feeling about the host culture have had a more successful learning process. This research has demonstrated that affective factors have an impact on immigrants' adaptation processes and language performance. For further research, it would be good to have participants that have never learnt English before in order to have a clearer picture of the consequences of the affective filter in their learning process.

Acknowledgements

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A Quantitative Investigation of Factors Influencing Binge Drinking Behavior amongst Undergraduate University Students in Johannesburg, South Africa

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Abstract

The paper investigates factors influencing binge drinking behavior among university undergraduate students. Data is drawn from a quantitative survey conducted on undergraduate students' perceptions of peer pressure, students living arrangement, socio-economic status and binge drinking at a South African university. 330 students participated in the study by completing a paper-based survey. The study found a statistically significant correlation between factors of peer pressure, students staying off-campus, high socio-economic status and binge drinking. Female students engage in binge drinking more than male students. Students with friends who drink were more likely to engage in binge drinking than those with friends drinking less. Students living off campus were more likely to engage in binge drinking of alcohol than those staying on campus. Students with high socioeconomic status were more likely to engage in binge drinking than those with low socioeconomic status. The paper makes an empirical contribution to future studies to explore binge drinking behavior amongst university students.

Keywords: alcohol, binge drinking, university students, peer pressure, socioeconomic status.

1. Introduction

Alcohol consumption among university students is a growing trend with generally negative effects. According to Dlamini, Rugbeer, Naidoo, Metso and Moodley (2012), the consumption and abuse of alcohol is common in rural South African universities, and students are more likely to consume alcohol as a result of peer pressure. University students are most likely to be introduced to alcohol consumption during university orientation week (Kalideen, 2011). This suggests that students are less likely to consume alcohol while still under the supervision of their parents but begin drinking alcohol at university. Gresse, Steenkamp and Pietersen (2015) indicate that student living arrangements contribute to the consumption and abuse of alcohol, with students living without supervision tend to consume alcohol freely. Studies reporting on the negative effects of the consumption and abuse of alcohol on university students list a high rate of absenteeism, a high drop-out rate and poor academic performance as the consequences of such behavior (Betancourt & Herrera, 2006; Devos-Comby & Lange, 2008; Gresse, Steenkamp & Pietersen, 2015; Govender, Nel & Mogotsi, 2015). Although the consumption and abuse of alcohol has received considerable research attention in South Africa, binge drinking among university students and the factors leading students to drink excessively is an under-studied area. Studies on alcohol abuse by students tend to contradict one another: for instance, while Tayob and Van de

Heever (2014) report that students do not drink excessively but do nevertheless consume alcohol, Kwabena and Ramagoma (2013) and Young and Klerk (2008) argue that university students do in fact abuse alcohol and do so for numerous reasons, including stress relief and peer pressure. The purpose of the study was to explore binge drinking among university undergraduate students and the factors influencing such a behavior. Using a quantitative research approach, the study intended to provide a response to the following research question: What are the factors influencing undergraduate students to engage in binge drinking of alcohol?

2. Defining binge drinking

Binge drinking receives considerable research attention in the north but is under-studied in the context of South African universities, even though the consumption and abuse of alcohol among university students is known to be prevalent in South Africa (Kwabena & Ramagoma, 2013; Mogotsi, Nel, Basson & Tebele, 2014). The definition and measurement of binge drinking provide an important foundation for the discussion to follow. On the basis of a study conducted in the USA by Weitzman, Nelson and Wechsler (2003), binge drinking is measured as the consumption of more than five alcoholic beverages for men and four or more for women in one sitting. Binge drinking in South Africa is likewise measured by the number of alcoholic drinks consumed in one sitting, generally accepted as four or more (Betancourt & Herrera, 2006; Phillip & Steyl, 2009). In general, men are reported to abuse alcohol to a greater extent than women. Some studies indicate that peer pressure is among the causes of binge drinking, because students drink alcohol to have fun with friends (Kwabena & Ramagoma, 2013). However, binge drinking has serious negative effects on students, including putting them at greater risk of contracting STIs and HIV, poor academic performance and absenteeism (Phillip & Steyl, 2009). For the purposes of the study binge drinking was measured as the consumption of four or more alcoholic beverages in one sitting.

