University of Cincinnati

Date: 5/1/2012

I, Huma Bashir, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Counselor Education.

It is entitled:
Understanding Diversity in Cultural Identity in South Asians: Implications for Clinical Practice

Student's name: Huma Bashir

This work and its defense approved by:

Committee chair: Mei Tang, PhD
Committee member: Donna Tromski-Klingshirn, PhD
Committee member: Mary Brydon-Miller, PhD
Committee member: Geoffrey Yager, PhD
Understanding Diversity in Cultural Identity in South Asians: Implication for Clinical Practice

A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate School
of the University of Cincinnati
in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in Counselor Education and Supervision
Counseling Program
School of Human Services
College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services

By

Huma A. Bashir
M.S. University of Dayton
December 2006

Committee Chair: Mei Tang, Ph.D.
Abstract

This study explored the personal experiences of three generations of Pakistani Americans with an aim to understand the contributing factors to their cultural identity and meaning of their experiences. The ecological counseling approach (Conyne & Cook, 2004) was the theoretical framework that guided the design and analysis of this study. A total of 11 participants representing first, first and half, and second generation of Pakistani Americans were recruited from a community center in a Midwest region. Semi-structured individual interviews and one focus group were conducted as the means to collect data. Thematic analysis was used to uncover common themes within and across the generational groups.

The results revealed five common themes across generational groups. These are: awareness of cultural identity differences are situational, sense of loss, positive experience, awareness of two cultures, and culture and religion are intertwined. In further analyzing these themes, a second level of categories emerged as data were reviewed by specific generational groups. While there were some differences among the generations, all groups demonstrated overarching beliefs about their Pakistani American heritage. There was consensus regarding maintaining strong religious values and beliefs. Those beliefs were also directly mingled with culture and were inseparable. For all generations, cultural identity was maintained through certain values including modesty of dress, maintaining holiday traditions, and respect for elders.

The findings of this study have the implications for the counseling practice with Pakistani Americans and helping professionals. By incorporating an understanding of the cultural identity of Pakistani Americans, counselors can offer more culturally-focused strategies which may, in turn, result in more effective outcomes for Pakistani American clients. When considering this
population for mental health treatment, counselors need to remember that clients will be better-served if they are viewed within the relevant contexts of their lives, not in isolation.
Acknowledgements

I give thanks to Almighty God, Allah (swt) who has enabled me to get to this point in my academic pursuit. To get to where I am today, He has used several special people along the way. First and foremost my family; without them I would never have been able to complete this dissertation. My supportive and wonderful husband Shahid who has stood by me through thick and thin to see me through this lengthy and at times difficult process. Thank you very much. You have sacrificed so much for me to get this done. I owe you my life. The three shining stars of my life, my three children, Hira, Humza, and Hafsa have been a source of strength for me. Thank you guys, for inspiring me to complete this work!

I wish to thank my Mom, who was my biggest cheerleader, to encourage me when I did not think this was possible. My most supportive friend Elaine Morris Roberts who stood with me until I completed the study. I owe you my sanity and you proved to be stealth of strength when I needed it the most. Thank you very much! Also, I wish to thank all my participants for taking their time to conduct this study with me. You made it possible!

Last but not least I wish to thank my advisor Dr. Mei Tang for her untiring work to support my work. Also, my doctoral committee members, Dr. Brydon-Miller, Dr. Yager, and Dr. Tromski-Kilshirm for their feedback and encouragement.
# Table of Contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................................... ii

Acknowledgements ....................................................................................................................... iv

Table of Contents ............................................................................................................................. v

List of Tables ................................................................................................................................... xiii

Chapter One - INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................... 1

  Statement of the Problem ........................................................................................................ 1

  Purpose ....................................................................................................................................... 3

  Research Questions ................................................................................................................ 4

  Significance ............................................................................................................................. 5

Chapter Two – LITERATURE REVIEW ......................................................................................... 8

  Cultural Identity and Related Research ............................................................................. 8

    Definition of Cultural Identity ......................................................................................... 8

  Acculturation ........................................................................................................................ 9

  Ethnic Identity ....................................................................................................................... 11

  Social Identity Theory ....................................................................................................... 13

  Theoretical Models of Conceptualizing Cultural Identity ............................................ 14

  Development Stage Model .................................................................................................. 14

  Recent Model for Cultural Identity Development ......................................................... 17

  Multidimensionality of Cultural Identity ........................................................................... 19

  Ecological Approach to Understand Cultural Identity .................................................... 21

  Cultural Identity and Counseling Pakistani Americans ................................................ 29

    History and Background of Pakistani Americans Immigrant ..................................... 29
Demographic Statistic……………………………………………………………………31

Issues for Pakistani Americans in the U.S..........................................................33

Counseling Needs of Pakistani Americans........................................................34

Mental Health of Pakistani Americans............................................................35

Reasons for Under Service to Pakistani Americans.........................................37

Summary and Conclusion.................................................................................39

Chapter Three – METHODS............................................................................41

Research Goals and Questions......................................................................42

Study Site..........................................................................................................44

Study Population..............................................................................................45

Sampling...........................................................................................................47

Measurement...................................................................................................47

Procedure.........................................................................................................49

Data Analysis..................................................................................................51

Data Validity....................................................................................................52

Limitations.......................................................................................................53

Chapter Four – RESULTS................................................................................54

Data Analysis Overview..................................................................................54

Participants’ information................................................................................54

Data Narration.................................................................................................57

Awareness of Cultural Identity Differences are Situational.........................58

Sense of Loss.................................................................................................62

Positive Experience.........................................................................................64
List of Tables

Table

1.1 Generation Definitions .............................................................................................................46

1.2 Participant Profile ..................................................................................................................52
This work is dedicated to my family!
Chapter I

Introduction

Problem Statement

The importance for counselors to develop multicultural competency is becoming more critical than ever because of globalization and the fact that our society is expeditiously becoming a multiracial, multicultural, and multilingual society (Arredondo et al., 2005). The number of foreign-born individuals in the U.S. reached 33.5 million, which represent almost 12% of the country’s population (U.S. Bureau of the census, 2010). This increase is matched by significant shifts in countries of origin. While 90% of all immigrants living in the U. S. until the middle of the 20th century were of European or Canadian descent, more than half of all immigrants who have entered the U.S. since 2000 come from Asian and Latin American countries (Suarez-Orozco, 2000).

When South Asian Americans move to a new culture, there may be acculturation issues that can impact many aspects of their lives, including seeking out effective mental health services. There is little research conducted about how South Asian Americans develop their cultural identity when they are not living in their home culture. Only recently there have been some studies on South Asians, mainly Indian American, but research on Pakistani immigrants in the U.S. is scarce. Pakistan’s current population of 187 million as of 2011 is the seventh largest in the world and is projected to grow to be the third largest by the year 2050 (Pappas, Akhtar, Gergen, Hadden, & Khan, 2001). Further study of this population needs to be done because Pakistanis living in the U.S are growing in numbers. They have been in the U. S. for less than 50 years as a group. Studies regarding their utilization of mental health services, understanding
their culture, and what would be required from a counselor to treat them are also noticeably limited.

Pakistan is an ethnically diverse country, having four different regions, six languages and many religions. Because of the many cultures that coexist in Pakistan, Pakistanis who choose to immigrate come to the U.S. with personal experience in dealing with cultural diversity. However, their experience and knowledge is not necessarily shared when they move to a new culture; they do not openly talk about this with people in their new culture -- lay people, counselors and psychologists (Ibrahim, Ohnishi & Sandhu, 1997). Ibrahim, Ohnishi and Sandhu (1997) also proposed that many Pakistani Americans will be different in their identity development based on their generational status in the U.S and therefore, more acculturated to their new culture. Unfortunately, few studies clearly address the impact generational status has on cultural identity; identity models do not address this variable with enough specificity.

The level of acculturative stress that Pakistani immigrants go through to adopt to the culture of the new country is laid out in a study by Jibeen and Khalid (2009) who reported that Pakistani immigrants living in Canada showed perceptual conflict with the identity between the two cultures, mainly focusing on the second generation’s learning and adopting of values of the new society that were unacceptable to previous generations. These pose a threat to ethnic identity as demonstrated by a participant’s concern voiced during an interview. “I worry that my children/next generation will not adopt/follow Pakistani beliefs and customs” (Jibeen & Khalid, 2009, p. 241). It is important to understand how American and Pakistani cultures tend to fall at opposite ends of the spectrum, with particularly strong differences found on individualism versus collectivism (Jibeen & Khalid, 2009). More recent studies (Robinson, 2008) are in line with the research theme of the study presented in this paper. Robinson (2008) found that Berry’s (1990)
acculturation model proposes that immigrants who integrate home and new cultures show better psychological adaptation than those choosing one over the other. Studies of young Pakistanis and Indians in Britain found that these young people prefer the integration mode of adaptation. These young Asians are bi-cultural and bi-lingual, have maintained some form of their own culture, and at the same time, have adopted some of the majority cultural norms (Robinson, 2008). In fact, Robinson (2008) found that first and second generation Asians in Britain used hyphenated labels such as ‘Pakistani-British’ to describe their identity (Robinson, 2008). Modood (1994) in Robinson (2008) concluded that most of the second generation Asians wanted to maintain some core heritage, religion, family values, and language.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore what factors impact the cultural identity of Pakistani Americans and how they bridge the two cultures within which they exist. By interviewing Pakistani Americans about their experiences, this study will bring to the fore information regarding generational status, acculturative stress and personal experiences.

Pakistanis living in the U.S. may experience multidimensional acculturative stress that may include threats to ethnic identity, culturally specific values and mores of daily living. For many minority group members, cultural identity and self-identity are intertwined; they are multifaceted because of interactive influences from many factors including race, ethnicity, spiritual/religious backgrounds, and geographic locations during childhood years, cultural values, and traditions. For example, a South Asian American client can identify herself as a Muslim, Pakistani, feminist, and American all at the same time. According to Erikson (1968), identity refers to a subjective feeling of sameness and continuity that provides individuals with a stable sense of self and serves as a guide to choices in key areas of one’s life. It is not something that
individuals automatically have. An identity develops over time, beginning in childhood, through a process of “reflection and observation” (Erikson, 1968, p. 22) that is particularly important during adolescence and young adulthood, but may continue through adulthood and is expected to lead to an achieved identity (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Sam and Virta (2003) studied psychological adaptation of adolescents with immigrant background and found that as a whole, adolescents with immigrant backgrounds did not differ from peers native to their new culture with respect to psychological adaptation. Cultural identity over time can evolve into a shared sense of identity with others who belong to the same ethnic group (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Because cultural identity is a multidimensional construct, the core of ethnic identity is a sense of self as a group member that develops over time through an active process of assimilation, acculturation, and development of cultural identity.

For a clinician, it is these multidimensional factors that could pose a challenge for the treatment of mental health issues in Pakistani Americans. In a study by Sheikh and Furnham (2000), it was concluded that positive attitudes toward seeking professional help for psychological distress were similar for British Asians, Westerners and Pakistanis. However, the significant differences between the groups were in the culturally determined causes of mental distress that contribute to attitudes towards seeking help from professional for mental health problems (Sheikh & Furnham, 2000).

**Research Questions**

This study attempts to explore factors contributing to the cultural identity of Pakistani Americans and how these factors were understood by Pakistani Americans in shaping their identity. It is important to develop a better understanding of this group living in the U.S with respect to the processing or meaning making Pakistani Americans attach to their cultural identity.
Factors that may influence this development of cultural identity include personal experiences, levels of education, acculturation, generational status, and gender. Therefore, this study will aim at understanding cultural identity development of three generations of Pakistani Americans to address the following research questions: (a) What factors contribute to the cultural identity of Pakistani Americans? (b) How do Pakistani Americans make meaning of their cultural identity?

**Significance**

In the past few decades, there has been an increasing interest in conducting research about the impact of cultural identity on one’s mental health in the South Asian population living in the United States. The phrase “it’s a small world” has turned globalization into a reality and its connectedness has allowed cultures and people to interact freely. Today’s research science is in overdrive, trying to keep up with the new cultures and influx of new immigrants to the United States from developing countries such as Pakistan which has made it essential to learn more about them. The number of immigrants from Pakistan in the U.S. has increased in the last four to five decades. In the last couple of decades, political instability, insecurities of personal lives and poor economics have made it necessary for increased immigration. In the 60s and 70s, many Pakistani professionals such as doctors and engineers immigrated to the United States. The increasing population of Pakistanis living in the U.S. has also increased concern relating to social, emotional, and mental health issues. The past research on Asians was mainly focused on Chinese, Japanese, and Indian immigrants. It is the intention of this research study to bring to the surface some of the experiences and cultural factors that contribute to cultural identity of Pakistani Americans. The Asian American population is very diverse and one of the fastest growing groups in the U.S (Zagelbaum & Carlson, 2011). With 40 subgroups that differ with regard to language, religion, and values, it is important to keep in mind the uniqueness of
each group. Knowing the differences between the groups within the South Asian population will help counselors prepare to work with South Asians, particularly Pakistani American.

It is expected that this study will help to uncover a broader picture of the multidimensionality of cultural identity and acculturation experiences of a range of generations of Pakistani Americans. The findings of this study will contribute to the research of Asian Americans, particularly Pakistani Americans’ cultural identity formation and its implications for the counseling profession. Though research on multiculturalism in the last two to three decades has significantly increased, information on the complexities of cultural identity are still lacking. Specific areas needing further study include cultural identity’s impact on the counseling process and outcome for Asian American, particularly Pakistani Americans. This study will provide information that can be applied to the practice of multicultural counseling competencies, recognizing the multifaceted nature of cultural identity, its impact on counseling dynamic, and the exploration of cultural transmission from first generation to second generation utilizing the ecological approach (EA).

The multifaceted nature of EA is essential to dissect cultural differences of individual clients, therefore allowing a clinician to take a snapshot of contextual information (Roysircar & Pignatiello, 2011). When evaluating cultural identity, EA considers all levels of influence in a person’s life, looking at them in context. This study will also contribute ways to understand ethnically diverse clients, particularly Pakistani Americans, with a focus on the importance of cultural losses and transitions within and across multiple contexts of life.

The understanding of the cultural identity of Pakistani Americans can be used to enhance the training and practice of counseling professionals. That knowledge is needed to understand the client’s level of acculturation, worldview and attitude toward and role of humility in the client’s
cultural identity. The client can educate the counselor regarding the client’s specific identification level with his or her ethnic group. This study will help establish the clinical implications of a deeper understanding of a client’s cultural identity. By learning about specific cultural and social differences, counselors may be able to better identify ways to help members of a different culture. By gaining this information, counselors can build stronger multicultural competencies in the areas of knowledge, awareness and skills.
Chapter II

Literature Review

This chapter provides a comprehensive and detailed literature review on cultural identity research from various theoretical perspectives. This chapter also reviews cultural traditions, historical backgrounds, and counseling issues of Pakistani Americans living in the U.S.

Cultural Identity and Related Research

Definition of Cultural Identity

The cultural identity is a multidimensional and multifaceted construct. Cultural identity is the end result of many factors that affect an individual’s development. Cultural identity is comprised of many factors and is characterized by a sense of belonging and group identity, determined by social pressures and psychological need, and perceived as partially changeable (Sewell, 2009). Components such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, disability, socioeconomic class and spirituality contribute to cultural identity.

The ecological approach would include family background (including the age at which the individual migrated to the new country), acculturation, ethnic identity, language, and cultural knowledge of the parents (Bernal & Knight, 1993). Often times where these immigrants live has an impact; as urbanization of the community, socioeconomic status of the family and community, immigrant’s minority status, characteristics of the dominant group, and effects of these characteristics on the social, economic, and political status of minority people can also impact cultural identity (Bernal & Knight, 1993). The research also suggests that people’s cultural identity is formed from the influences of many factors such as race, gender, class, spirituality, disability, and sexuality with historical events (Robinson-Wood, 2009).
Many factors contribute to the formation and maintenance of cultural identity, which can be environmental or genetic. Gender refers to the roles, behaviors, and attitudes that are expected of persons on the basis of their biological sex. Sexuality is situated on a continuum and envelops homosexuality, bisexuality, and heterosexuality and there are different expressions of sexuality within and across the sexuality continuum (Robinson-Wood, 2009). Socioeconomic class refers to a person’s or group’s social and financial position in comparison to others in that same social group. Influences that affect one’s socioeconomic ranking include educational level, employment stability, wages, marital status, income of spouse and/or other persons in the home, size of household, citizenship, and access to medical benefits (Robinson-Wood, 2009). Spirituality may affect people across all ages, race, and ethnic groups, religion and/or spirituality plays a part in many people’s lives. Religion may be seen as affiliations including Catholic, Methodist, Islam, or Judaism.

