

## Reflection Paper

My decision to pursue a career in scientific research can be attributed to multiple factors such as my experience as a female, my nationality as a Mexican American, raised by Mexican immigrants in a town primarily Latinx with 80 percent of the population being recognized as low economic status, my experience as a teenage mother, and a first-generation college student. It is difficult to distinguish one single cause for my academic pursuit, but I like to believe I am the best version of myself because of all these attributes that most may view as a barrier, a weakness. To those I would like to say this, do not fear the unfamiliar. Allow your perspective to change, and as a result, you may notice yourself acquiring more strength, more resilience, more compassion, and empathy for others. I allowed my experiences to shape me, which has led me to pursue a scientific research career. Data derived from empirical research, which I have obtained through the California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) library databases, have supported this outlook. The CSUSM library has also provided me with articles that have further enhanced my understanding of the process of acculturation, which has also contributed to my research interest to investigate factors associated with perinatal health in women and children from marginalized backgrounds.

My upbringing was an equalizer. As a result, I'm not intimidated by poverty nor wealth. In Mexico, mothers and children sleep on the streets – an endless cycle of poverty that is all too familiar to Mexico's citizens. My grandmother suffered the loss of a sister due to lack of food and later experienced multiple travesties with her children due to lack of safety and protective measures. Today she lives in the United States, depressed, anxious, and still, after 25 years, feels unwelcome and unfamiliar with the United States. Unfortunately, my grandmothers' story resembles the reality of many others from Mexico.

The outbreak of the coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) has led to all of us experiencing loss. Nevertheless, COVID-19 has intensely impacted vulnerable groups with a substantial impact on racial and ethnic minorities. Mothers may be at considerable risk for developing psychological disorders even after COVID-19 is no longer here. For instance, recent research on COVID-19 has found that mothers report more symptoms of depression and anxiety than before the pandemic. Before COVID-19, depression affected 10 to 15 percent of mothers. However, when we look at Mexican American mothers, we have seen those numbers hit nearly 50 percent. Therefore, Mexican mothers may be at an increased risk for psychological and social consequences in the context of COVID-19.

COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted the Latinx community in 55 percent of cases and has formed 46 percent of California's deaths. Therefore, identifying multiple risk factors under a pandemic in this ethnic group is particularly crucial for developing interventions and understanding the relationship between culture, depression, and anxiety in the context of COVID-19. As the impact of COVID-19 on the relationship between depression and anxiety has been less extensively studied in Mexican American mothers, we investigated this population before and then during the global pandemic after California implemented stay-at-home orders on March 19, 2020.

Research like mine remains critically essential toward developing protective interventions and reducing the existing racial disparities surrounding COVID-19. The statistical information discussed was collected through the CSUSM library databases, including journal articles from Mexico. I found PsycINFO, PubMed, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect to be the most useful when constructing my paper and supporting my arguments. Additionally, all the databases mentioned accommodated my diverse research interest and my citation manager, Endnote, which allowed me to track all my references without delay. With the CSUSM library's assistance, I am confident that prospective students

and I will continue to have access to the necessary resources that can support a career in scientific research.