3. Literature review: Factors influencing binge drinking

3.1 *Peer pressure and binge drinking*

Peer pressure is at the core of alcohol consumption and binge drinking by university students. Yunus, Mushtaq and Qaiser (2012) define peer pressure as an influence on how one behaves and thinks in a particular space. This is associated with individuals conforming to certain ways of a particular group or individuals, with those who do not conform being seen as outcasts. Binge drinking among students is influenced by peer pressure, as students consume alcohol under the guise of having fun with friends (Robinson, Jones, Christiansen & Field, 2014). Gou, Li, Owen, Wang and Duncan (2015) argue that peer pressure takes multiple forms; for instance, direct influence is achieved through the friendly gesture of buying alcohol for friends. Similarly, South African studies show peer pressure to be one of the main contributors to binge drinking by university students (Themane, 2014; Mogotsi, 2011). University students are influenced by their peers to engage in binge drinking during social activities such as parties; as Kalideen (2011) points out, students are introduced to the drinking culture during university orientation. Thus, students who have friends who binge drink are more likely to engage in binge drinking themselves.

3.2 *Students' living arrangements and binge drinking*

University students make use of a variety of living arrangements, some of which have strict rules governing alcohol consumption. Studies have indicated that there is a relationship between students' living arrangements and binge drinking, with Cross, Zimmerman and O'Grady (2009) arguing that students residing on campus are more likely to binge drink than those staying

off campus. Although student residences on campus have strict rules regarding alcohol consumption, students living there do nevertheless drink alcohol. Lorant, Nicaise, Soto and d'Hoore (2013) indicate that the relationship between where students live, and binge drinking may derive from the influence students have on one another. Kwabena and Ramagoma (2013) make an observation that students staying off campus engage in binge drinking as the result of the influence by their peers. Students living arrangement therefore has an impact on their engagement in binge drinking behavior.

3.3 *Socioeconomic status and binge drinking*

There is known to be a relationship between socioeconomic status and student binge drinking. The study conducted by Richter, Leppin and Ghabainn (2006) indicates that students from affluent families are more likely to engage in binge drinking because they have the money to do so. Similarly, Humensky (2010) found socioeconomic status to influence binge drinking behaviour among university students. Studies in South Africa indicate that students who are less affluent are less likely to engage in alcohol consumption because they do not have enough money to purchase alcohol (Mogotsi, 2011). However, Wechsler, Seibring, Liu and Marilyn (2004) posit that socioeconomic status is not the only factor influencing binge drinking, and that access to cheap alcohol contributes to this phenomenon. In general, easy access to alcohol influences binge drinking among university students, irrespective of their socioeconomic status. The study aimed to understand the impact of socioeconomic status on undergraduate binge drinking among students at a South Africa university.

An exploration of the literature indicated that limited quantitative studies conducted to investigate the factors influencing binge drinking among undergraduate students at a South African university. Most of the studies conducted measured the possible factors influencing students' alcohol consumption based on the effects of the consumption of alcohol on students. The following hypotheses were formulated for testing:

- **Hypothesis 1**: Students staying on campus are more likely to engage in binge drinking than those staying off campus. The independent variable is student's place of residence, which was measured through looking at students staying on campus and those staying off campus in relation to binge drinking. The dependent variable is engagement in binge drinking.

- **Hypothesis 2**: Students from high family socioeconomic status are more likely to engage in binge drinking than those from low family socioeconomic status. The independent variable is socio-economic status, which was measured through looking at students' family economic status. The dependent variable is engagement in binge drinking.