**Acculturation**

Acculturation is a process of a change in the cultural values, attitudes, and behaviors of an individual resulting from being exposed to two different cultures (Gonzales et al, 1995; Leong et al. 2000). It assumes that there will be some conflicts for ethnic minorities with the contact of two cultures. The concern becomes determining which ethnic identity is maintained when an ethnic individual is in constant contact with the mainstream culture (Leong et al. 2000). For example, a child of an immigrant parent, a young adult, and immigrants themselves may experience conflict and stress as they find that their cultural values and behaviors at home are not recognized or are portrayed negatively among peers at work or at school or in the media (Gonzales et al. 1995). This can pose a challenge for them to either maintain their ethnic minority status or give it up. According to Gonzales et al. (1995) broad cultural and identity
changes are expected to take place, particularly when large differences between the two cultures are found in beliefs, customs, values, and languages, and religions.

Acculturation theory is developed from an assimilation model, which views the task of immigrants as learning and adopting the cultural norms, values, and behaviors of the dominant cultures as quickly as possible in order to fit in the mainstream society (Gonzales et al., 1995). The limitation with the assimilation model is that it does not explain conflict, does not address that “the dominant group has not readily accepted others into the mainstream in-group,” and ignores that “most ethnic groups do not easily give up all aspects of their own culture in the process of becoming ‘Americanized’ (Gonzales et al., 1995, p143).”

Berry et al. (1992) proposed an acculturation model that looks at two issues. The first main issue is the extent to which the individual or group members want to conserve their own cultural background as opposed to giving up their cultural traditions. The second main issue is the extent to which the individual or group members want interactions with members of other groups in the larger society as opposed to turning away from other groups. Berry, et al. suggested four possible types of alternative styles of acculturation: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization.

When an acculturating individual does not wish to maintain culture and identity and seeks daily interaction with the dominant society, then the assimilation path or strategy is defined. In contrast, when there is a value placed on holding onto one’s original culture and a wish to avoid interaction with others, then the separation alternative is defined. When there is an interest in both maintaining one’s original culture and in daily interactions with others, integration is the option; here there is some degree of culture integrity maintained, while moving to participate as an integral part of the larger social
network. Integration is the strategy that attempts to make the best of both worlds. Finally, when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss), and little possibility or interest in relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination), then marginalization is defined (pp.278-279).

Berry’s model makes significant contributions to our understanding of the varieties of possible adaptations for individuals who are in constant contact with two cultures (Gonzales et al., 1995). It articulates important concept biculturalism, which is a feasible solution to multiethnic demands. Individuals who choose to adapt in this way considered to be enjoying the best of both cultures (Gonzales et al., 1995). Often it is seen how intergenerational conflicts exist in immigrant families because of the different acculturation levels between parents and the children. Biculturalism provides an opportunity for immigrants to integrate into the mainstream culture without giving up their own ethnic identity. The acculturation theory could help us increase our knowledge about the cultural transmission of different generational levels and its complexities impacting individuals’ cultural identity.

**Ethnic Identity**

Cultural identity can be viewed as a broader construct based on factors like location, level of education, and generation status. It tends to be a more current term. Ethnic identity is closer to the person and stays with that individual as he or she moves from culture to culture. Depending on the researcher, the terms can be used interchangeably.

Ethnic identity is not a fixed categorization but rather is a fluid and dynamic understanding of self and ethnic background. Ethnic identity is a dynamic, multidimensional construct that refers to one’s identity or sense of self as a member of an ethnic group. Ethnic groups are subgroups within a larger context that claim a common ancestry and share one or
more of the following elements: culture, phenotype, religion, language, kinship, or place of origin. Since ethnic identity is not a fixed category, various changes take place along different dimensions over time or across generations in a new culture, in different contexts, and with age or development. Of these changes, those that occur over time in a new culture can be thought of as changes related to acculturation. Change, according to Phinney (2003) is focal to an understanding of both ethnic identity and acculturation. The shift in cultural identity can best be conceptualized in terms of at least two dimensions: retention of or identification with the ethnic or original culture as compared to adaptation to or identification with a host or “new” culture. More constructs are possible due to multiple cultures which make this multidimensional concept even more complex; this notion is often ignored in much research. The other possible dimensions of ethnic change are when someone becomes bicultural (Phinney, 2003). Bicultural identity simply doesn’t mean finding a midpoint between one’s home culture and new culture. It often develops after having been in the United States and acquiring an “American identity” while retaining ethnic identity over time.

The constructs mentioned above – ethnic identity and acculturation -- often overlap and are closely linked. Generational status has been the most widely used criterion of acculturation in research, but generation alone is not a good predictor of ethnic identity according to Phinney (2003). The first generation usually keeps its culture of origin and is unlikely to change significantly. They tend to do the basic association such as learning English, social networking beyond their own ethnic group and staying competent in the new culture. Most retain their mother tongue and are bilingual, and keep a close social network within their own ethnic group. Often with the second generation, an “American” identity is generally secured because they are born in the United States. For the third and later generations, the ethnic identity becomes more
complex because various contextual, historical, and political factors unrelated to acculturation influence the extent to which ethnic identity is retained (Phinney, 2003). For non-European ethnic groups, racism and discrimination play a role in the preservation of ethnic identity, maybe because a strong ethnic identity can provide a sense of solidarity in the face of discrimination (Phinney, 2003).

**Social Identity Theory**

Social identity theory helps us understand why some minorities try to dissociate themselves from their ethnic group and assimilate into the mainstream culture. Social identity theory assumes that individuals want to achieve a positive self-concept and high self-esteem, thus they are motivated to identify with groups that are comparatively superior in the society (Gonzales et al., 1995; Nesdale & Flesser, 2001). Therefore, members of low-status groups will try to change their social standing through a variety of strategies (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). If they find that the boundaries between their group and the high-status group are permeable, they will try to leave their group by becoming assimilated into the mainstream society. If they find that the boundaries are impermeable, they might try: (a) to reinterpret their group in a positive manner (e.g., “Pakistani Americans are hardworking.”) (b) to emphasize some characteristics that tend to favor their group (e.g., “but we have darker skin color that makes us look tan”), or (c) to make comparisons with lower status groups (e.g., “but we are still better than group X”).

Sam and Virta (2003) argue that both cultures (host and immigrant) may transmit to the child growing up in the U.S.; one type may be more emphasized than the other, depending if the child growing up in collectivist or individualist society. For example, Pakistani parents will transmit the collectivist values to their children such as importance of family relationships, respect/obey their adults/parents, follow the typical family multigenerational patriarchal family
structure, and fulfill filial obligations. Pakistani adults/children are expected to remain at home until marriage, and follow the advice of their elders in matters of marriage, education, and career choices. Individual autonomy is subordinated to the needs of the family, in contrast to the Western value of encouraging autonomy in children and adolescents (Steinberg, 1990, as cited in Sam & Virta, 2003). However, these values are inconsistent with the new culture (U.S.) and this can complicate establishing the immigrant’s cultural values. Research suggests that immigrant adolescents generally acculturate to the values of new society faster than their parents (Rick & Forward, 1992; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993), but the majority of Pakistani Americans endorse conforming to parental authority more than their Western counterparts.

**Theoretical Models of Conceptualizing Cultural Identity**

After two decades of calls for effectiveness in multicultural counseling and development, many models for training, assessments, and practice exist (Ibrahim, 1991). It is important not only to understand the variety of development stage models, ethnic identity, social identity, and racial identity but also to understand how these processes can differ for diverse ethnic groups.

**Development Stage Model**

Considered alongside more general cultural identity models, minority identity development models utilize some components from the more general models, but in a more inclusive framework. Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1983), described cultural development in five stages:

- **Conformity:** preference for values of the dominant culture over to those of their own culture group.

- **Dissonance:** confusion and conflict toward dominant cultural system and their own group’s cultural system.
Resistance and immersion: active rejection of dominant society and acceptance of their own cultural group’s traditions and customs.

Introspection: questioning the value of both minority culture and dominant culture.

Synergetic articulation and awareness: developing a cultural identity that selects elements from both the minority and dominant cultural group values. (pp. 72).

Phinney’s work on ethnic identity formation is based on a model that is applicable across ethnic groups. Comparable to Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1983), Phinney discussed the process versus content of ethnic identity (Bernal & Knight, 1993). He distinguished that content is the actual ethnic behaviors which individuals of that group practice, along with their attitudes toward their ethnic group (Phinney, 1990). The process of ethnic identity formation is about the individual from an ethnic group understanding the implications of his or her ethnicity and making decisions about its role in his or her life, regardless of the degree of their ethnic involvement (Bernal & Knight, 1993). These concepts are most likely related and ethnicity is important to their identity.

The first stage of Phinney’s model called unexamined ethnic identity is lack of exploration of ethnicity. In this stage, minority individuals initially accept the majority culture’s values and attitudes about the minority culture; they then internalize negative views of their own group that are held by the majority (Bernal & Knight, 1993). Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1983) called it conformity stage, in which individuals show a preference for the cultural values of the dominant group over those of their own culture.

The second stage is called ethnic identity search/moratorium. Phinney stated that during adolescence, many undergo a process of exploration and questioning about ethnicity in which
they attempt to learn more about their culture and understand the meaning of group membership (Bernal & Knight, 1993). This helps groups explore their culture, learn of its strengths and come to accept it. The third stage is ethnic identity achievement in which the supposed outcome is achieved identity. This is evident by a clear, confident sense of one’s own ethnicity (Bernal & Knight, 1993). Individuals also feel comfortable with both parts of themselves such as Asian and American.

These three stages of ethnic identity raise an important question if these stages are sequential, with individuals progressing to higher stages over time (Bernal & Knight, 1993). Phinney (1989) and Phinney and Tarver, (1988) found significantly higher scores on ethnic identity achievement among college students than among high-school students. A longitudinal study (Phinney & Chavira, in press) also found significantly higher stages of ethnic identity over the three year period from age 16 to 19. These results are also similar to those from studies of ego identity showing a movement to higher stages with increasing age (Kroger, 1988) and suggest that ethnic identity is likely to show a developmental progression (Bernal & Knight, 1993). It is also important to note that contextual factors influence the extent and rate of development (Piney & Rosenthal, 1992; Bernal & Knight, 1993). For example, adolescents who are high in ethnic identity have parents who report trying to prepare their children for living in a diverse society (Phinney & Nakayama, 1991; Bernal & Knight, 1993).

Recent Model for Cultural Identity Development

According to Pedersen (2000), identity is developed in a cultural context. Belonging to a cultural group means accepting the beliefs and symbols of that group as having meaning and importance in a profoundly personal sense. Identity includes personal elements such as one’s name, social connections such as one’s family and cultural connections such as one’s nationality.
and ethnicity. Pedersen (2000) stated that we become more aware of our cultural identity through contact with persons from other cultures who are different from ourselves, and we see ourselves in contrast. Cultural identity is a complicated construct; Pederson states the five stages of a frequently used model are too simplistic, ignoring some important components.

1. Dominant majority model simply imposes a dominant culture on all minority groups.
2. Transitional model presumes a movement toward the dominant culture as an appropriate adjustment.
3. Alienation model seeks to avoid stress from anomie by assisting persons in transition to make successful adjustments to some external norm.
4. Multidimensional model presumes transition on several dimensions at the same time with different degrees of adjustment on each dimension
5. Bicultural model presumes that one can adapt to a new culture without losing contact with an earlier culture (Pedersen, 2000, p. 62).

According to Pedersen (2000), the more comprehensive model, called the Orthogonal model, suggests that adapting simultaneously to any one culture is independent from adapting to many other cultures, providing an unlimited combination of patterns that combine the preceding five alternative stages as each being partially valid, depending on the situation (Pedersen, 2000). This model, according to Pedersen, is more multidimensional than other linear models. In other words, identity is socially constructed and always fluid, intertwining with resistance, struggle, and power structure between individuals and the society they live in (Li, 2010).

Pedersen’s Orthogonal model is as follows:

1. Cultural groups may exist in association with one another without isolating themselves or competing with one another.
2. Minority cultures need not be eliminated or absorbed to coexist with the dominant majority culture.

3. A permanent multicultural society may be possible that is multifaceted and multidimensional without becoming a melting pot imposed by the dominant culture or anarchy and chaos imposed by the different competing cultural minorities.

4. Conflicts of value and belief do not present insurmountable barriers but may be combined in a realistic pluralism. Although some primary values and beliefs of each cultural group cannot be compromised, other secondary values and beliefs can be adapted and modified to fit a changing society.

5. Cultural conflict may become a positive rather than a negative force from the perspective of shared common-ground expectations, even when the culturally learned behaviors of minorities are perceived to be different and seemingly hostile to the dominant culture.

6. Members of minority group may be less inclined toward militancy when their survival is threatened. Personal and social advancement requires an environment that is safe enough that people can take risks with one another. Without safety, no one will take the risk. Without risk, little or no learning occurs.

7. Interaction between minority and majority cultures may be less destructive for all parties. The orthogonal model describes a win-win outcome for conflict among culturally different peoples (Pedersen, 2000, pp.62-63).

There are economic advantages of releasing resources previously consumed by cultural conflict. Imposed and enforced harmony is expensive and frequently ineffective in the long run. Voluntary harmony promotes the best interests of everyone if it can be achieved through willing
cooperation. There are already models of orthogonal relationships in healthy bicultural and multicultural individuals or social units. Pluralism is neither easy to achieve nor simple to maintain. However, the alternatives are likely to be more expensive in the long term (Pedersen, 2000).

In summary, this comprehensive model of cultural identities offers several advantages (Pedersen, 2000) and depicts a more multidimensional and multifaceted nature of cultural self-identity. This model may be a more inclusive model for understanding cultural identity of different ethnicities living in America because it includes more factors. This model promotes freedom for individuals to function on their own terms, free from any external social norm, and it can serve as a cultural context central to self-identity (Pedersen, 2000).

**Multidimensionality of Cultural Identity**

Cultural identity is viewed as a multidimensional construct that is impacted by factors such as generation in the U.S, educational level, social class, identification with own ethnicity and culture, experiences with racism, sexism, and exclusion (Ibrahim, Ohnishi, & Sandhu, 1997). Goodwin and Duncan (2000) analyzed the cultural values of acculturation and social identity as interchangeable or adaptable. According to the authors, South Asian communities in Britain are viewed more collectivist. The cultural values are practiced at all generational levels and maintained to the best of the ability. Most second-generation Asians are cognizant of engaging in a relationship with their host culture that would take them away from cultural roots (Goodwin & Duncan, 2000). Since migration may cause a loss of the extended family system, a compromise of social and cultural values in the traditional collectivist family is to be expected. In Goodwin and Duncan (2000), it was seen that assimilating the new culture’s values led to a more balanced bicultural perspective and a personal fulfillment.
A situational example provided by Stewart, Franz, and Layton (1988) used personal documents produced over 40 years by Vera Brittain, an influential English feminist, pacifist journalist, and novelist. The authors found that the identity themes were tied to personal and social events, and in this case World War I and the deaths of her brother and fiancé. The general model of linkage between personality development and social events that pointed to the central role of identity formation, especially for some cohorts in particular cultures, was the convergence of individual development and significant social changes resulting in a strong “generational identity” (Unger, 2004). Examples of the convergence are persons affected by World War I in England, by the Great Depression in the United States, and by the partition of India and Pakistan. This is where the subgroups within a culture form. Even within a culture, individuals are evolving throughout their lives. People living in India under the British Empire may have developed the sense of oppression or Muslims living now in India as a minority may fear discriminations or racism against them. Therefore, they live under a questionable identity of Indian-Muslim or Minority Indian. Over time, living with any kind of negative influence will gradually shape our ideology of religion, language, ethnicity, and meaning making, resulting new cultural identity. This may be viewed as a deviation from the original group into a subgroup.

The meaning making of the same historical moments by two different ethnic groups can lead to two different meanings. For example, in Unger (2004) the preferred definition of “passive” by white women was “laid-back/easygoing;” for women of color, in contrast, “passive meant “not saying what I really think.” This points to the importance of how cultural and subcultural contexts matter, even when it may appear that they do not.

