Work Perspectives Among Mexican Immigrants

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Overview
- Latino immigrants in U.S. and Missouri
  - Characteristics of population(s)
  - Significance of Mexican immigrants in MO
- Mexican immigrants’ work experiences
  - Analytic frameworks & methodology
  - Key preliminary results
- Research limitations & implications
  - For researchers & practitioners
  - For Mexican immigrant workers

Latino Immigrants in the U.S.
- Estimated 40 million Latinos in US
  - Roughly 13% of total US population
  - Approx. 20 million are immigrants
- Underrepresented in education pipeline
  - 14% Latino college degree completion
- Overrepresented in service sector
  - Light manufacturing, agricultural, construction & service industries
  - Significant increases in day labor participation by Latinos

Growth of Latinos in Missouri
- Since 1990 Census, MO Latino population has doubled
- Challenges for Latinos & receiving communities
  - Education
  - Employment
  - Services

Age Differences of Missouri’s Latino Population

Analytic Framework & Methodology
- Psychology of Working (Blustein 2001, 2006)
  - Cognitions, values & beliefs about work
  - Importance of work context
- Structured qualitative interviews
  - Confidentiality & anonymity
  - Culturally competent data collection procedures
- Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) data analysis (Hill, Thompson, Williams 1997)

Participant Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Relationship Status</th>
<th>Years in US</th>
<th>Years of Education</th>
<th>Monthly Income</th>
<th>Years Working in US</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$1200.00</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>$1200.00</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$1204.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Mean: 27.75, SD: 4.11

Note: All participants are from Mexico and identified as 1st generation. Worked an average of 40.8 hours/week (SD=8.39) and average hourly wages was $8.41 (SD=0.52).
Key Preliminary Results

- Motivation for working in US
  - Economic opportunities
- Barriers to working
  - Limited language skills & discrimination
- Access to working
  - Networking & family support

Key Preliminary Results

- Work attitudes
  - Hard but enjoyable
- Conceptions of work
  - For survival & to develop character
- Work climate
  - Both positive & negative with some danger

Key Preliminary Results

- Work goals & expectations
  - Obtain or improve skills (incl. English) & advance
- Americans’ stereotypes of Mexicans
  - Negative - manual labor
- Information for others
  - Diversity among group
  - Provide support, appreciation & value Mexican heritage
  - Awareness of language barriers

Research Limitations

- Recruitment & sample size issues
- Nuances lost (or lessened) in translation
- Results are preliminary

Research Implications

- For vocational psychologists
  - Provide multicultural education & skill training to employers
  - Advocate for workplace policies that support the work of Mexican immigrants
- For Mexican immigrants
  - Vocational workshops
  - Referrals for community services

For additional information

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