- **Hypothesis 3**: Students with friends who drink a lot are more likely to engage in binge drinking than those with friends who do not drink a lot. The independent variable is peer pressure, which was measured through examining the influence of friends who drink a lot on other students who engaged in binge drinking. The dependent variable is engagement in binge drinking.

4. Research methodology

Using the quantitative research approach, the study explored the factors influencing binge drinking among undergraduate students. Employing the quantitative approach allowed the researcher to collect data from a large sample (n=330) in a short space of time (Sarantakos, 2005; Babbie, 2004). Multi-stage cluster sampling was used to select respondents for the study, and 330 students (first-, second- and third-year students) completed the self-administered survey, which

took the form of a paper-based survey consisting of biographical and closed-ended questions relating to the phenomenon under investigation.

Data was collected during undergraduate tutorial classes. In all, 330 students responded to the survey, and SPSS 24.0 was employed to analyse data. Chi-square was used to test the significant relationship between dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable was engagement in binge drinking, and independent variables were peer pressure, socioeconomic status and students' place of residence (either on or off campus). Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the Faculty of Humanities Ethics Committee.

4.1 *Description of the sample*

The profile of the sample provides an outline of the respondents who completed the survey. The variables listed below are binge drinking, peer pressure, socioeconomic status and student's place of residence. The study sample consisted of n=330 respondents (68.8% female and 31.2% male). Most students lived off campus (88.2%), with the minority living on campus (11.8%). Of the respondents, 50.91% engaged in binge drinking, and 49.70% did not. In terms of socioeconomic states, 35.15% were able to make ends meet, 33.64% were living adequately, 13.33% struggled to make ends meet, 12.42% were living comfortably and 2.42% were affluent. In response to being asked whether they had friends who drank a lot, 26.06% strongly agreed, 21.82% agreed, 21.21% neither agreed nor disagreed, 19.39% disagreed and 11.52% totally agreed.

5. Results

5.1 *Binge drinking among undergraduate students*

Binge drinking at South African universities is an under-studied phenomenon, particularly in terms of the possible factors leading students to consume more than four or five alcoholic drinks in one sitting. Although studies have explored the consumption and abuse of alcohol at universities, most of these have measured the level of alcohol abuse among students as reflected by the negative effects on students. In the study under review, binge drinking was investigated by asking students whether they consumed four or more alcoholic beverages in one sitting. The pie chart below illustrates that at 50.3%, slightly more students engaged in binge drinking, while 49.70% did not.
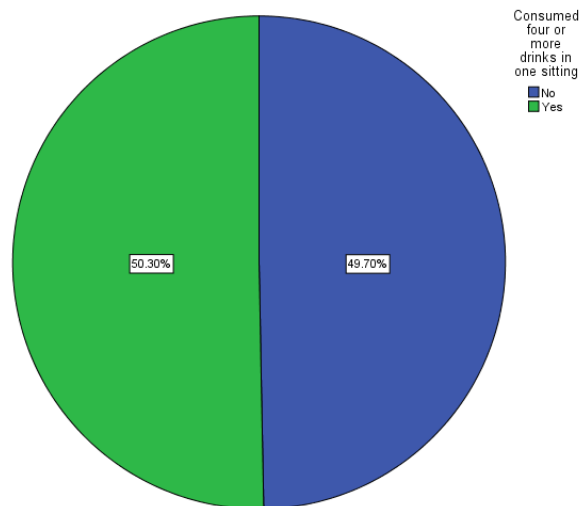

Figure 1. Binge drinking

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Binge drinking is the dependent variable, and was tested with the following independent variables identified from the literature as possible factors leading university students to engage in the consumption and abuse of alcohol: peer pressure, students' place of residence and socioeconomic status.