Inman (2006) studied the effects of education, level of religiosity, ethnic identity, and racial identity statuses (conformity, dissonance, resistance, and awareness) on cultural value
conflict for first and second generation South Asian women. The results showed cultural conflicts for South Asian women in two areas: intimate relations and sex-role expectations. It was noted that intimate relations and contexts in which those should occur, dating within a committed relationship, sex within a marital context, no premarital sex are in direct opposition to the Western cultural values. Similar things noted in sex-role expectations were that women were expected to be selfless and stay connected to the indigenous culture (Inman, 2006). The study found that the first generation followed the same linguistic, religious and communal identities. In contrast, second generation Asian American women raised in the U.S. view themselves as Americans and may more easily adopt a racial-political social position. The messages and experiences internalized by minority can seriously shape reactions that women develop toward their own race and people of other races, resulting in one of four racial identity statuses (Inman, 2006). The ultimate “internalized racial identity” would result in South Asian women having a flexible response to racial stimuli. Of course, this is more applicable to second generation U.S. born South Asian Americans than to first generation. The important point is that the second generation is more acculturated to a racialized society and might experience struggles with visible aspects of their culture (Inman, 2006). The literature suggested that stronger ethnic obligation and involvement facilitates a stronger ego identity and greater collective self-esteem, thus enabling better coping with cultural conflicts (Sodowsky & Maestas, 2000, as cited in Inman, 2006).

**Ecological Approach to understanding cultural identity**

The EA draws its defining principles from ecology within the physical world. The human are physically rooted in their environment (ecology) and depend on others for sustenance and support (Conyne & Cook, 2004). The EA is metatheoretical in nature.
“A metatheoretical framework attempts to provide unifying constructs and processes that apply across diverse theories. It is recognized that individual theories attempt to explain a portion of the determinants and processes contributing to the totality of human behavior. Some theories are quite specific and focused, whereas others aim to explain behavior more comprehensively. Because human behavior is influenced by such a complex array of factors, ranging from biochemical processes to sociohistorical trends, at best a single theory can be valid for a minute portion of the total picture. …The EA is intended to help counselors serve as travel agents for diverse clients with diverse destinations. Within the ecological approach, counselors are reminded that no two clients’ life journeys are the same; no one destination is necessarily the only one to be pursued; and the same endpoint can be reached by adopting different strategies. The EA operating as metatheory is meant to help counselors conceptualize the diverse possibilities and, with their clients, plan interventions that will help clients reach their own goals with the resources they can command.” (Conyne & Cook, 2004, pp. 9-10).

The concept of cultural identity is greatly complex and diverse. The ecological approach framework stresses some form of multiplicity and interconnectedness. By definition, EA “contextualized help giving that is dependent on the meaning that clients derive from their environmental interactions” (Conyne & Cook, 2004). The basic principles are that behavior is contextual, interactional, and meaningful. According to Conyne & Cook, “human life cannot exist apart from a network of mutually defining and sustaining influences in the animate and inanimate world” (p.6). All life processes depend on each other and together constitute the “web of life” (Capra, 1996 as cited in Conyne & Cook, 2004). One cannot examine a particular component of identity such as race, gender, or sexuality without considering the impact of other
overarching identities influencing that definition. For example, studies of racial identity often include both men and women but do not examine gender identity. Similarly, studies of gender identity often include people of different ethnic background but do not examine the possibility that ethnic background is an important context shaping gender identity (Unger, 2004). These examples show “intersectionality” which refers to holding two or more social statuses such as Pakistani-American female. The womanhood cannot be separated from the daily life experiences. She is always and everywhere both raced and gendered, and her experience cannot be wholly attributed to only one of these characteristics (Unger, 2004). Consider an American-Pakistani female who is a professional, works full-time outside of home and also has family to raise. The cultural gender roles are to be considered here as well as their meaning attached to being bicultural or ‘American.’

The importance of interactional and reciprocal processes in explaining behavior is emphasized within the EA. Behavior is usually not unidirectional, the cause and effect are influencing the person to some extent.

“Some cultures see the individual as interdependent, less than human when taken out of the cultural context defining and sustaining him or her. Others see individuals as primarily separate from others, needing others for support and important resources but whose essence as a human being is well differentiated from them. Individuals sharing a cultural context also differ from one another in how they have internalized these templates for the self through their own meaning-making processes” (Conyne & Cook, 2004, p. 13).

People interact with environments that are anchored in time and place. This means that there is a context surrounding behavior. Therefore, time and place combine create unique
contexts within which people live out their lives (Conyne & Cook, 2004). It is necessary for counselors to understand the salient contexts of clients’ lives. For example, when a client discloses that he or she is depressed, it is important for an ecological counselor to understand the conditions surrounding his or her depressed state. The counselor needs to become aware about the real time and place issues that may be contributing the depression, as well as the intrapersonal matters that may be influential. Clients are viewed within the relevant contexts of their lives, not in isolation.

The levels are described as follows:

Microsystem: Contexts or settings in which a person or persons have primary face-to-face contact with influential others, such as family, workplace, peer group, or school. By definition, microsystems are proximal influences.

Mesosystem: Relationships and connections existing between microsystems, or the ways in which situations interrelate. Examples include connections between home and school, workplace and family, or peer group and parents.

Exosystem: Larger systems within which a person does not directly participate but in which important decision and actions emerge that affect the person. The exosystem encompasses major social institutions that operate at a local level, including the world of work, local government, health care system, and mass media. This level refers to distal influences.

Macrosystem: The most pervasive system containing blueprints for defining and organizing social and institutional life in a society, including general values, political and social policy, and ideology (Conyne & Cook, 2004, p. 16).
Bronfenbrenner emphasized that whereas the other three levels of systems refer to specific contexts affecting a person's life, the macrosystem determines the nature of these concrete contexts either explicitly (e.g., written laws, policies), or more often informally and implicitly in the form of ideologies influencing everyday customs and practices (Conyne & Cook, 2004). Macrosystem-based ideas about what is a successful life, a dutiful parent, a good American, a masculine man, or feminine woman can influence behavior at every systemic level. Although these influences are abstract and global in nature, they permeate every other level (Conyne & Cook, 2004).

The importance of time is an essential, although invisible part of our life context. Bronfenbrenner (1992) used the term “chronosystem” to capture the interconnected nature of persons, environment, and proximal processes over time. All of us are influenced by the state of the world around us when we grew up, for example, our lives after terrorist attacks of 9/11, the partitioning of India and Pakistan, or an economic down turn (recession). Discrete events throughout life can decisively shape our experiences. The ecology of a person’s life is ever changing (Conyne & Cook, 2004).

One can see the parallels between the ecological systems and life cycle systems of one’s life. For example, microsystem parallels to the child and family systems which are the biological makeup, cognitive and behavioral systems. The mesosystem correlates to the immediate family of an individual. This includes ones religion, school, and family. The exosystem is the institutional community which includes the community, culture, and society. The macrosyste is the political and social system which include the sociocultural, political, and ideological.

Human life as we know it is impossible without meaning making. In the words of Heller et al. (1984), “The environment is not perceived directly; rather, psychological processes
involved in perception affect the way that individuals interpret and then act on environmental
information” (p. 138). In the ecological approach through meaning making processes, persons
define and understand what happens in their lives (Conyne & Cook, 2004). Hayes and
Oppenheim (1997) noted that “human development represents the course of our attempts to
make sense of those changes going on around us-to understand what it means to be in a world
like mine at a time like this” (p. 23).

The concept of acculturation strategies can be further explored utilizing the ecological
perspectives because ethnic groups and individuals engage in the process of acculturation at
different levels. These strategies are used in conjunction with a variety of cultural and
psychological factors with consequences of attitudes and behaviors (Berry, 2003). When the
minority group does not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seeks daily interactions with
other cultures, they are using assimilation strategy (Berry, 2003). In contrast, when minority
groups place a value on holding onto their original culture and at the same time wish to avoid
interacting with others, they are using separation strategy. When minority groups have an interest
in maintaining their original culture during daily interactions with other groups, they use
integration strategy. This helps the ethnocultural group to participate as an integral part of the
larger social society. Lastly, the marginalization strategy is used when there is little possibility of
or interest in cultural maintenance and little interest in having relationships with others (Berry,
2003).

With the use of this ecological framework, comparisons can be made between individuals
and their groups (micro system) and between nondominant people and the larger society (meso
system) within which they are acculturating. According to Berry (2003), generally, when
acculturation experiences are challenging for acculturating individuals, it causes acculturative
stress. Berry (1997) generalized that when considering behavioral changes, few result from the separation strategy and most result from the assimilation strategy. He also talked about integration, the selective adoption of new behaviors from the larger society and keeping the valued features of one’s heritage culture. Further marginalization is often linked with major heritage culture loss and the appearance of many dysfunctional and deviant behaviors (e.g., substance abuse and familial abuse). This pattern of results holds for various indicators of mental health (Berry & Kim, 1988; Schmitz, 1992) and self-esteem (Phinney, Chavira, & Williamson, 1992 as cited in Chun, Organista, & Marin, 2003). It has also been shown that the acculturative process is interconnected to behavior and environmental factors such as sociocultural, political, economic, community that is ones neighborhood, work, friends, religions, organizations, extended family, immediate family, and the individual.

In a cross-cultural study that exemplifies Berry’s (2003) study focusing in the differences between individuals and their groups and between nondominant people and the larger society, Feldman, Mont-Reynaud, and Rosenthal (1992) examined first and second generation Chinese youth in the U.S. and Australia, adolescents from Hong Kong, and Anglo adolescents in the U. S. and Australia. They found that the acculturation of the study participants was influenced toward Western values in first generation compared with their Hong Kong counterparts (Chun, Organista, & Marin, 2003). There were only little differences in values between first and second generation Chinese youth in valuing the family. Compared to their Western adolescent’s counterparts, Chinese youth from the second generation did value their family, but other factors such as tradition, noncompetitiveness, and cultural superiority were not very different from the first generation.
Certain acculturation patterns in Asian American family socialization and parenting practices have considerable attention in the literature. For example, researchers have examined that Asian immigrants parents may maintain “traditional” collectivistic family values in their new culture (Cuba, 1994; Shun & Jag, 1982), a practice that includes reinforcing the importance of filial obligations over individual needs, obedience to parental authority, respect to elders, and conformity to a hierarchical, patriarchal family structure (Chun, Organista, & Marin, 2003). For example, Pakistani American parents may believe in absolute parental authority, conformity to a hierarchy, arranged marriages, dating, and respect to elders, whereas their second generation adolescents may be more inclined to reject these values. Personal experiences suggest that immigrant Pakistani parents are authoritarian because of their involvement in their children’s lives and expect adherence to strict rules of behaviors. Pakistani Asian immigrant parents may attempt to control the everyday activities, friends and life decisions of their children due to fear of losing their own culture. Phinney (2003) refers to this as “ethnic loyalty,” or the desire for cultural preservation (Chun, Organista, & Marin, 2003). In order to save the culture, one would prefer to socialize with the same ethnic group. This can become attenuated during acculturation as indicated by Taiwanese American mothers who reported less authoritarian and controlling child-rearing attitudes than mothers in Taiwan (Chiu, 1987 as cited in Chun, Organista, & Marin 2003). However, acculturation may encourage Pakistani fathers who are first generation in the U.S. to be more involved with their children’s lives whereas, typical fathers in Pakistan do not control the daily activities as this is handled dominantly by the mothers. For example, typically fathers would not change their baby’s diapers, but after acculturation they might. Fathers also are particular about instilling values and cultural identity.
Acculturation may place some stress on the family environment. The differences between first, 1.5, and second generations can put a strain on parent-child relationships, family cohesion, and developmental milestones. For example, adolescents may compete for autonomy, dress code, or language. However, parents who are more competent report fewer problems with their children.

Children are affected by their culture through the communication of beliefs and customs parents receive from other structures in the mesosystem and exosystem. Our culture shapes beliefs concerning religion, school, family, and community life. The older generation passes on cultural values via these structures, and the younger generation receives these cultural values and passes them on to their offspring. Another example can be seen in the cultural value of independence. Because of this value, people believe a necessary component of success in our society is individuality or separateness. This belief is responsible for fostering a competitive model in our educational and economic systems, rather than a cooperative one. Cultural beliefs have real power in affecting all Bronfenbrenner’s systems. These beliefs are deeply held and become a basis for a child’s sense of self (Seifert, 1999). Because of the role culture plays in identity, there is a potential for conflict between cultures represented in this country. We may come together to form one society, yet we maintain different cultures, ethnicities, religions, and languages. Sometimes the forces of the dominant culture communication of conflicting messages to families of other cultures can create crises identity in children (Seifert, 1999). The cultural message of ideological support that is available for families in the dominant culture can be one of cultural disapproval for families of minority cultures.

Cultural Identity and Counseling Pakistani Americans

History and Background of Pakistani Americans and Immigrants
A worldview is a combination of variables that influences how cultural identity is mediated. It may also be determined by the experiences of a person in a specific context (Ibrahim, Ohnishi, & Sandhu, 1997). Immigrants’ racial worldviews are often a convergence of their home and new culture experiences. Some basic belief and values of South Asian Americans are derived from their sociohistorical culture. For example, the 1.5 generation who are the children of immigrants born in Pakistan but raised in the U.S wanted to be bicultural and fully integrated in the new society, more educated than their parents, more independent than their mothers, and identified with their own values and culture. The new country such as the United States tends to have a more inclusive policies and freedom for the immigrants. On a personal level, it is only normal for a majority culture member to feel uncomfortable with the people of a minority culture due to lack of knowledge about them. It is the element of not knowing, being knowledgeable about other cultures, and the differences between different cultures that make it difficult for people. Worldview may also vary according to the meaning making and interaction of a person in context.

Another more political aspect for the immigrants to consider is that the new country’s existing perception of the immigrant group, the legal environment, and boundaries of citizenship and membership will greatly play a role to the way immigrants feel and respond to the new culture (Henke, 2005).

One’s worldview is, for the most part, having a sense of belonging to one’s ethnicity and having positive feelings about it. Cultural identity is not something that individuals automatically have, but it develops over time, starting in childhood, continuing through adolescence, and beyond (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Some basic beliefs and values stated in Ibrahim (1997) might be consistent for all South Asian Americans. The 1.5 generation watched their parents and their
grandparents hold certain beliefs and they try to carry them, hoping that their children will carry them as well. According to Ibrahim (1997) some common assumptions that are held across Asian Americans including South Asian American (Ibrahim, 1997) are: “self-respect, dignity, and self-control. From early on, each person is encouraged to achieve these. Individual is a person in a familial context. Individuality of a person is encouraged within the boundaries and limits of the family. The most desirable self-identity is to be free of material need” (p. 7).

Respect for the family: Parents are most valued and respected. The family is of various relationships, valued and appropriate respect is given to them.

Respect for age: The hierarchical role of elders is valued and familial conflicts are resolved by them.

Awareness and respect for community: This is instilled from the previous concepts. Community is seen as an extended family.

Fatalism: Some things in life are unavoidable and must be handled accordingly.

Humility: Very important concept and supposed to make a person more humble. The more you have, materially or intellectually, the more giving one becomes (Ibrahim, 1997).

**Demographic Statistic**

The Asian American population consists of East Asian (Chinese, Korean, Japanese), South East Asian (region between Vietnam and Pakistan), and South Asians (Indians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans) (Zagellan & Carlson, 2011). As of 2005, there were over 10 million Asian Americans (U.S Census Bureau, 2005). It is important to keep in mind that even as a group, South Asians are considered to be significantly different from the East and Southeast Asians.

Most Pakistanis who immigrated to the U.S. came from urban cities like Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Hyderabad, and Peshawar. The majority are Punjabi, Pathans, and
Muhajir term refers to Muslims immigrants from India, Urdu speaking (Kalra, 2009). The Sindhis and Baluchs live in more rural areas of Pakistan and are poorly educated and therefore are underrepresented. Pakistanis moved to the U.S. for various reasons in the 1960s and 1970s, they moved for the exceptional employment opportunities and greatly improved work and research conditions (Kalra, 2009). The Americans encouraged the immigration of educated and professionals; that includes doctors, engineers, scientists, and businessmen. In the subsequent decades, there has been a relative shift, as many of the immigrants who arrived from the 1980s onwards have tended to be less educated than those in the 60s or 70s (Kalra, 2009). Pakistanis have migrated to America for social and cultural reasons as well: migration is associated with ideas of prestige and is seen as raising the social status of a family (Kalra, 2009). However, not all Pakistani immigrants have been so successful. The subsequent wave includes illegal immigrants, who tend to hold low or poorly paid jobs such as taxi drivers, newspaper vendors, waiters, gas station attendants or cashiers at local convenience stores (Kalra, 2009). Overall, the number of Pakistani immigrants has been increasing over the past two decades, and the average income of families has also been growing, and according to the 1990 census, Asians were the wealthiest amongst the non-white American Population in the U.S. (Kalra, 2009). In a more recent study, the census for the current decade, the average household income in the U.S. in 2002 was $57,852 annually, while that for the Asian household, including Pakistanis, was $70,047 (Kalra, 2009).

