

Professional Immigrant Women in Medium and Large Organizations in the USA:
A Phenomenological Study Exploring Communication Conflicts that Arise from Language

Barriers

by

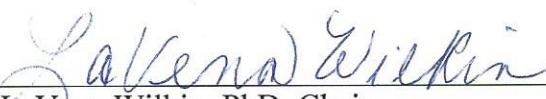
Harika Suklun

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in
Management

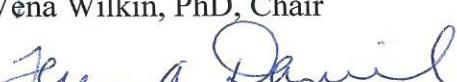
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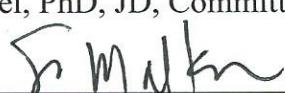
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Abstract

Cultural diversity is increasing in workplaces around the world, and developed countries are receiving more immigrants than developing countries every year. The result of the immigration phenomenon in the United States is that more immigrants are integrating into workplaces, which creates more opportunities for interaction. Managing diversity is still a challenge for organizations and countries, and particularly for countries that are high immigrant receivers. This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews so professional immigrant women could describe their experiences and share their perspectives on being in the workplace in the United States. Through professional immigrant women's perspectives and their voices, a database was established from which data were coded, compared, categorized, further coded, and analyzed using phenomenological methodology. The participants described their experiences in the United States, and differences between their expectations and their actual experiences; because of the cultural gaps between their home countries and the United States, professional women encountered adjustment difficulties with respect to verbal and nonverbal conflicts in the host country. To overcome such difficulties, professional women employed several strategies to cope with the verbal conflicts. They also had to adjust their body language by providing more distance than in their home country and not touching the listener. This study has implications for professional immigrant women and for organizations. Since there are increasing numbers of people with multicultural backgrounds in organizations, related issues will not dissipate soon; therefore, organizations should understand the context of multiculturalism. Professional immigrant women in this study advised newcomers not to listen to people from their countries who are not supportive of them in advancing their careers; they also advised newcomers to work harder to reach their goals and ignore any negative attitudes from their own people.

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Dedication

In memory of my father, Bekir Suklun. His encouragement and guidance will always be with me.

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This dissertation embodies far more than the result of years of study. This dissertation also reflects the relationships with many big-hearted and inspiring people I have met since beginning my graduate studies.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Human beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so.

--*Douglas Adams*

Background

Who are we without any type of communication? Alan C. Kay, former fellow at Apple Computer, stated, "Human beings cannot exist without communication" (Mooney, 2011). Every living creature communicates and does so for a specific reason. Because of the great diversity among living beings, different species and different groups within each species develop distinct forms of communication. According to Fryer (2012), "Communication is a broad term that refers to the transfer of information from one entity to another, in terms of processor or system" (p. 59). Keyton, et al. (2013) asserted that communication behaviors are: inherently social, used to engage in relationships with other members of the organization, and link micro actions of individuals to macro communication patterns and collective structures. Language enables humans to represent and communicate complex abstract information (Fedurek & Slocombe, 2011), and it occurs in verbal, nonverbal, and written forms (Iizuka, Marocco, Ando, & Maeda, 2013). This study focused on both nonverbal and verbal communication; the written form is excluded.

In verbal communication (i.e., spoken word), human beings use language not only to convey information, but also to express themselves, and words are used as symbols to communicate meaning (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Mink, 2010). According to *Ethnology Languages of the World* (n.d.), there are 172 languages in existence globally, and at least three million

speakers in each language. What would happen if a couple of million people from each language were to work together? Although communication problems might be seen between speakers of same native languages, this group of people would still work with fewer communication problems, provided they had the advantages of sharing the same culture and a good work environment. However, the researcher's interest was to discover what happens when people from different cultures who also speak different languages attempt to work together.

The nonverbal form of communication is a physical exchange or display. Body language such as eye contact and body position (Benzer, 2012); gestures and facial expressions (Akhyamova, 2012); personal space (Crane & Crane, 2010); touch, petting, caressing, and hitting (Hertenstein & Keltner, 2011); and paralanguage (pitch, tone, volume, and tempo) (Butt, Iqbal, & Farooq, 2011) are nonverbal communication in interaction. Nonverbal communication is also very important in human interaction. Early human beings depended on body language as a necessary part of survival and today, body language is used as a tool for communication. It accounts for 55-70%, and even up to 90% of human communication (Benzer 2012; Rane, 2010; Williams, 2009; Dumbrava & Koronka, 2009; Karadag, Caliskan, & Yesil, 2008; Arbib, Liebal, & Pika, 2008). For example, Stouten and De Cremer (2010) asserted that facial expressions of emotions may shape a context in which communication may be perceived differently, and they found that people's facial expressions are a prominent feature in social interaction.

Hofstede et al. (2010) stated that intensity of contact among groups has been changed: "humans urgently need to become better able to collaborate across different moral circles while tolerating symbolic differences among them" (p. 473). They also claimed that cultural differences manifest themselves in several ways, including symbols, heroes, rituals, and values; the authors categorized language under symbols. Therefore, intercultural communication is the

study of communication among people from different cultures. According to Durant and Shepherd (2009), "intercultural communication studies have often classified culture on the basis of nationality or pan-national traits such as Nordic, Southern European, or Asian, or more generally still as Western (individualist) and Eastern (collectivist)" (p. 151). As Liua and Dall'Albab (2012) stressed, proficiency in intercultural communication has become essential for functioning successfully in progressively more globalized and multicultural society.