5.2 *Peer pressure and binge drinking among undergraduate students*

The chi-square test was employed to test the significant relationship between peer pressure and student engagement in binge drinking. The question aimed at understanding whether students engaged in binge drinking in response to the influence of friends who drank a lot. Respondents were asked whether their friends drink a lot, and provided with the following set of possible responses: 1=*Strongly disagree*, 2=*Disagree*, 3=*Neither disagree or agree*, 4=*Agree* and 5=*Strongly agree*. Binge drinking was measured by asking students whether they were in a habit of consuming four or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting, and they were provided with the following set of possible responses: 1=*Yes* and 2=*No*. Strongly disagree (5) and Disagree (4) were merged for reliability of tests.

Table 1. Cross tabulation between peer pressure and binge drinking

Friends drink a lot * Consumed four or more drinks in one sitting: Cross tabulation

			Consume four or more drinks in one sitting		
			No	Yes	Total
Friends drink a lot	Disagree or Strongly disagree	Count	101	49	150
		% within Friends drink a lot	67.3%	32.7%	100.0%
	Neither agree nor disagree	Count	28	42	70
		% within Friends drink a lot	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
	Agree	Count	26	46	72
		% within Friends drink a lot	36.1%	63.9%	100.0%
	Strongly agree	Count	9	29	38
		% within Friends drink a lot	23.7%	76.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	164	166	330
		% within Friends drink a lot	49.7%	50.3%	100.0%

The chi-square test was suitable for testing the relationship between ordinal and normal variables. The results show that university students engaged in binge drinking in response to the influence of peers who drank a lot of alcohol. A total of 76.3% of students stated that they engaged in binge drinking and strongly agreed that they had friends who drank a lot, while 23.7% did not engage in binge drinking, and stated that their friends did not consume a lot of alcohol. The results illustrate that students' engagement in binge drinking was influenced by having friends who drank a lot (peer pressure). The relationship between peer pressure and students' engagement in binge drinking is further illustrated below.

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Table 2. Chi-square test of the relationship between peer pressure and binge drinking

Chi-square tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	36.898[a]	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	37.918	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	33.448	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	330		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18.88.

The chi-square test above yields the results of testing the relationship between peer pressure and binge drinking. The p-value is 0.00, which is smaller than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis of students with friends who drink a lot are not likely to engage in binge drinking is **rejected**. The alternative hypothesis is **not rejected** because the results show a significant relationship between peer pressure and binge drinking behavior, because students who engaged in binge drinking reported having friends who drank a lot. Therefore, the undergraduate Sociology students who participated in the study engaged in binge drinking in response to the influence of peers who drank a lot.

5.3 *Students' place of residence and binge drinking*

The relationship between students' place of residence and binge drinking was tested using the chi-square test. The question focused on exploring the influence of students' living arrangements on binge drinking behavior, and respondents were given the following possible responses from which to select: 1=*On campus residence*, 2=*Off-campus shared accommodation*, 3=*At home with parents/guardians/family/other adults* and 4=*I live on my own/with spouse/with partner*. Engagement in binge drinking was tested through asking students whether they were in the habit of consuming four or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting. For reliability of the test, response 3=*at home with parents/guardians/family/other adults* and 4= *I live on my own either with spouse/partner* were merged.

Table 3. Cross tabulation between students' place of residence and binge drinking

Study residence (place of residence while studying) * Consuming four or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting: Cross tabulation					
			Consuming four or more drinks in one sitting		Total
			No	Yes	
Study residence (place of residence while studying)	University residence	Count	22	17	39
		% within Study residence	56.4%	43.6%	100.0%
	Off-campus shared accommodation (commune/flat/townhouse)	Count	89	79	168
		% within Study residence	53.0%	47.0%	100.0%
	At home (with parents/guardians/family/other adults) or I live on my own/with spouse/with partner	Count	53	70	123
		% within Study residence	43.1%	56.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	164	166	330
		% within Study residence	49.7%	50.3%	100.0%

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The cross tabulation illustrates that students staying off campus were more likely to engage in binge drinking (47.0%) compared with students living on campus (43.6%). Although students staying off campus in communes and so on engaged in binge drinking, students staying at home did so to a greater degree (56.9%). The results show that students' living arrangements influenced their binge drinking behaviour, as those staying off campus engaged in binge drinking more than those staying on campus. Thus, there is a relationship between students' engagement in binge drinking and their place of residence – specifically their living arrangements. Students staying at home and those living on their own were collapsed into a single category for the reliability of the test, as these were suitable for testing as one category.