Pakistan has different regions mainly called four provinces. They are called Sindh, Baluchistan, Punjab, and North-West Frontier (NWF). The majority of people who migrated to U.S. were from the Punjab and Sindh. Punjab is the largest province of Pakistan. It is reported by
the Census Bureau 2010, total population of Pakistani alone is almost 3 million in the United States.

**Issues for Pakistani Americans in the U.S.**

Cultural identity is secured in a socio-cultural context with major influence coming from cultural teachings that our parents, families, peers, and the rest of the ethnic community provided us during our childhood years. Culture is the context in which all behaviors are learned from the time we learn to hold a spoon to the time we have our first religious ceremony. Our life experiences have taught us many things that we have incorporated into our identity. According to Pedersen (2000), we do have just one cultural identity, but many different salient identities presented by ethnographic, larger culture, demographic, status and affiliation groups as we grow up with them. Cultural identity may be person’s sense of belonging with other members of the same ethnic group.

Pakistani Americans differ in their identity development based on the number of generation in the United States. The first generation will not likely show conformity stage as assumed by the models of minority ethnic identity models. They accepted the cultural differences when they immigrated which is confirmed in the way they dress and follow traditions. The Dissonance Stage comes about when the first generation comes into conflict with the 1.5 or second generation who may disagree with the first generation. Parents of second or 1.5 generation children may see a need to have the same skin color as the majority culture, they realized fluency in language is very important, and climbing the corporate ladder is a white privilege not ‘brown’ (racial color referred to South Asians). They themselves may have had these experiences, especially with the gender roles one would see in families and culture.
It is seen that Identity Development Models to be interconnected and one can face them at any stage of development. They are not linear, but are multidimensional due to the complexities of social, behavioral, and historical context. Under this overarching umbrella lies a very complex human personality. According to Ibrahim (1997), cultural identity is best if developed by an ongoing process how people view themselves and how others view them. Cultural identity is strengthened when people are grounded within their ethnicity, culture, and belief system (Ibrahim, 1997).

Counseling Needs of Pakistani Americans

As stated previously, the lack of understanding of counseling needs of Pakistani Americans require more scientific research to increase the knowledge, skills and awareness of clinicians. There is a need for scientific investigation into the differences in level of acculturation and assimilation in the various generations. Ibrahim, Ohnishi, and Sandhu (1997) stated that the current research on identity development focuses on comparisons to mainstream ethnic identity instead of the origin of a cultural identity of a person from a specific cultural group. This poses a challenge for a counselor who tries to conceptualize all the information and theories on identity development to arrive at an understanding of the client’s stage of development (Ibrahim, Ohnishi, & Sandhu, 1997). This circumstance is further complicated when the client is an Asian American, because of the multidimensionality of Asian American identity (Sodowsky et al., 1995 as cited in Ibrahim, Ohnishi, & Sandhu, 1997).

Pakistani immigrants are an understudied and neglected ethnic minority group lumped together with other South Asians (Jibeen & Khalid, 2010). Very few studies have examined the multidimensional nature of cultural identity of Pakistani Americans and the many facets involved in the development of cultural identity of Pakistani Americans. Berry and Kim (1998) stated that
immigrants’ mental health is often affected because of the distress inherent in the acculturation process. Researchers have identified depression, anxiety and psychosomatic problems as the most common mental health consequences among acculturating individuals (Berry, 1997; Berry & Sam, 1997 as cited in Sam & Virta, 2003). Jibeen and Khalid (2010) measured “Threat to Ethnic Identity,” as an acculturative stressor, and found that strong identification with at least one culture is linked to positive psychological well-being. They also stated that in general, perceptions of identity gave the conflicted feeling of living in two cultures with concerns about their children’s learning and adopting of values of the new society that were unacceptable to them. An example of an item that measured this treat to ethnic identity was “I worry that my children/next generation will not adopt/follow Pakistani beliefs and customs” (Jibeen & Khalid, 2010).

**Mental Health of Pakistani Americans**

The lack of utilization of mental health services by ethnic minority groups is well discussed in mental health literature, and the studies have been centered on medical models and religion rather than cultural issues. For the majority of Pakistanis, and since Pakistan is a predominantly Muslim country, it is important to clarify the concept of mental health and illness with inclusion of religious and cultural factors. Hussain (2009) reported that cultural factors and religious views may influence the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness among Muslims within mental health services. Cochrane (1977) wrote, “cultural heritage determines the way in which people experience reality, understand their social world, define what is moral and immoral, explain various phenomena (including madness) and shape their sense of self as an individual or as part of a collective” (pp. 76).
This research on the mental health of Pakistani Americans is scarce. According to Hussain (2009), concepts such as culture and cultural differences and awareness of the distinction between religious and social culture may lead to individual differences that may impact the mental health services of Pakistani Americans who happened to be Muslims. Professionals need to raise their own awareness regarding not only culturally diverse models, but also religiously diverse models of mental health. A study by Cochrane (1977) reported that both Pakistani and Indian women have lower rates of admission for affective disorders than native white British women. A study by Soni-Raleigh, Bulusu, and Balrajan, (1993) examined suicide rates in England and Wales between 1970 and 1978 and found that in the general population, suicide rates were highest among elderly, widowed, and divorced men, but in the Asian population, the higher rates were among younger, married women. In a later study, Balrajan and Raleigh (1990) found that the rate of suicide by Asian women between the ages of 15 and 24 is three times higher than the average for all women and 60 percent higher in Asian women age 25-34. A study that investigated the role of culture in the attitudes linked with seeking professional help for mental illness as well as in beliefs about the causal attributions of mental illness found that culture was not a significant predictor of attitudes toward seeking professional help for mental illness (Furnham, 2000). The result also indicated that positive attitudes toward seeking help were tied to gender, level of education and religion (Furnham, 2000). This meant that men has a less positive attitude toward seeking professional help than women and less-educated people were less favorable toward seeking professional help. Muslims showed less positive attitude as well (Furnham, 2000).

In a multiethnic community study on cultural identity as a risk factor for mental health problems among adolescents, it was concluded that integrated cultural identity based on
friendship choices is related to fewer mental health problems among adolescents of all ethnic
groups (Bhui, et al., 2005). It was also noted that girls whose clothing choices integrated home
and new culture choices and boys with integrated friendship preferences have fewer mental
health problems (Bhui et al., 2005). As a group, Pakistani Americans do not seem to use mental
health services in proportion to their numbers in the population. Pakistanis, apparently, are
resistant to talking about personal, intimate problems with anyone other than a member of the
family, and they are reluctant due to stigma attached to counseling for not only the person who
needs it, but also the entire family. There is also a myth of the “model minority” which is
successful not only in terms of social status but claims higher standards of social and personal
achievements. Because of this, to this myth, the group can be in denial of mental health and
emotional problems.

**Reasons for Under Service to Pakistani Americans**

Cultural awareness and competency of helping professionals is needed in this era much
more than ever before due to globalization. As stated previously, scientific research on
significant aspects of Pakistanis’ experiences living in the U.S. is lacking. Little is known about
the quality of Pakistani’s lives, the stresses and strains of their day to day life, their mental health
needs, and the degree to which they utilize mental health services. Many immigrants come to the
U.S in search of a better life, and many realize their dreams in terms of materials conditions of
life, career goals, travels, and other vocational interests. The experience of immigration,
especially for people from developing countries also has a downside (Das & Kemp, 1997). For
the first and 1.5 generations, the immigrant experience has some losses of leaving a familiar
world, close relatives, and friends. Over time as the generations’ stays grow longer, the more
they get used to life here, and almost feel it would be impossible to return to Pakistan. Also, due
to recent turmoil of political instability, people usually do not go back. But most never outgrow the longing to return to the original homeland. Das and Kemp (1997), reported that South Asian men usually adopted the dress code, typically day to day mannerism of place of work and make formal social contacts with other Americans, but in general, they prefer ethnic foods, family values, and religious beliefs and practices (Sodowsky & Carey, 1988).

Counselors may find it helpful in trying to understand the attitudes and values of Pakistani Americans clients. These values, as understood by the researcher from her Pakistani heritage, include but are not limited to:

- Importance attachment to preserving religion
- Education
- Humility
- Modesty in dressing, especially for women
- Prohibit alcohol drinking or any other substance use
- Premarital sex is not allowed
- Dating is not preferred
- Modest about sexuality
- No public demonstration of affection with couples
- Strong sense of duty of family
- Protect family honor and values
- Harmony among hierarchical roles
- Respect for older persons and the elderly

When working with a Pakistani American, it is important for the counselor to show interest in learning about what is important for the client. To have a basic understanding of
immigrants’ pre-immigration and post-immigration losses and transitions within and across multiple contexts of client’s life will lead to a sound therapeutic relationship. It is recommended that culturally competent counselors assess where their clients are in the immigration process and acculturation process for the second generation to avoid any overgeneralizations or misdiagnosing. Counselors should become aware of their own culture, biases, values, and assumptions regarding clients’ ethnic and cultural group. Additionally, counselors ought to gain knowledge about Pakistani culture and the worldview of their clients. Finally, they need to acquire proper skills and interventions for their clients, given their culture and other contextual factors.

**Summary and Conclusion**

When considering the relationship between cultural identity and mental health in Pakistani Americans, counselors need to keep in mind two concept along with a general knowledge of cultural values: (a) “the degree of acculturation that the client has undergone in the mainstream culture, and (b) the type of ethnic cultural identity that the client has developed” (Das & Kemp, 1997, p. 32).

The ecological approach is helpful in working with a client from a diverse ethnic group, particularly Pakistani American. Working with a client from a diverse ethnic group cannot be put in a pigeonhole, and using the ecological perspective would give a fluid, flexible, and contextual view of new life events. Using the ecological approach, clinicians use an understanding of their clients’ cultural contexts to avoid any misdiagnosis. According to Roysircar and Pignatiello (2011) understanding a client’s ecological systems will lead to diagnosis of accurate presenting problem(s). Knowing the micro, meso, exo, macro, and chronosystems will help clinicians prioritize therapeutic goals, have visual and conceptual means of comprehending the presenting
problem(s), and therefore a snapshot of client’s life. The mapping will allow the client to view
his/her own life’s roadmap and serve as a tool to begin meaning making of an otherwise
overwhelming problem. It gives a different lens to view a problem. This framework is helpful to
conceptualize the multifaceted nature of Pakistani Americans’ cultural identity and to develop
more effective intervention strategies.
Chapter III

Methods

Research Goals and Questions

The purpose of this research is to explore factors accounting for behaviors and the meaning making life experiences of the Pakistani-American participants affecting their cultural identity. The qualitative data for this research addressed changes that occur over time from one generation to another as they relate to cultural identity. The ecological approach would help uncover the various factors and context such as social, environmental, educational, and other aspects that influence the cultural identity of Pakistani-Americans living in the U.S. This study was aimed at understanding cultural identity development of three generations of Pakistani Americans to address the following research questions: (a) how do Pakistani American make meaning of their cultural identity? (b) What factors contribute to cultural identity of Pakistani American?

Research Design

The research suggested the qualitative method is preferred for the investigation of complex issues such as those relating to culture, race, and ethnicity (Mertens, 1998). “Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). The research design is qualitative with an interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivist approaches focus on the meanings attributed to events, places, behaviors, and interactions, people, and artifacts (Given, 2008). Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). These meanings have historical depth and are widely shared, negotiated, and co-
constructed (Given, 2008). This phenomenological approach emphasizes the individual’s subjective experience and seeks the individuals’ perceptions and meaning of a phenomenon or experience (Mertens, 1998). It also assumes that social phenomena are constructed or co-constructed by self and can be discovered by collecting and analyzing conversations. This approach is selected because it allows focusing on understanding of how individuals create and understand their own cultural identity. The subjective experiences are at the center of the inquiry (Mertens, 1998). This is also heavily dependent upon the researcher’s involvement with the participants’ community since meaning-making emerges through interaction among participants and between the researcher and the participants (Given, 2008). Higgs and Cherry (2009) noted:

This culture of inquiry focuses on lived experiences and the way people make sense of those experiences. It aims to develop rich descriptions of the way phenomena are experienced by individuals or groups, and to understand the meanings these people attach to their experiences. Researchers are asked to avoid pre-judgments about the experience in question, to develop thick descriptions of the experience, explore the many meanings it can have, and then to try to extract the shared essence of the experience. Phenomenology has its roots in philosophical thinking about the nature of human experiences and has been taken up in different ways by psychologists and sociologists. Researchers from more aesthetic or arts-based disciplines are interested in how intuitive experience can be represented in ways that avoid the limitations of words (p. 10).

This allows for an understanding of how members of the society apprehend and act upon the objects of their experience as if they were things separate and distinct from themselves (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The emergence of categories, separate and distinct from individual thought and action, goes well with this background (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).
In this study, in-depth individual interviews and one focus group interview were used as a data collection method to understand the subjective experiences of these individuals as Pakistani Americans. According to Liamputtong (2009), interviews in social research are seen as ‘special conversations’ in which the social world of individuals is talked about in great detail. The research interview, according to Kvale (2007, p. 1), is “an inter-view where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee.” This is an effective means to learn at great length from participants about their perceptions and experiences of living in the U.S. Therefore, this is an appropriate type of data collection method using open-ended questions formulated for the in-depth unstructured individual interviews with the participants. Interviews give direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge (Patton, 2002). Interviewing allows for free interaction between the researcher and the interviewee and includes opportunities for clarification and discussion. The researcher can explore participant’s views of reality and make full use of differences among different levels of generation status and acculturation. Furthermore, the in-depth interviews provided a more personal voice of the interviewees along with cultural perspectives of Pakistani Americans.

After the preliminary analyses consisting of description or themes from the individual interviews, a focus group of participants was convened to reflect on the accuracy of the accounts using member-checking strategies. According to Khan and Manderson (1992), a focus group is a way of describing and understanding perceptions, interpretations, and beliefs of a select population. According to Carpenter and Suto (2008) member-checking “reflects some core values of qualitative research related to accurate representation, privileging participants’ knowledge and experience and decreasing the power imbalance between research and participant (p.153).” During the focus group interview, the participants expressed their ideas, helped
validate the emerging themes and interpretations from the earlier in-depth interviews, and gave
direction for future research questions. The researcher did not put any one person on the spot to
disclose what they stated on the in-depth interview. Participants shared their views, experiences,
beliefs and concerns with the rest of the group at their discretion.

Study Site

The recruitment for participants took place at a community organization called Miami
Valley Islamic Association (MVIA) located in Springfield, Ohio. It is a community center for all
Muslims from different ethnicities; a moderate number of Pakistani-Americans are members of
this organization. The center has about 200 members, mostly from the local Springfield area and
a few traveled from areas in the vicinity. The center is a place of worship for Muslims and hosts
community gatherings for its members. The prayers are offered every day, five times a day.
Every Sunday there is a community gathering in the afternoon for visitors and members to meet
for social time and a luncheon get-together. Sundays are also the day for Islamic teachings for all
age groups. At this center, people of other religions also visit to collaborate for events like garage
sales, bake sales, and community support resources.

All participants and the researcher met at this center or at an alternative location at a
mutual time in which interactions occurred among the Pakistani families for face-to-face
interviews and focus group interview. The participants had an opportunity to choose a place of
their preference to meet and conduct the interviews. Each participant was interviewed separately;
each member of the same family (if there is more than one participant of different generation
from the same family) had a chance to answer the questions so that differences of opinions could
be seen. At the same time, similarities in opinions were also noted. The in-depth interviews with
individual participants facilitated expression of feelings and thoughts that might not have
otherwise emerged if all generations were put in the same room for the interview. By giving an opportunity for participants to do individual face-to-face interviews before the focus group, any cultural hierarchy differences were eliminated. This process allowed a place to express openly and freely.