Table 4. Chi-square test of students' place residence and engagement in binge drinking

Chi-square tests			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.574[a]	2	.167
Likelihood Ratio	3.583	2	.167
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.541	1	.060
N of Valid Cases	330		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5.
The minimum expected count is 19.38.

The results illustrate the relationship between students' place of residence and engagement in binge drinking. The p-value of the test is 0.167, which is greater than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis of students staying on campus not being likely to engage in binge drinking in comparison with those staying off campus is **not rejected**. The alternative hypothesis of students staying on campus being more likely to engage in binge drinking than those staying off campus is **rejected**. Thus, the results indicate that students staying off campus engage in binge drinking to a greater extent than those staying on campus. There is a significant relationship between students' place of residence and their engagement in binge drinking.

5.4 *Socioeconomic status and binge drinking*

The chi-square test was used to test the relationship between socioeconomic status and binge drinking. The study intended to investigate the influence of socioeconomic status on students' engagement in binge drinking. Respondents were given the following possible responses from which to select: 1=*Cannot or rarely provide the basics*, 2=*Struggling to make ends meet*, 3=*Just manage to make ends meet*, 4=*Living an adequate life*, 5=*Well-off or living a comfortable life* and 6=*Affluent*. Engagement in binge drinking was tested by asking students whether they were in the habit of consuming four or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting.

The cross tabulation illustrates the relationship between socioeconomic status and binge drinking. The results indicated that of the students living a comfortable or privileged life, 73.2% engaged in binge drinking compared with 40.7% of those barely able to make ends meet. Of the students living an affluent lifestyle, 62.5% engaged in binge drinking. Thus, students of high socioeconomic status were more likely to engage in binge drinking than those who were struggling and were of low socioeconomic status. This demonstrates that there is a relationship between socioeconomic status and binge drinking among university students. The responses; 1=*cannot or rarely provide for basic needs* and 2=*struggling to make ends meet* were collapsed into a single category for the reliability of the test.

Table 5. Cross tabulation of socioeconomic status and engagement in binge drinking

Socioeconomic category * Consuming four or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting: Cross tabulation					
			Consuming four or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting		
			No	Yes	Total
Socioeconomic category	Cannot or rarely provide for basic needs or Struggling to make ends meet	Count	32	22	54
		% within Socioeconomic category	59.3%	40.7%	100.0%
	Just manage to make ends meet	Count	64	52	116
		% within Socioeconomic category	55.2%	44.8%	100.0%
	Living an adequate life	Count	54	57	111
		% within Socioeconomic category	48.6%	51.4%	100.0%
	Living a comfortable or privileged life	Count	11	30	41
		% within Socioeconomic category	26.8%	73.2%	100.0%
	Affluent	Count	3	5	8
		% within Socioeconomic category	37.5%	62.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	164	166	330
		% within Socioeconomic category	49.7%	50.3%	100.0%

Table 6. Chi-square test of socioeconomic status and binge drinking

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.468[a]	4	.014
Likelihood Ratio	12.831	4	.012
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.760	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	330		

a. 2 cells (20.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.98.

The chi-square tests the relationship between socioeconomic status and students' engagement in binge drinking. The p-value is 0.014, which is smaller than 0.0, hence the null hypothesis that students of high socioeconomic status are not likely engage in binge drinking and that those of low socioeconomic status are is **rejected**. The alternative hypothesis is **not rejected**; therefore, students of high socioeconomic status are more likely to engage in binge drinking than those of low socioeconomic status.

6. Discussion

Alcohol consumption by students is prevalent at South African universities; Tayob and Van de Heever (2014) in fact argue that alcohol use by students is a major health concern. According to Kwabena and Ramagoma (2013), students consume alcohol to overcome depression, relieve stress, imitate role models and obtain relief from loneliness. Although studies have been conducted on alcohol consumption by students, the study reported on here indicates that students not only consume alcohol, but engage in binge drinking behaviour, understood for the purposes of the study as consumption of four or more alcoholic beverages in one sitting. The results indicate that students do indeed engage in binge drinking, and that factors giving rise to this behaviour include peer pressure, students' living arrangements, and socioeconomic status.

The study revealed a significant relationship between binge drinking and peer pressure. On the one hand, students with friends who drank a lot tended to engage in binge drinking themselves, while on the other hand, students with friends who did not drink a lot reported not engaging in binge drinking. Therefore, the study provided an indication that students' binge drinking is influenced by peer pressure through having friends who drink a lot. The results therefore bear out the established literature stating that peer pressure is one of the main factors leading students to drink alcohol (Kwabena & Ramagoma, 2013; Themane, 2014).

The study showed that there is a significant relationship between students' living arrangements and binge drinking, with students staying off campus engaging in binge drinking to a greater degree than those staying on campus. In this, the results contradict the literature indicating that students living on campus consume more alcohol than those living off campus (Kwabena & Ramagoma, 2013). This suggests that university residences could be taking precautions to limit alcohol consumption by students.

The study demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and student engagement in binge drinking. The established literature proposes that students consume alcohol because they have enough money to buy it (Richter, Leppin & Ghabainn, 2006; Humensky, 2010). The results of the study showed that indeed students of high socioeconomic status engaged in binge drinking to a greater extent than those who just managed to make ends meet. Although South African studies have shown that students struggling to make ends meet do abuse alcohol (Mogotsi, 2011), the study reported on suggested that students of high socioeconomic status engage in binge drinking to a greater degree than those of low socioeconomic status.

7. Conclusion

The study investigated factors leading to binge drinking among university students. The literature shows that alcohol consumption is prevalent among university students and results in poor academic performance and increased absenteeism. Peer pressure is the main factor giving rise to alcohol consumption among this group. Although the consumption of alcohol is known to be prevalent at South African universities, the study found that students engage in binge drinking behaviour, measured in this context by the number of alcoholic beverages students consume in one sitting. The results indicated that female students engaged in binge drinking to a greater degree than their male counterparts – in other words, female students were more likely than male students to consume four or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting. The factors encouraging binge drinking among students include peer pressure, students' living arrangements and socioeconomic status. University students engaged in binge drinking mainly as a result of having friends who drank alcohol (thus as a result of peer pressure). The study further revealed that students living off campus engaged in binge drinking to a greater extent than those staying on campus. Socioeconomic status influenced engagement in binge drinking, with students of high

socioeconomic status and with access to money engaging in binge drinking to a greater degree than those of low socioeconomic status. The study did not generalise with regard to binge drinking behaviour among university students but was intended to contribute to filling the knowledge gap relating to binge drinking behaviour at South African universities.

7.1 *Recommendations*

- Future studies could potentially measure binge drinking in detail by asking respondents to state and estimating the number of alcoholic beverages consumed in one sitting.

- Researchers could employ mixed methods to obtain detailed data relating to student experiences of binge drinking and the behaviour.

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The editors are doing their best to reduce the time that elapses between a paper's submission and publication in a regular issue. It is expected that the review and publication processes will be completed in about 2-3 months after submission depending on reviewers' feedback and the editors' final decision. If revisions are requested some changing and corrections then publication time becomes longer. At the end of the review process, accepted papers will be published on the journal's website.

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