Study Population

The target population is comprised of Pakistani Americans living in the U.S. The research included the first generation, the immigrants who left Pakistan as adults and moved to the U.S; the 1.5 generation, who are the children of immigrants and who were born in Pakistan but raised in the U.S; and the second generation who are born and raised in the U.S. Refer to Table 1.1 for generation levels. For this study, the sampling pool included families living in the Ohio area for over 20 years. In addition, participants could be geographically from different location of Pakistan, which would be possible mainly in the first and 1.5 generation levels.

Qualitative research usually focuses in depth on fairly small samples, even single cases selected purposefully (Patton, 2002). The aim of this study was to provide enough data to allow the descriptions of the life experiences of the interviewees with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described research questions. Altogether there were 11 participants. The participants needed to be at least 18 years of age and above, except in the 2nd generation, who were under 18, but able to participate with parental consent.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation Level</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Those who moved to U.S as adults. No established family group in U.S. Age ranges 18-60. Youngest moved here immediately after marriage and had her children here. Oldest moved after retirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Those who moved to U.S with parents or moved a short time after parents and had an established family group in the U.S. Age ranges 4-34.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Those who were born and raised in U.S. Some have visited Pakistan but others have never visited Pakistan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sampling

This research used criterion sampling, where representation is desired and randomization is not required (Given, 2008). It was predetermined that participants will be 1, 1.5, and 2nd generations Pakistani Americans living in the U.S to provide the rich information relevant to the study. The sampling size was dependent upon the number of Pakistanis willing to participate in this study. The researcher limited the size to at least 2 members of each population and maximum of 4 in each generation but to include as many different levels of generations in the study as possible. Therefore, total number of participants had to be from 6 to 12. In qualitative research, no set formula is applied to determine the sample size. It was flexible and generated quality data (Liamputtong, 2009). Since the researcher is an insider, the researcher placed a phone call or recruited through networking in the organization MVIA center for any member who meets the criteria of the research study. The researcher contacted the Pakistanis to set the time that is convenient for the participants and met at agreed location to interview. The agreed-upon location was the interviewees’ homes, researcher’s home, or MVIA that has classrooms which could be used to provide a quite environment to record the interviews. The researcher kept in mind that the agreed upon place should be one where distractions and noise levels are to the minimal. The above criteria were utilized to conduct the interviews.

Measurement

There were two methods of inquiry in this study: face-to-face in-depth interviews with participating Pakistani individuals and one focus group interview at the end of the study for validation. By bringing together Pakistani Americans living in the Springfield community who share similar backgrounds, the intention was to create the opportunity for participants to engage in meaningful conversations about the cultural identity that researcher wished to understand. The
in-depth interviews contained five open-ended questions. There were follow-up questions designed to help the participants to elaborate about the answer they have just given. The researcher was allowed to probe and clarify any question.

The questions were open-ended and tried to capture the experiences of each generation living in the United States and how the cultural identity is changed or maintained over time. The questions also tried to capture the influences of host culture over Pakistani culture. The interviews were unstructured because the participants were free to elaborate or take the interview in new but related directions. One question asked, “How would you describe your experiences as a Pakistani American living in the U.S?” Appendix A contains a list of additional questions.

In the unstructured interview, the conversation moves back and forth among the researcher’s introduction of the topic under investigation, the participant’s account of his or her experiences, and the researcher’s probing of these experiences for further information useful to the analysis (Given, 2008).

The focus group offered the opportunity for participants to validate the themes identified in the in-depth interviews. The participants were invited to review their transcripts. They were able to delete information that they may not wish the researcher to include in the analysis (Liamputtong, 2009). They were also invited to give further comments that would make additional contributions or strengthen accuracy. Liamputtong (2009) described it as a narrative course of conversation that allows the interviewees to bring forth their perspectives and subjective experiences. The researcher conducted the role of a moderator to obtain accurate account of information given in the face-to-face interviews and ‘validate the researcher’s interpretive process, to determine whether the participants were able to ‘hear their own voices’,
or have their experiences or perspectives represented in the preliminary findings’ (Carpenter & Suto 2008, p. 153 as cited in Liamputtong, 2009).

**Procedure**

The researcher contacted the Pakistanis that were selected and agreed to conduct the study and set the time and location. Same participants were included in the in-depth interviews and focus group. The researcher remained flexible to the availability of the participants and work around their schedule. All participants remained confidential to protect their identity. Ethical considerations were closely monitored to protect the participants’ identities. Each participant was given a pseudo name to protect her/his confidentiality. Ethical issues are more prominent in qualitative research because of the close interaction and relationship between the researcher and the participants. The informed consent had been defined as “the provision of information to participants, about the purpose of the research, its procedure, potential risks, benefits, and alternatives, so that the individual understands this information and can make a voluntary decision whether to enroll and continue to participate” (Emanuel et al. 2000, p. 2703 as cited in Liamputtong, 2009). The researcher informed the participants of the risk of conducting a study within a small community where people know each other well and disclosure of any personal matter may be recognized by the other participants or other community members who may read the finished study. However, the researcher maintained confidentiality of all participants, and concealed the true identity of the participants.

For the focus group, all three generations participated and answered the interview questions to allow full expression of feelings and open conversation. All interviews were completed in a similar setting. The researcher situated herself across from the interviewees and presented summary questions to which the participants responded. The summary questions had
some themes from the individual interviews to give the participants a chance to elaborate on their responses. The interviewer followed a sequence which had an introduction that allowed both parties to engage in the process and feel comfortable with each other. This allowed opinions, interpretations and behaviors of participants with each other and about their interviews become more alive. The researcher requested consent, introduced the research, explained the purpose of the study, and reassured confidentiality (Liamputtong, 2009). Permission to record the interview was requested at this stage with each participant. The individual interviews started with an opening question such as those listed above. The interviewer tried to encourage the participants to keep talking by using probes and follow-up questions. Body language and verbal cues were noted to capture the full experiences of the participants (Liamputtong, 2009). Brief notes were jotted down on the question list for further discussions. The interviewer let the interviews flow as naturally as possible (Liamputtong, 2009).

The ending of the interview finished by summarizing some the main points the participants had given and by asking: “Is there anything else you would like to bring up, or talk about before we finish the interview?” This allowed the participants to say more about some other important matters they have been thinking about during the interview, and offered any clarification (Liamputtong, 2009). The researcher tried to end on a positive note to have an opportunity to return for any clarification in the future.

After the interviews were finished, the researcher debriefed the participants by asking if they had any questions or anything else to add (Liamputtong, 2009). The participants were invited back for the focus group; the date and time were set in collaboration. A thank you note was sent to all participants.
The tape recorder was used to record the in-depth interviews and focus group conversations with participants so that the researcher was able to pay close attention to what participants said, to follow up the conversation, to probe further and to clarify in the interview session. These recordings were transcribed and subsequently used for analysis. This was to ensure that the participants’ responses were captured in their own words.

**Data Analysis**

Corbin and Straus (2008) propose that an exploratory study should help the researcher move toward a better understanding of how a research problem should be structured, determine what is appropriate data and develop useful tool to gather information. Drawing on the work of Blumer, they suggest that analyzing one’s data will assist in learning not only about the area of study, but also about how the lives of participants unfold.

The recorded interviews and recorded focus group interview were transcribed to help the researcher learn as much as possible about participants’ interviewing style and to record the social and emotional aspects of the interview situation. These transcriptions helped the researcher understand the meaning-making process as discussed by interview subjects (Liamputtong, 2009). The transcription was word by word. As soon as one transcription was done, the researcher listened to the tape and reviewed the transcript for any errors.

Upon the completion of the transcription of the recorded tapes, a thematic analysis took place to emphasize the importance of context, particularly experiences of the participants. This allowed the researcher to say something about the participants as a whole and patterns of themes across the full data set, highlighting what interviewees had in common as well as how they differ (King & Horrocks, 2010).
The analytic process coded emerging categories and themes from the data and focused attention to those data points which demonstrated the subtle, unspoken undercurrents of social life (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Identifying salient themes, recurring ideas, patterns of belief, and loss of home culture and traditions took place during the initial phase of data analysis. These categories generated patterns evident in the setting and expressed by participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). As categories of meaning emerged, the researcher searched for those that had “internal convergence and external divergence” (Guba, 1978 p. 159 as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In Patton (2000), inductive analysis processes are described as uncovering repeated experiences, themes, and categories in one’s data which is in contrast with deductive analysis where the analytic categories are stipulated beforehand.

Once the researcher developed categories and themes, the coding process was nearly finished and written analytic memos that summarize key findings began to surface. The researcher looked for challenges and understanding to incorporate these findings into larger constructs, as necessary (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). After this step, the researcher began to write the report which has already been part of the analytic process. It was important to choose words carefully to summarize and reflect the complexity of the data. This interpretive act lent shape and form, bringing meaning to “mountains of raw data” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006 p. 162).

Data Validation

To ensure that the research findings were trustworthy, the researcher conducted an approximately two-hour long focus group. I reported the initial themes identified in the data analysis procedure to the focus group in order to validate and clarify themes in the face to face
interviews. This process was also used to identify whether the respondents felt any important information relating to their individual interviews was missing.

Limitations

Due to time constraints, it was not feasible to include Pakistanis from other areas of Ohio to interview more respondents. I wanted to represent the Pakistani families that live in Springfield to learn more about my own community. I was unable to get a balance in gender numbers because of the work schedules and time availability to conduct the study.
Chapter IV

Results

This chapter presents the narration of the findings from the data analysis. Each participant is introduced with background information so readers can get to know the participants. The results of the 11 face-to-face interviews and one focus group are presented. Five themes emerged across three generational groups.

Participants’ information

Sajid, 73 year old, Muslim male, emigrated from Pakistan at age 28. Sajid is a physician (Internist), who is still practicing medicine. He left Pakistan when he was 25 year old and completed is post-graduate residency in England and moved to the U.S after three years training. He is married and is considered first generation.

Shahid, 85 year old, Muslim male, emigrated from Pakistan at age 60. Shahid is a retired family physician. He left Pakistan 25 years ago. Shahid is married and is considered first generation.

Saeeda, 56 year old, Muslim female, emigrated from Pakistan at age 18. Saeeda is career counselor at a community college, who is still working full-time. She left Pakistan 38 years ago, and had completed high school. After she moved to the U.S. she completed her undergraduate from a local university and masters in career counseling. She is married and is considered first generation.

Farah, 42 year old Muslim female, emigrated from Pakistan at age 22 following her parents who came to U.S. a few months before her, 20 years ago. Farah is a homemaker with an undergraduate degree. She is married and considered 1.5 generation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudo Name</th>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years spend in the US</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Approximate Age</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sajid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Physician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saeeda</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Retired Physician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tariq</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farah</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Homemaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iman</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Homemaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aisha</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Homemaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monis</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salma</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariam</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age Group</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatima</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>HS 15</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tariq, 46 year old Muslim male, emigrated from Pakistan at age 34 followed parents, 12 years ago. Tariq is by profession an Architect, but after moving to the U.S, couldn’t pursue this career and now he works for a nursing home as an administrator. He is married and considered 1.5 generation.

Iman, 51 year old Muslim female, emigrated from Pakistan at age 25 with her parents, 26 years ago. Iman completed her medical school in Pakistan before she moved to the U.S. After she moved she did not pursue her career and became a homemaker. She is married and considered 1.5 generation.

Monis, 24 year old Muslim male, born and raised in the U.S. Recently graduated from college with an undergraduate degree and pursuing Law. He is single and considered 2nd generation.

Fatima, 15 year old Muslim female, born and raised in the U.S. Attends local high school. She is single and considered 2nd generation.

Salma, 22 year old Muslim female, born and raised in the U.S. Attends a private university in Ohio and upon completion in May 2012, she is pursuing Dentistry. She is single and considered 2nd generation.

Mariam, 16 year old Muslim female, born and raised in the U.S. Attends local high school. She is single and considered 2nd generation.

Data Narration

The first generation had a total of 4 participants, but one interview could not be transcribed due to poor recording and a broken tape. This one participant left the U. S. and did not return in time to interview again with the researcher. The 1.5 and second generations had 4
participants and each completed the interviews. All other 11 participants were able to finish the research study and seven participants returned to take part in the focus group.

The five major categories that emerged across the three generational groups are described and supported with the raw data. The following are the five categories:

1. **Awareness of cultural identity differences is situational.** This category emerged across all three generations but it was more prominent in the 2nd generation. Older study participants felt greater cultural differences which encompassed more aspects of their lives. First and 1.5 generational participants spoke about how they struggled with some assimilation and still feel different in some situations.

   The second generation spoke about feeling more American when they are around older Pakistanis or Pakistanis who are new to the U.S. They saw a much smaller difference between cultures and felt a part of their American friends groups with little or no pressure to choose between the cultures.

   Saeeda saw this as the differences between generations, and how things are easier for them to do versus what she went through. She compared it with her grown children who are 2nd generation in the U.S.

   These kids are much more natural on that because they grew up here and they know the sense of humor they know all the background … They are more at ease. It is easy for them to say no, we came from a culture and didn’t know how to say no. It was not polite to say no. That was a cultural thing. We had to adapt to say no, just more comfortable to say yes… My parents are here and don’t want to say no to them, that’s an old culture thing.
Aisha also saw that acculturation is easier for 2nd generation. She saw that with her own day-to-day experiences because she came to the U.S as a child and spent most her of life in the U.S.

So I think when I was first growing up, I didn’t really know but then when you go out to high school and college, it is very different because you are around people who don’t know your background and who had different backgrounds. So then you can see how people treat you and how accepting they are of your background and your culture. Like overall growing up as a Pakistani-American, I don’t feel that different because I think in the U.S., everyone is pretty accepting … In our household we do a lot of things that are Pakistani but for us, it not like we still listen to the music and we do speak the language but it has become a mixture. With that, when I go out in public like it is easy to adapt. So I am not changing who I am but I think I have just kind of assimilated.

Monis reported more along the lines of historic sense.

I feel like for me there are no like dichotomy between American and Pakistani. I think being Pakistani in itself as an immigrant or as second generation immigrant, we are very American. You know, in the sense that we come to this country or our parents came for these opportunities and they took well advantage of what was available here and I think that is one of the most American things to do. I think maybe hanging out with my friends while they are at the bars or something and they are all drinking and stuff, that is when I am most American. I am still Pakistani so I don’t feel like a difference.

Fatima was the youngest of my participants. Her views were limited to her life experiences, undefined, and developing in nature.
I guess it’s because sometimes your parents are more strict than other parents. Things are different and you will say something weird and they will be like, what’s that? So it is not very different, I guess… When I am with a whole group of Pakistanis, that is when I feel Pakistani culture, and I guess like parties at the mosque and things like that, with my family, when talking to each other. That is mostly when…I kind a feel bad that like they are associated with us even though we are nothing like that. I guess that fact that we are American also makes a difference, we are not living there. We are not just Pakistani, we are Pakistani-American different.

Salma reported that her life experiences have given her better understanding of her cultural identity.

Well, I think growing up in a Pakistani family; we were kind of around a lot of Pakistani culture. We grew up speaking Urdu in the house but then we starting going to school, I think the culture kind of leaves you because you think it is uncool. You don’t speak Urdu anymore, you are speaking English and to our parents they try to keep the culture within you. So the only real way that we try to keep the Pakistani culture within us is by hanging out with other groups of Pakistani people … I think as I have gone to college, I have become more aware of it and want to be more in touch with it, just because you get to learn to appreciate it more. When you are around more individuals who also appreciate their culture more, you want to be in touch with it …You meet groups of friends and you relate to certain people more and then you realize how you were brought up. You relate to the Pakistani kids more, just because you have some of the same culture….I think interacting with people like in college, interacting with people who come straight from Pakistan and you like talk to them and they approach you because they think you are
going to be like another Pakistani from Pakistan and then you tease them about the culture and show them, because I grew up here. So I see a lot of American culture interacting with people who are foreign from abroad, I think that is when I feel most American. Because it is like you actually see the cultural difference, even though you are both Pakistani, it is actually really different.

Mariam, a high schooler talked about her family dynamics

I mean, the experiences are basically the same. I feel like I am not very different from the rest of my friends minus like maybe from the social things like dating. Everything is basically the same. We go to the same friend troubles, even family troubles are basically the same because you get into arguments with your parents. They are all generally the same thing for everybody … Everyone else is going through the same things at some point in their lives … I would say mostly when I am with my family, like when I go on vacation and stuff. That is what I love about it, that they are always like so Pakistani and there are no boundaries behind it. I am not embarrassed by anything and also it makes me feel my culture more, because you are around more those people … You are just around a bunch of people who understand everything about you. Like most of the differences that you have with the Americans, they always understand that. So it is just like refreshing to be around people who understand what you are going through completely all the time.

2. Sense of Loss. First and 1.5 generation participants were the only groups to address a sense of loss about their home culture. They spoke about losing their connection with their home country and missing the important cultural events that took place in their absence. Some 1.5 generational participants spoke about a specific kind of loss – they feel they cannot provide a
strong cultural base for their children because they are in the U.S. and do not have direct access
to Pakistan and their extended families there.

Second generation participants do not feel a loss because they have not experienced a life
in Pakistan. In some cases, they spoke about a desire to learn more about their heritage and fold
that into their cultural identity. Their desire is to more fully appreciate their home culture, but
not to make up for a loss.

Sajid talked about his sense of loss with no longer having siblings or older relatives to
spend time within the U.S or Pakistan. Sajid felt a loss for his children and grandchildren
who have never visited Pakistan. Political uncertainty and corruption have created safety
issues which keep his children and grandchildren from being able to learn from directly
experiencing Pakistani culture. I have been there 4 or 5 times (since 1970) … I think that
deteriorated there. My mother passed away, my two sisters, two brothers, they all passed
away. So really there is only one brother left now… Because the way things are going
and Pakistan doesn’t really have a good name right now… I mean violence and
dishonesty and corruption is so bad… I was raised and educated in Pakistan. So we just
cannot deny it, but I feel sorry that it is that way. I hope things get better … That is the
reason for our safety problems. I hate to go back. We don’t want to bring our kids there.
There is no sense of security…But, yeah, it really is challenging time to even think about
going for a visit with the family.

Saeeda felt this sense of loss in terms of leaving Pakistan when she was a teenager and
left all her family. It was a difficult transition for her. She replaced her loss with new friendships
and those friends became her new family.
That was a hard adjustment coming from a huge family, because we had joint family system and to be by yourself. That was an adjustment … Families away from family… That was a stronger bond. I felt when I would go back home that I am not connected to my own friends and relatives anymore because they are in a different world and I am in a different world … Your siblings don’t understand, your cousins don’t understand because they are not in your situation. Your local created family is your family. I think that is what the trust and friendship was different. In Pakistani culture the friendship is deep. So I think here it comes even deeper than Pakistan … The western lifestyle is everything is on you. So I think that was the hardest adjustment, cleaning bathrooms and cleaning cars and doing your own groceries and things like that initially, but then once you get used to it everything is like anything else. You can get used to it. Then not having support system at times, you know. You found friends but they are also in the same boat as you are. They have their family and their children. So you don’t have the support system like mothers and sisters around when you are sick or you really need somebody. So that was the hardest one … The taste of the food … you know sometimes I sit here now and imagine how I like that (certain food) … The other day I was talking to my parents and wished I could have a nice Khadri ghost (Pakistani dish) but no matter how much you try (to make such dish), there you go, it is not the same. There are those kinds of things.

Shahid discussed his sense of loss because he is elderly with health issues and most likely would not be able to visit Pakistan before he passes away. He missed his relatives, weddings of his relatives, and death of family members.

At times of seeing relatives … Mostly the occasion of marriage and their bad times.
Iman came as an adult and remembers most of her life in Pakistan. She felt this sense of loss for her three children growing up in America. She felt that she couldn’t give them those same experiences that she had because they were wonderful for her.

I was a kid that was different, carefree, life was great. Holidays used to be different (compare to here) We have things but not the same and my kids are missing out on them, I tried to do what I can, I really miss them….I know the bad things going on there, but I don’t like others saying anything bad about Pakistan. I really remember it from the days I was there, things were great, people have changed, not in Pakistan, but all over the world and the world has changed.

3. Positive Experience. Most participants had positive experiences as they assimilated into U.S cultures; comments about opportunity, ease of acculturation and not experiencing discrimination were cross-generational. Most study participants feel they made a good decision moving from their home country to the U.S. and are aware of the higher quality of life.

Sajid being here for more than 38 years had all positive experiences.

We really appreciated it and we were very grateful… I personally really didn’t feel any problem …Yes, I mean I can say that personally I have never been discriminated and never felt any really negative feelings from the local people or anybody else … Well, I can say that we are very happy here in this country and this country has been good to us. We are here, serving the community and we are getting rewarded for that. We are very grateful to the American people. As far as I am concerned really I have a very positive understanding with the Americans.

Saeeda reported her experiences in the U.S as “pretty good life” at this point. She went on to say that she has picked good qualities from both countries (host and home).
Shahid also reported “very good experience and has made my life very comfortable and has health facilities. He felt very happy to be in the U.S. because he was able to receive good healthcare and there are facilities for elderly that he could take part in which are not available in Pakistan for elderly.

Tariq talked about his experiences in the U.S as positive.

My experience has been pretty good you know being in the U.S. as a Pakistani-American, but again like I was saying, it is changing a little bit and not exactly post 9/11 but maybe post the war or something. So more than 911, people are more trying to criticize us to our faces and they don’t think there is anything wrong with it. They don’t understand that is what North America was basically based on. What made America great was that we lived in harmony with so many religions, what their differences were and we always had left our differences back home, even with other communities that we had were over here but we always left that back home and we lived as one over here. That is the only thing and I hope it changes in the future … Like, you know my experience has been great. I have met so many great people. I met so many people like I told you last time that my mentor in the long term care business; her husband was a clergy and he was a pastor and she has been great with me. She held my hand all the way until the time I got everything done. Farah also had a positive experience and she said, “I totally enjoyed it”, “it was always nice”.

Iman reported it as “good experience” as well. She said she did not have any problems living in the U.S.

Monis said, “I feel like it has been a good experience overall.”
4. **Aware of two cultures.** All participants verbalized that they are aware of the two cultures of home versus new. They are aware of the difference of two cultures. For the first and 1.5 generation, the difference was between the home and the new culture, but for second generation, it was more of the cultural differences between school or public culture and their culture inside the home where they interacted with their families.

For Sajid, awareness of two distinct cultures is highlighted by celebrating American holidays while retaining strong ties to his home culture.

I think that (Thanksgiving) is a very good holiday where first generation, we feel that we are assimilated in the American society. We get together; all our family gets together with the turkey and everything. So really my three children are born here in this country, so they are U.S citizens and they are as American as anybody else. That is a good feeling … I think we have become more American now. I spend more time in this country than back home … Of course we cannot forget our heritage. We are still Pakistani. We remember Pakistan. We still have communication with Pakistan.

Saeeda talked about her awareness of both home and new cultures in respect to her daily life.

At work I think I am most American at work in terms of my demeanor or my mindset, but 80% American daytime and 20% Pakistani at night…Yeah, there is a little shift, but it happens so naturally that you don’t think I am switching this way or switching that way you know. There are times through I will sometimes be saying in English something and some word will slip out of my mouth and I will have to catch that because I am watching a lot of plays (Urdu TV) … We become bilingual very easily I think. I would say Pakistani-American because you don’t want to forget your roots … I am here twice as
much than there…I adopted this country by choice. So naturally there is a positive and some good about this culture. We raised our children here, we are still here so that root has to be there; so I would stay Pakistani-American … I would rather not make them feel uncomfortable sitting here constantly saying I don’t drink, anymore than some feelings, why is she acting so different. So I don’t want to wear my religion on my sleeve. So I excuse myself. Moments like that sometimes, you just kind of feel like you belong to a particular group, but 95% of the time things work.

Aisha referred to her awareness as maintaining both cultures.

I just want to be referred to as Pakistani-American because that way I am not getting rid of either cultures or both worlds because I still appreciate my Pakistani heritage but at the same time I know I am not just Pakistani. I worked hard to become an American. I have a lot of white culture too, so I would definitely just want to have both because that is who I think I am … I think the moments that make me feel most Pakistani are probably when I am introduced to people who just have no idea (who I am). When they haven’t been around the culture and they ask you like, oh what country are you from and sometimes they don’t even understand when I am saying Pakistan because people just don’t know the culture.

Tariq was most reminded of two cultures when he celebrated Pakistani holidays and how Americans are more generous and give more to charity.

Basically cultural occasions, like Ramadan makes me feel mostly Pakistani because as far as we are concerned these are not exactly interchangeable. Most of Pakistani occasions are Islamic occasions too … Most of the occasions are religious occasions are religious occasions that remind me of my country … I think so, I think so because it is more
prevalent over here in America than anywhere else that basically back home in Pakistan that I have seen that helping people and doing whatever throughout the year actually. ..So that is more that I have seen over here than I have seen in Pakistan.

Farah is aware of the two cultures by other’s reactions to her phenotype.

Because wherever you go, people still ask you from where are you? Because of my skin color or my name or probably my accent because my accent is not very still there …

Because when I go out folks still want to know where you from are … Not everyday. I believe in do as the Romans do but you still don’t leave your identity and you don’t leave your limits, your cultural or your moral values. So I dress up in American clothes all the time but that doesn’t mean that I am not Pakistani anymore. I am still there, but I am embracing different clothing… I like to involve everything in my life because I don’t want to label myself as just Pakistani or just American or just Muslim.

Fatima, being a 2nd generation said, “I am not really reminded every day. I just know I am different from everyone else”. She also went to say, “I guess Pakistani-American, like it is cool to be like different. It’s like two cultures. It’s cool.

Monis saw the two cultures as more a “description of me as a person, but I have always believed to be Pakistani.”

I think I definitely feel more Pakistani when I am around my family. You know, I don’t have any Pakistani friends, one and he is like white basically, yeah, my family …

Because it is a constant struggle between just my philosophies in life, because that is who I am as a person, who I am continuing to be on a more American than I could ever see because I don’t know anything else.
Salma saw the two cultures come more alive when she moved from her small home town to a larger community with even greater diversity.

Then going to college, I go to a pretty diverse college so people are more educated. They are pretty accepting and we have like a Pakistani association and we do Pakistani events just to raise awareness of the culture and of Pakistan. So my experiences in the U.S. have changed as I have been growing up … So that is something that kind of individualizes my Pakistani culture. But dress-wise, I don’t really wear my Pakistani shalwar kameezes and things that often. I mean when we have our Pakistani student association events, that is when I really can express the culture but that is not that often … One thing is like respecting your parents and adults. Something like that, I think in American culture it is a little different. Like if you go to a friend’s house a lot of the American kids don’t say hi to your parents or something like that. But in our household, in a Pakistani-Muslim household, I think like one big thing is respecting elders and respecting your parents and that you should go out of your way to like say hello to them and talk to them. So I think there are certain things like what is in the culture that you learn.

Mariam shared her sense of awareness of living in two cultures by her daily life experiences.

It is not really that different except for maybe some of the cultural differences from my own family, like how long I am allowed to stay out with my American friends versus like they tell me to come home at 11:00 PM and they are allowed to stay out to like 1:00 AM … Major difference because it is just different being in relationships. So caught up in themselves all the time, like in each other and it is just like a different experience. Like they don’t notice the third person most of the time … I mean I have learned to accept it. I
know sometimes it seems like it would be fun, like socially, not like more of the romantic part but just like going out and like hanging out with people … I would say it would be more in the line of morals and boundaries, like clothing for instances, because they dress differently, not completely differently but I will cover myself up more. Like if I went swimming with them, they would be like in bikinis and stuff, and I would be in a full body suit. I look like a freak but I don’t care because I don’t want to wear a bikini because that makes me uncomfortable … more on the lines of like clothing, interactions with people and boundaries like curfew and what I am allowed to do, like driving a car or something … It is just a cultural difference. I think you have to learn to trust your kids a little bit and I would be believe that my kids would do what I would do, because I would be like teaching them things.

5. **Culture and religion are intertwined.** Most participants across the generations spoke about the inability to separate religion and culture because they see the two closely intertwined. Clothing and food choices, for example, are most often dictated by Muslim beliefs which are part of their cultural identity.

Saeeda felt very strongly about her religious practicing are intertwined with her cultural values. She looked at it as a moral and ethical base to stand on.

That gives me moral and ethical ground to stand on. That guides me every single day … You know your culture and it comes to surface I would say mostly religious celebrations because I think our identity is kind of intertwined with the social and religious activities, so fasting eating, all those occasions, or when we go to the Pakistani Association gatherings … Those kind of things; they are all part of the culture. So that comes when we are gathering of our own kind.
Aisha linked it more to her identity as Muslim versus Pakistani. I think this identity has made us who we are. I mean a lot of the Pakistani culture is ingrained with religion and I think religion really affects everything we do in our life. So whether it is interacting with our parents, like respecting our elders, that is a very Pakistani culture but it is also very Islamic. Stuff like that, I think … I think I probably do personally because the Pakistani culture is only so much but I think it is just intertwined. Like a lot of the culture, the things we do, clothes we wear, the food that we are prohibited to eat. Pakistan was a Muslim country. It is based on almost the values… For me, I think it is very intertwined so being Pakistani for me the culture is kind of like the plan to.

Farah saw no difference in behaviors from cultural views to religious values, for her they are same, cannot be separated. She had a difficult time separating her cultural identity and religion. When I was about to end our interview, Farah said, “That is sad, I was just getting started. You know, before we speak, I never thought of these things. You know, Muslim slash Pakistani slash American. I just see that my life brought me here and I got well adjusted”.

I never thought about it because I think of myself American-Muslim, because I told you culture is always a part, the religion is there in the culture. You can say 5%, 10%, that is on an individual, but I cannot say that you can exclude religion from culture….When you say culture, the religion has to be involved in there somewhere a little bit, not much, not very little but some will be involved…. It goes side by side as in our religion it says that you have to respect your parents. That is what our culture says to respect your parents. So it goes kind of side by side. So I don’t know if I should say that is cultural or religious but this is just a little example I am giving. I still want that for my kids.
Monis, a second generation, looked at himself as Muslim-American more than Pakistani-American. The reason for this was that he traveled a lot and also lived in the Saudi Arabia for some time as a child, so his identity is more linked to his religion because his direct exposure to Pakistani culture was minimal. Since he has had different cultures and felt that his experiences included a little bit of everything, and did not like to be “boxed in” into one culture.

**Results by research questions**

A second level of categories emerged as data were reviewed by specific generational groups. There were some second level categories that emerged only within a generational group even though the general category was cross-generational. The first research question, “What factors contribute to cultural identity of Pakistani Americans?,” was explored by interview questions 2, 3 and 4.

1. What are the significant moments that make you feel mostly Pakistani?
2. When (what kind of situations make) do you feel most as American?
3. What would you like to be referred as, Pakistani-American, Pakistani, or American? Explain.

The second research question, “How do Pakistani Americans make meaning of their cultural identity?” was explored by interview questions 1 and 5.

1. How would you describe your experiences as a Pakistani American living in the U.S.?
2. How would this identity (i.e. what they prefer to be referred to) be a factor in your daily life?
Research Question #1

What factors contribute to cultural identity of Pakistani Americans?

Many factors contributed to the cultural identity of study participants, but there were generational distinctions. Within each generation, Pakistani Americans meant something slightly different. The second generation is more assimilated and as does not feel so apprehensive about going out in the night with colleagues or friends. Monis said that he would sometime join his friends at the bar and not drink, he does not feel pressured to drink alcohol. Saeeda felt more pressured and chooses to stay home for office parties because she is first generation and has those old thinking that is if you went to a place where alcohol and men are involved is not seen as a traditional way. The 1.5 generation came in the middle, depending on the age of emigration and family values. Some families had more traditional ways of conducting self versus others.

Overarching factors mentioned by all generations included celebrating religious holidays, ethnic food, clothing, elaborate weddings, cultural occasions, national occasions, and social family gatherings within this ethnic group. There are differences in daily practice of Pakistani Americans, they are more structured from the religious aspect and there is are sub-cultures within our own culture that is more religious specific. An example would be that Muslim men and women, and especially women preferred to not participate in happy hours, work related parties after dark, drinking alcohol is prohibited in the religion, so it makes no sense for them to go to a bar and sit and explain to others that they don’t drink alcohol. The sense of feeling most American was viewed as in the sense of belonging and having positive experiences in the daily lives. Almost every participant cross generational reported that they are aware of the two cultures they live in and that referred as Pakistani American because they cannot forget where they came from and their heritage. As much as the previous question was overwhelmingly in agreement
with feeling American for the most part, but still remember where the family came from. No one agreed to denounce their Pakistani heritage. Everyone agreed that respect for elders is very much part our culture, but it also coming from the religion, that heavens lies in the feet of the mother, therefore, care for the parents, so this is why cannot live with one or the other.

The first generation was more particular about making the transition of new culture and maintaining the home culture to the best of their abilities. This generation was more reserved with some being more forthcoming about assimilating in the new culture and basically does not engage with the non-Muslims or people of different cultures as compared to subsequent generations. Sajid said that he feels we need to do more, we are stuck in our own religious ideas, life around prayers, religious holidays, and “hanging out with only own people.”

The 1.5 generation was more open to assimilate and became a bi-product of the new and home cultures. Their developmental stages had a role in this process as well. The younger they were when they came to the U.S., the more acculturated they became with daily practices. Aisha, who moved to the U.S at age 4, said “I didn’t even realize how I was cultured … when I was first growing up I didn’t really know.” It was easy for them to talk to people of other cultures. Invite discussion on Islam and feel more grounded with their cultural identity. This generation also felt more concerned for their children who are second generation in the U.S. They were in consensus when they talked about peer pressures for their children. The dressing is different, lifestyle is different, and culture is different. Many things may be part of new culture that it is unnoticeable, but Tariq said, “We have to stop them and constantly remind them, this is not what we do. I feel bad”. Showing affection openly was seen as a generational difference and it became more acceptable to express emotions with 2nd generation. This generation also saw the difference in cultural items like jewelry to be more of an accessory versus necessarily. Gold jewelry is very
popular in Pakistani culture and is valued to your socio-economic status. This generation still valued it and wears it, but reported that their children would rather keep things simple.

The second generation mainly felt that the main contributing factor to their cultural identity is their home life and families. They get all their cultural upbringing from their parents and since political situation is unsafe in Pakistan, traveling is not an option for most participants. So they are receiving all their cultural upbringing from their parents, Pakistani friends and community. The difference with this generation from previous ones is that they are aware of their culture and appreciate it without feeling any differences from their peers. They are less critical of any existing problems. The family upbringing is the key in what or how they perceive their cultural identity.

Research Question #2

How do Pakistani Americans make meaning of their cultural identity?

Many participants verbalized their feelings about their experiences as a Pakistani American living in the U.S. and how these experiences shaped their cultural identity. Across the generations, no one reported discrimination to aimed directly at them personally, but felt that the greater society, through various forms of media, were focusing on their ethnicity. They did not feel singled out in their own communities, but were aware of a more focused attitude toward their culture as it related to 9/11. One out of four 1.5 generation participants mentioned that while traveling after 9/11, Farah experienced what she termed a “horrible experience” after 9/11 at a New York airport. She was singled out and subjected to extra security measures she felt, because she was flying from the U.S. to Pakistan. During the focus group, another participant spoke up and agreed with Farah that the attitudes toward Pakistanis changed in a negative way after 9/11. Also during the focus group, the majority of participants across the generations felt
like they existed quite normally and all of a sudden after 9/11, negative attitudes came into “our awareness even more prominently that we are someone different.” “It was there, but it became more prominently,” “it made us think about our own identity, because it was asked of us that we are different.” Overall experiences were positive; they said that people are kind here, they allowed us to be happy, to assimilate to a point that where we are trying to adapt to a culture where there is more humility, more humanity, understanding for other humans, try to do the right thing as human beings. This realization helped them to understand how Americans viewed them and gave them direction in bringing American values into their lives.

A sense of loss was felt more for the first and 1.5 generations versus 2nd generation. The first and 1.5 generation at times feel they are missing on occasions in the home country, or their cultural values may be deteriorating, some 1.5 generation participants said that culture itself might be deteriorating living over here, as we progress into different generations. But, they argued, it is over there also. If you visit now to Pakistan, one would see how the home culture has changed also. One 1.5 generation participants said that people who feel that the culture is deteriorating living over here have not been back to Pakistan in 10 to 20 years, but people who are going every year see the change, “I see the change over there, the lives over there are so busy, they are so electronic lives that we are leading here, it is kind of same, probably the degrees is not the same as here, because still the culture is alive 90% of people are still religion, same culture, it not gone or something, some see the change, going away, we try to keep it still alive living over here in our homes, in our community, with our children, with our friends.” The sense of loss creates an internal struggle for 1st and 1.5 generation because they watch the 2nd generation assimilate quicker and more fully. These differences show up as part of each generation’s sense of identity.
For the 2nd generation, the loss is not there because this is their home with a different culture, so that is all they know. “I am not really reminded every day”, said Fatima. Mariam attached meaning to her identity as “I am fine with Pakistani-American. Most people, who know me, know that I am born here, so they know that I am American but Pakistani is the different part of me. You know how American people link that with their millions of ancestors in every country possible, like they always do that, it is kind of along the same lines”. She would rather show her different side, “yes because everyone here is American. That is assumed”. The impact on her daily life of having this identity is according to her, “I don’t really think it has that big of an effect on my daily life, being referred to as Pakistani because the only time of the day in like a normal day that I feel Pakistani is at my house really and that is like it is there too. You are assumed American everywhere else, you are assumed Pakistani in your own home, because everyone else there is Pakistani. It doesn’t really make that big of a difference I don’t think, because I don’t live in Pakistan. Mariam also went to say that since this is all she knows, she would not know how not to have this identity therefore, acting the way she does is normal to her.

Meaning making can be very different across generational levels even when they all experience an event together. The focus group became the place for much discussion about generational differences because there were representatives from all generations together in the same room. The participants openly compared experiences and speculated as to why those differences existed. For Aisha, knowing the differences between the two cultures was not enough when the 2nd generation is born and raised in the U.S. She shared something that her family went through with the focus group. Her daughter made a comment to her that her daddy never hugs her. “She went to her friend’s home and you know the friend’s father hugs them all that.” This is when her girls got be teenagers. Aisha told her husband (first generation) and he
explained that this is how “I was raised. When girls become a certain age, you don’t hug them. You don’t do that.” Aisha went on to say that after she explained her daughter’s feelings to her husband, he made conscious efforts to hug. The father would cuddle them and all that but when they got to be teenagers, it was difficult. Another example that came up in the focus group was about the elaborate gold jewelry that Pakistani culture has. In Pakistani weddings, giving the girls in particular, heavy traditional gold jewelry was a tradition for the first and 1.5 generations. For the 2nd generation, this is not something they prefer. Sajid shared that her daughter preferred and asked if she could have more casual jewelry. “I can’t wear any of that (traditional Pakistani jewelry) with American dressing. It is too heavy.”

Another difference discussed in the focus group was the expression of emotions, which also manifested itself differently among the generations. Aisha shared that the 2nd generation is more expressive to emotions than the first or 1.5 generations. She said, “They are much more open about it compared to like us or my husband. I think it would be a matter of life or death for my husband to say I love you in from of, even like never. But it is just part of generation”. It is understood and indirect. She shared what one time she said to her husband, “you never tell me you love me anymore, so he told me and I think that was so funny but he sat there and said look I love you, I am not going to tell you ever again, I don’t do that. It is not me. If I ever stop, I will tell you.” Again, the 2nd generation will be different and are more verbally expressive.

Summary

While there were some differences among the generations, all groups demonstrated overarching respect for their Pakistani American heritage. There was consensus regarding maintaining strong religious values and beliefs. Those beliefs were also directly mingled with culture and were inseparable. For all generations, cultural identity was maintained through
certain values including modesty of dress, maintaining holiday traditions and respect for elders. Even though some first generation Pakistani Americans have been in the U.S. for a very long time, they do not want to lose their connection with their home culture and values. For all participants, remembering their heritage was important, even though practices to do so may be different among the generations. While no participant felt strong discrimination, they spoke about raising awareness about Pakistani Americans and Pakistani culture by being visible and participating in the community.
Chapter V

Discussion

This chapter presents an overview of the study’s background, design, and procedure. The major findings of the study are discussed in the context of the literature and its implications for counseling practice with Pakistani Americans. Limitations and suggestions for future study are also presented in this chapter.

Review of Background

It is important for counselors to develop multicultural competencies because the U.S. population is becoming more diverse. Specifically, there is little research on Pakistani Americans and particularly on how generational differences in cultural identity and impacts on acculturation. The purpose of this study was to explore what impacts the cultural identity of Pakistani Americans and how they bridge the two cultures within which they exist. By exploring Pakistani Americans cultural identity experiences, this study provided information about generational status, acculturative stress and personal experiences in relation to their experiences and meaning making process of living in two cultures.

Review of Design

The design of this study used qualitative methodology with an interpretivist approach. Interpretivist approaches focus on the meanings attributed to events, places, behaviors, interactions, people, and artifacts (Given, 2008). The principles of the ecological approach were used in the formulation of the interview questions as well as interpretation of the data obtained through the interview of 11 Pakistani Americans living in the U.S with various generational statuses. Five interview questions regarding factors contributing to their cultural identity and
how they made meaning of their experiences were asked at each individual interview. A focus group was conducted with the participants after the initial data analysis results were available. It was always important throughout the study to listen to the meaning and interpretations that the participants ascribed to their experiences as Pakistani Americans living in the U.S. These participants’ interpretations of experiences, in turn, informed on how they view the composition of their cultural identity. It highlighted insiders’ perspectives on common issues they experience that might benefit counselors working with Pakistani Americans.

**Major findings**

Five major categories emerged from the thematic analysis: Awareness of cultural identity differences are situational; sense of loss; positive experience; awareness of two cultures; culture and religion are intertwined. Data were also pulled from the focus group held after all individual interviews, which offered validation for individual responses and offered participants an opportunity to add anything they felt was not covered in individual interviews. From the five categories identified, what appeared on the surface to be primary factors contributing to cultural identity became what allowed them, on a personal level, to make meaning of their cultural identity. Participants spoke about their lives at home, which allowed them to mediate the differences between their home culture and the new culture. Participants also talked about how their religion also helped them to assimilate while still retaining certain important cultural values. The generational status and developmental stages of the participants also made differences in their view of their cultural identity meaning-making process.

As with many other ethnic groups, the first and 1.5 generation adult participants in this study moved to the U.S. to complete a better education, which would allow them to achieve a higher economic status and have better lives. Most of the participants reported having positive
experiences in the U.S., and no one reported experiencing discrimination aimed at them personally. Participants reported being happy living in the U.S. and one person explicitly stated that “this country has been good to us.” Participants talked about feeling differently after 9/11, because more people seemed to be aware of their ethnic difference from the mainstream. That event became an eye-opener for them because their ethnicity -- being a Pakistani American -- was not so pronounced before 9/11. Because the participants are well-educated and living in a smaller community, they were not faced with the day-to-day discrimination felt by some Pakistani Americans in larger cities where Pakistani Americans function at a wider range of socio-economic levels. After 9/11, Pakistanis in larger U.S. cities who held jobs such as taxi cab driver and convenience store employees were targeted. No participant in this study held such a job or position. One participant elaborated by saying, “Now we know we are someone different,” and “It was there, but it became more prominent and never went away.” Working to acculturate into their new culture was never questioned – it was a given for the participants, so after 9/11 many of them began to think about their cultural identity more overtly. That became an opportunity for interaction and growth which was a large part of the positive experience for participants during that time in their lives. One woman started volunteering in the community in a much broader sense and spoke about how she worked to turn what could have been a negative into an opportunity to create a positive image of Pakistani Americans in her community.

All study participants voiced the belief that religion and culture, for Pakistani Americans who are Muslim, are intertwined and function in tandem in many places in their lives. Cultural norms, such as clothing, food and drink choices are dictated on large part by religion. Especially for women, choosing to dress modestly is suggested in Muslim and can be interpreted in various manners while still adhering to the tenet. “We dress in a way that is part of our culture, but also
part of our religion. We dress in modesty, because our religion teaches us that,” on participant stated. Consumption of alcohol and pork are prohibited according to Islam, so those choices are cultural and religious. Other cultural practices that have religious roots include respect for elders and care for elderly parents. When Pakistani Americans come to the U.S., many choices that are made in the home culture are strictly religious, but when those choices are made in the U. S., those choices are viewed more as cultural because of the lack of awareness by the people they meet in the new culture as to how culture and religion differ.

Teachings of the Prophet Mohammad Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH), called the Hadith, are a guide for many Muslims and the participants in this study referred to those notions as well as the teachings in the Koran as the basis for their religious choices. Participants expressed a desire to retain this part of their Pakistani heritage because it keeps many important components of their home culture alive while still allowing them to assimilate into the new culture. Participants said they were seeking balance and by retaining certain cultural and religious practices, it helped them to create a grounded existence that honored both parts of their cultural identity. Cochrane (1977) and Hussain (2009) also talked about how Muslims determine their mental health in the context of religious values. Cultural factors and religious view may influence the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness among Muslims within mental health services.

There was a sense of loss felt by many participants, but the way in which that was experienced was dependent in part on the generational level of the participants. Older participants or first generation participants who moved away from family and friends at a younger age talked about a more overarching sense of loss because they missed more family events such as weddings, births, funerals, religious ceremonies and traditional family gatherings.
Those in the 1.5 generation described an easier acculturation on some levels. They also felt less of a sense of loss with regard to family and friends, but for some it was easier to see that their home culture was changing so they made a connection between the changes taking place in both cultures. Developmental stage of the participants had an impact, too, since those who left Pakistan at a younger age found it easier to assimilate since their memories of home culture were not as well-established. This result parallels outcomes from Bernal and Knight (1993). Their study suggests that it is common for those who leave their home culture at a young age to assimilate more easily because there are fewer influences from the home culture playing a role in cultural identity development.

Second generation participants reported no sense of loss, feeling more like an outsider learning about Pakistani culture through family and friends. Growing up in the U.S. gave them a different outlook – they wanted to learn about their parents’ home culture and retain and incorporate components of that into their own lives. “So the only real way that we try to keep the Pakistani culture within us is by hanging out with other groups of Pakistani people,” one young person stated.

The first and 1.5 generations reported overwhelmingly, no matter how assimilated they have become in the U.S., they still felt a sense of living in two cultures. The 2nd generation did not feel the same way. They viewed their home culture as U.S. and their new culture as Pakistani. Interestingly, for two college-age participants, going to college helped them become more aware of their Pakistani cultural identity and created a desire to be more in touch with that “just because you get to learn to appreciate it more.” This may be the case because their exposure to Pakistani culture is more direct and intense in this situation. By interacting with young people
who are new to the U.S., the participants have the opportunity to see aspects of Pakistani culture they have not been exposed to before.

The notions that participants were aware they exist in two cultures and that awareness is situational were discussed by the majority of participants. Second generation Pakistani Americans who had not yet left their homes for college voiced that they were the most aware when they were at home with parents. While at home, these participants were aware of living in two cultures because of the languages spoken, food served and traditions practiced. While at school, the 2nd generation participants didn’t feel different so there was no conscious feeling of being Pakistani. Participants from the first and 1.5 generations tended to feel the opposite – they were aware of the cultural difference more while out in the greater community. While these participants were at home, it was sometimes easier for them to express their Pakistani part of the cultural identity. They could speak their home language, eat the appropriate food or participate in specific religious practices. When first and 1.5 generation participants left their homes, their manner of dress representing their home or eating in restaurants and making uncommon food choices caused them to feel different. Cultural identity for all participants was shaped by these experiences and choices, but for first and 1.5 generation participants, it was a rougher road since their Pakistani identity was more firmly established.

**Discussion**

Identity is developed in a cultural context, from the time we learn to hold a spoon to the time we have our first religious ceremony. Shared life experiences teach individuals the thoughts, values, and behaviors that they then incorporate into their personal identity (Tang & Bashir, 2012). Cultural identity is constructed within groups and shaped through interactions with people different from themselves. When study participants moved to the U.S., they needed
to adjust to the new environment and find their place within their new culture. During interviews, first and 1.5 generation participants expressed a positive outlook about their new cultural identity because they came to the U.S. in search of a better life. That outlook had an impact on their subsequent interactions with members of the new culture, which were reported as generally positive. According to Tang and Bashir, the formation of cultural identity is not only about the construct itself, but also about the sources of influence and interaction.

The interactive experiences with the mainstream culture for the study participants were positive, and they seem to be satisfied with their cultural identity. Three generations in the study, particularly the second generation identified with the mainstream culture without difficulty. This finding is supported by social identity theory which assumes that individuals want to achieve a positive self-concept and high self-esteem, thus they are motivated to identify with groups that are comparatively superior in the society (Gonzales et al. 1995; Nesdale & Flesser, 2001).

When study participants spoke about how their culture and religion were intricately intertwined, there was a great expression of passion. They talked about how it was not possible to separate the two and compromising those components of their Pakistani identity as they worked to assimilate into their new culture was not an option. The study participants, especially those in the first and 1.5 generations, expressed that for them, as one participant explicitly stated, “Most of Pakistani occasions are Islamic occasions, too.” This is true, in part, because Pakistan was founded to provide a new home for Indians who wanted to practice Islam. In this researcher’s experience as a Pakistani American, my transition to the new culture of the U.S. also went smoothly, but religion remained traditional and central. So, for many Pakistanis, religion and culture are inseparable.
When Pakistani Americans are working to assimilate, there will always be points of conflict. That does not mean those conflicts will be negative or harmful, but they can demonstrate differences between the two cultures. According to Pedersen’s (2000) orthogonal model of cultural identity formation, conflicts of value and belief do not present insurmountable barriers but may be combined in a realistic pluralism. Although some primary values and beliefs of each cultural group cannot be compromised, other secondary values and beliefs can be adapted and modified to fit a changing society.

For the Pakistani Americans in this study, major religious values and beliefs could not be compromised, but some lesser components of Islam may need to be modified based on availability of things such as a place to practice religion (a mosque) and appropriate food products (halal/kosher). A first generation female talked about her inability for many years after her move to the U.S. to find halal meats and certain spices. Her family had to change their eating habits which in turn had a direct impact on their religious practices. She was reflective about it, saying that she understood it was a necessary part of her transition. “We didn’t have any grocery stores … and I used to get my groceries by mail.”

Feeling a sense of loss was a common experience, but only for first and 1.5 generation participants. It was clear throughout the interviews that there was a sense of sadness because they were concerned for their children and grandchildren who would never have a direct experience with Pakistani culture. A 1.5 generation participant spoke emotionally about her memories of her home culture and her attempt to recreate those experiences for her children, second generation Pakistani Americans. “My kids are missing out on them (Pakistani celebrations and holidays). I tried to do what I can. I really miss them.”
Losing their home language caused some participants to feel a sense of loss for their home culture. Others spoke emotionally about going to weddings where there was no traditional singing and dancing. While the things that triggered a feeling of loss may have been different, most of the first and 1.5 participants expressed similar feelings and reactions – they wanted to find ways to keep traditions alive for the younger generations who never experienced Pakistani culture first-hand. That lack of direct exposure for the second generation participants is why they felt no similar sense of loss.

The generational division in cultural values is one major factor that creates differing cultural identities for those within the participant group. Moving to a new culture causes a loss of the extended family system and can subsequently cause a loss of traditions (Goodwin & Duncan, 2000). The changes to the first and 1.5 generation’s family structure in their new culture is a major part of what led to their new bicultural perspective, even though that carried with it a sense of loss.

If cultural identity involves encounter with two cultural experiences, then acculturation is a process by which individuals negotiate and adapt their experiences of being in two cultures (Tang & Bashir, 2012). The ideas that awareness of two cultures and awareness of cultural identity is situational was experienced and discussed by all participants across all generations. Berry et al. (1992) proposed that integration is the strategy comes into play as individuals attempt to make the best of both worlds. The participants in the study showed interest in both maintaining one’s original culture and in having daily interactions with others, while being an integral part of the larger social network found in their new culture. The first and 1.5 generations were very prepared when they came to the U.S. They spoke about few problems assimilating which is due, in part, to participants’ global travel experiences prior to moving to the U.S.
Experiences with various cultures within Pakistan also helped participants assimilate. The assimilation process was fluid and interactional with the new culture. They mingled with the people in their new culture and talked about few barriers such as language. This is what made their experiences very positive in the beginning as well. Most participants were mature enough to understand the change to a new culture and what was required of them to become a successful member of their new culture. Their awareness of two cultures helped them to make meaning of the new environment and to recognize their own cultural differences and biases. That helped to make the transition smoother.

When discussing the question of how cultural identity plays a role in their daily lives, it was surprising to this researcher that all participants balked before answering. It became clear that none of them had considered it as a stand-alone issue. The participants functioned within the two cultures in part by retaining the specifics of their religion, which helped them feel more grounded. Some participants struggled choosing which term they felt most comfortable with or connected to -- Pakistani American or Muslim American. Interestingly, those who favored Muslim American were from the 1.5 generation. First and second generation participants, after considering the question, favored Pakistani American because they focused more on their cultural heritage and not just their religious heritage.

Contextual factors played a role in how people made meaning of their experiences. Participants in the first and 1.5 generations, coming as newly married, seeking professional jobs, or furthering their education, had to adjust quickly and learned to acculturate to live the “dream” they came for. For most first and 1.5 generations, the life in the U.S. was much better than in Pakistan and they liked all the services and facilities at their disposal. The second generation, on the other hand, was bicultural from the beginnings of their lives. Going away to college and
moving around to different locations helped them discover their own cultural identity because it removed them from their homes and schools, offering reinforcement of components of both cultures from an outside source. Their interaction with a Pakistani from Pakistan reminded them of their “Americanized identity,” as they see the difference they have with Pakistanis from Pakistan even though they may appear to be the same. Pedersen (2000) stated that we become more aware of our cultural identity through contact with persons from other cultures who are different from ourselves, we see ourselves in contrast. Interestingly, second generation Pakistani Americans saw Pakistani immigrants as being from another culture. One research study suggested that immigrant adolescents generally acculturate to the values of new society faster than their parents, but the majority of Pakistani Americans endorse conforming to parental authority more than their Western counterparts (Rick & Forward, 1992; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). The findings from the second generation participants’ cultural identity experiences in this study also confirmed that second generation or first and half generation Pakistani American migrating to U. S. at younger age were more acculturated than their parents yet they still endorse Pakistani heritage such as respect for their elders.

Implications for Counseling Practice

The findings of this study have the potential to positively change the counseling experience for Pakistani Americans and their service providers. By understanding the cultural identity of Pakistani Americans, counselors can offer more appropriate and effective strategies. In general, mental health issues cannot be viewed separately from cultural factors because these factors may affect the definition and acceptance of mental health disorders. This is also true for Pakistani Americans because, as discussed in this study, Pakistani Americans often experience
cultural and religious differences that cannot be compromised or changed during the assimilation process.

The findings of this study can also benefit helping professions to develop better understanding about the Pakistani Americans and their cultural identity. Even though the lack of utilization of mental health services by ethnic minority groups is well documented in mental health literature, unfortunately, literature on specific group such as Pakistanis is sparse (Hussain, 2009). Despite a large number of South Asians working in the health care professions, as a group, they do not seem to seek mental health services in proportion to their numbers in the population. For South Asians, there are three identifiable cultural factors that keep them from seeking mental health services. Those include being prohibited from talking about personal problems outside the family; denying mental health and emotional problems because of a belief that South Asians belong to a “model minority;” and feeling a disconnect between Western values focused on self and Eastern values focused on family (Das & Kemp, 1997).

There is a sizable Pakistani population living in the U.S. and professionals need to have the knowledge about the distinction between Eastern and Western cultures and beliefs. The Western cultures make a distinction between the mind and body as a separate entity, however, Eastern cultures take a more holistic approach and view the mind and body as one (Hussain, 2009). The joint family system found in Eastern cultures – where many generations may coexist together – is often misunderstood or misinterpreted in Western culture. For Easterners, the approach is a positive and collectivistic one where families work for the common good and support each other emotionally and financially. For example, many young adults remain at home and contribute to the family until marriage. In Western culture, a multi-generational family is often viewed as negative and the assumption is that one or more generations are not capable of
caring for themselves. This cultural disconnect is only one example of the misunderstandings that can become part of counseling when clinicians do not have an awareness or understanding of the Pakistani culture. Lack of awareness of this distinction by mental health professionals could jeopardize treatment within mental health services. Within a clinical practice, Pakistani client may shut down if they feel their Eastern practices are not respected by the Western clinician. This understanding of Eastern culture practices are necessary and would play a major factor in receiving mental health services.

To consider this population for mental health treatment, it is important for counselor to be mindful of the factors relating to cultural identity when treating someone from another culture. For example, it is important for counselors to remember the impact of religious beliefs regarding mental illness and health (Hussain, 2009). Counselors need to remember that clients will be better-served if they are viewed within the relevant contexts of their lives, not in isolation. By considering a client’s generational status, helping professionals can offer strategies that appropriately address level of acculturation and willingness to accept change. Embedded within that generational status is the factor of time spent in the U.S. Looking at these factors in tandem can help clinicians discern with greater accuracy the level of acculturation. Pakistani Americans who have spent more time in the U.S. may be more open to counseling and discussing their personal experiences. By understanding these factors, clinicians may be better able to generate strategies and treatment options that will prove successful. Educational level should also be taken into consideration because a higher level of education may be related to a greater understanding of one’s new culture. This may be true because with a better education comes better employment opportunities and more openness toward new experiences. This can help Pakistani Americans of all generational levels acculturate and have more positive experiences.
with their new culture. Gender, because of the specific roles established in Pakistani society, must be considered. Even in the new culture, many first and 1.5 generation Pakistani American women are still influenced by the roles they learned in their home culture.

The ecology of a person’s life is ever changing (Conyne & Cook, 2004). Being aware of the importance of multiculturalism in counseling is widely accepted as a critical qualification of being a competent counselor. However, this is not enough, and connecting the various elements of individuals’ life spaces to make the counseling process a meaningful one for clients is what multicultural competence should be. When considering the relationship between cultural identity and mental health in Pakistani Americans, counselors need to keep in mind: (a) “the degree of acculturation that the client has undergone in the mainstream culture, and (b) the type of ethnic cultural identity that the client has developed” (Das & Kemp, 1997, pp. 32). A general knowledge of cultural values coupled with these concepts can create a better counseling environment for Pakistani Americans.

Clinicians interested in providing a multiculturally-based counseling experience for Pakistani Americans can apply the ecological approach, an appropriate choice because of its focus on the multidimensionality of cultural identity. EA is a way to look at an individual’s dynamic interactions with other individuals, groups, the societal surroundings and its customs of everyday living (Roysircar & Pignatiello, 2011). EA is also adaptable to one’s zeitgeist, changes with time and context and takes a process approach to understanding the cultural identity of a person. The findings from this study can be used as a guideline with regard to Pakistani Americans in that they have uncovered cultural and religious factors that are pertinent to establishing a more complete understanding of Pakistani Americans from a cultural identity perspective. Pakistani American values that the participants in this study endorsed include:
Importance attachment to preserving religion and cultural traditions

Education

Modesty in dressing, especially for women

Prohibit alcohol drinking or any other substance use

Dating is not preferred

No public demonstration of affection with couples

Respect for older persons and the elderly

Importance of successfully bridging both cultures

Recognition of various levels of acculturation based on generational status

“Counselors cannot habitually conceptualize clients’ issues based on their familiar framework of reference, neglecting the complexity and uniqueness of individuals’ concerns” (Tang & Bashir, 2012, p. 172). They should consider implementing culturally relevant clinical services based upon an understanding of the salience of cultural identity that includes ones religion, ethnicity, gender, generational level and educational level. Clinicians need to be aware of the multiple factors that can all be interacting to create cultural identity and impact the effectiveness of counseling services. For example, a counselor will be more effective if she understands the age and developmental level of her client and how those factors intersect with her family, parents and friends. In a specific case experienced by this researcher, a young woman presented with physical symptoms associated with malnutrition. After investigation, the young woman was reacting to an arranged marriage she feels she is being forced into and is unable to communicate her upset and anger to her parents. By being aware of and understanding the relevance of culture, clinicians can provide more effective services.
Being aware of the need to challenge one’s own cultural views and values while working with diverse populations is important but not sufficient. The data from this study highlight some, but clearly not all aspect of cultural identity that are important to Pakistani Americans. By incorporating these and searching for others with individual clients, clinical services can be improved by exploring how these aspects are incorporated into Pakistani Americans’ lives. By exploring how these aspects affect Pakistani Americans’ lives, clinical services providers can develop more culturally relevant interventions.

Working with clients from a diverse ethnic group cannot be put in a pigeonhole, and utilizing the ecological perspective would offer a fluid, flexible, and contextual of new life events. Using the ecological approach, which will help clinicians uncover particulars about cultural identity as found in this study, can bring about an understanding of their clients’ cultural contexts which will help to avoid any misdiagnosis. According to Roysircar and Pignatiello (2011) understanding a client’s ecological systems will lead to a more accurate diagnosis of presenting problem(s).

For Pakistani American participants in this study, the focus group provided a place for sharing opinions and beliefs not often shared outside of one’s immediate family group. It is common in Pakistani culture for such discussion to occur only within family groups, but the focus group provided a new, but still somewhat familiar setting so participants shared openly. By implementing multi-generational support groups as a component of counseling, clinicians can learn not only about the formation of cultural identity, but also about the generational distinctions embedded in an individual’s cultural identity. Small groups can provide a safe, comfortable atmosphere for people to verbalize concerns, experiences and questions. Advice and insight can be shared among the generations and new understanding can rise out of those
conversations. This new knowledge can benefit the clients and the clinician, who can gain valuable insight into the personal inner workings of Pakistani American culture.

Limitations/Future Research

Demographics posed another limitation. Using the available population from a relatively small city did not lend external generalizability of the results to entire Pakistan population. The majority of participants had some familial tie to other participants which may have resulted in similar views being expressed in response to the research questions.

Because most participants were educated and came from educated families, that made their meaning making experiences more positive and open. Their lives are comfortable and safe, with their basic needs being met. They do not struggle with jobs where they face a wide range of people who may or may not accept them. In general, their education and socio-economic status allows them to travel, experiencing segments of the U.S. where they are less likely to interact with those who have negative views. They do not face the same struggles of making it in the U.S. as, for example, a cab driver in the metropolitan Chicago area or a convenience store worker in New York City.

Future studies will benefit from using a broader pool of participants to capture the experiences of people from a wider range of educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. Studies done in varying locations could create data set that compare experiences of Pakistani Americans based on physical location, because living in a larger, more metropolitan community can have a definite impact on one’s acculturation. Researchers could formulate questions that focus on specific factors such as age of immigration, area of Pakistan (rural or urban), depth of religious beliefs and willingness to acculturate. By investigating how certain factors shape
beliefs and values, researchers may be able to delve even further into what impacts the formation of cultural identity for Pakistani Americans.

**Conclusion**

The findings of this study illustrated that Pakistani Americans’ cultural identity is situational and that generational status has impacts on their cultural identity and experiences. It is found that for Pakistani Americans in the U. S., religion and culture heritage are intertwined and cannot separated. The participants in this study clearly showed that it is not easy for them to distinguish whether it is Pakistani cultural values or their Islamic belief shaped their values and behaviors. Second generation Pakistani Americans, compared to first and first and half generation Pakistani Americans, are more identified with American mainstream culture, but they also maintain Pakistani heritage through their participation in traditional events and endorse the traditional values expected by their parents.

Counseling professionals working with Pakistani Americans can benefit from increasing their awareness of the factors that contribute to the formation of cultural identity as discussed in this study. By incorporating this knowledge, clinicians will be able to better-understand the needs of their clients and offer appropriate treatments and solutions. Pakistani Americans bring with them a unique set of cultural beliefs and values which shape their responses and reactions to their experiences with their new culture. Knowledge of those should be considered essential to provide effective mental health services.
References


*Acculturation: Advances in theory, measurement, and applied research* (pp. 63-81)

Phinney, J. S., & Ong, A. D. (2007). Conceptualization and measurement of ethnic identity:


Columbus: Pearson Education.

Conceptualization and practices with an Asian Indian immigrant woman. *Journal of


identification among Muslim-American emerging adults: A mixed methods study.
*Journal of Adolescence, 31*, 259-279.

study lives. *Journal of Personality, 56*, 41-76.


Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questions: Same for all Participants.

Gender

Generation level

Age

Age when emigrated to the U.S?

Education

Occupation/career choice

Religion
Appendix B

Interview Questions

1) How would you describe your experiences as a Pakistani American living in the U.S?

2) What are the significant moments that make you feel mostly Pakistani

3) When (what kind of situations make) do you feel most as American?

4) What would you like to be referred as, PA, Pakistani, or American? Why?

5) How would this identity (i.e. what they prefer to be referred to) be a factor in your daily life?