Statement of the Problem

When immigrants arrive in the United States, they are expected to adapt to their new environment; learn a new language; and adopt the values, beliefs, and customs of the new culture (Cervantes & Cordova, 2011). Jae-Pil, Hums, and Greenwell (2014) emphasized that acculturation occurs when individuals come into contact with a new society and according to Chen, Benet-Martínez, Wu, Lam, and Bond (2013), during the acculturation process, immigrants have to adopt useful features from the host culture to function effectively on a daily basis. Similarly, Lazarevic, Wiley, and Pleck (2012) stated that because of the differences between the home culture and the new culture (such as beliefs, values, and customs), immigrants have to make adjustments between the two cultures to guarantee best possible functioning. Additionally, Morrison and James (2009) concluded negotiation and integration happen between the host culture and new culture among immigrants in the United States.

People have different cultures, work ethics, opinions, and personalities, and as Shweta and Jha (2010) stated, individual differences create conflicts at workplace. Further, they emphasized that because of these differences, responses to particular stimuli in the workplace would be different, too. Strauss and Sawyerr (2009) asserted that "increasing diversity within the United States and rapid globalization create a need to appreciate and value differences in

order to work more effectively with people from diverse cultural groups" (p. 2627). According to Onea (2012), organizations have employees who belong to particular groups and categories. Portes (2012) pointed out that in the United States, different cultures are visible in the streets and in public transport; ethnic restaurants, stores, and churches; and parades and festivals celebrating foreign countries. Therefore, this study focused on identifying problems experienced by professional immigrant women through the acculturation process.

Ibad (2010) asserted that, "Employees in managerial capacities working in multinational organizations need to understand the importance of functioning effectively in their environment, which is international, and requires them to adapt to the complexity of other cultures, that entails understanding, accepting, and responding to the differences that culture produces" (p.485). It is also argued that organizations that are open to cultural diversity will achieve a competitive advantage against organizations that are either culturally homogeneous or which fail to successfully utilize their cultural diversity (Neves & Melé, 2013; Pieterse, Knippenberg, & Dierendonck, 2013; Neault & Mondair, 2011; Ibad, 2010).

Thus, it is important for organizations to understand people from other cultures in order to strengthen their business practices; to increase productivity and creativity (Brimm, 2010); to improve team structures; to better manage diversity (Pieterse et al., 2013); to decrease employee turnover; to improve communication; and to resolve cultural conflicts, as well as to establish a harmonious work environment (Chua, 2013). Washington, Okoro, and Thomas (2012) emphasize that businesses need to appreciate the importance of understanding the cultures and values of their counterparts, as well as to develop intercultural communication sensitivity and decorum. According to Washington et al. (2012), Abyad (2011), and Okoro (2013), a lack of intercultural skills and competence, an inability to communicate effectively at a global level, and stoppage to

practice acceptable etiquette in business negotiations are significant factors for failure. As a result, organizations with lack of diversity management may face failure in business.

In their study, Parthap, Nicolle, and Maquire (2013) found that language barriers were common among ethnic minority groups. Similarly, McCarthy, Cassidy, Graham, and Tuohy (2013) observed that when people did not share the same first language, the communication processes were often strained and conversations between them were limited.

Back, Bunker, and Dunnagan (1972) found that even in a highly educated group of members with similar backgrounds, there are important differences in connotation that impede communication. Impediments may come from preoccupation, emotional blocks, hostility, charisma, and past experiences (Shetach, 2012); hidden agendas, inarticulateness, stereotyping, and physical environment (Curșeu, Janssen, & Raab, 2012); and mind wandering and defensiveness (Waltman & Wagner-Marsh, 2010; Pfeiffer, 1978). Singh, Mckay, and Singh (1998) suggested that “both verbal and nonverbal communication styles are objective aspects of a culture, but they are a reflection of its subjective aspects and, as such, can only be properly understood with an appreciation of the meaning of the communication within the culture” (p. 404).

While examining communication conflicts and their effects on their jobs, this study focused on foreign-born women to bring their views to the management field in order to improve organizations' success. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012, Table 4), in 2011, approximately one-third (31.6%) of all employed women legally admitted into the United States worked in “professional and technical fields.” Compared with native-born female workers, employed foreign-born women were more likely to be in service occupations and in production, transportation, and material-moving occupations. The disparity was especially great

in service occupations. In 2011, 32.2% of foreign-born women workers were in service occupations, compared with 19.4% of native-born women workers. Employed native-born women were more likely than employed foreign-born women to be in sales and office occupations (32.6% versus 24.5%). Therefore, because of the number of professional immigrant women in the workforce in the United States, more studies are needed to understand their experiences and to create coherent workplaces to help them become more productive employees and to retain them.

Hite (2007) indicated that much of the research on professional and managerial women actually describes the experiences of white women, excluding those of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. Her exploratory qualitative study focused on the life and work experiences of Hispanic women in managerial and professional positions and how those experiences influenced their career possibilities. Although concentrating on a specific race or region has advantages, it does not provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Other races and regions have been omitted from the research, which is a gap in this field of study. As a result, in this study, immigrant women from different countries are recruited to determine whether experiences are similar or not.

Purpose and Goals of the Study

This qualitative phenomenological study is important and needed for several reasons. Considering professional immigrant women, a gap exists in the literature. Therefore, the first goal of this study is to identify professional immigrant women's experiences of communication conflicts. The impact of communication conflicts on immigrant women's professional performance in medium and large organizations in the United States is not well understood. The available literature has only focused on the experience of professional immigrant women from

specific countries (Gomez-Riquelme, 2012; Barrett, 2010; Nwabah, 2006; Kypuros, 2005), races, (Davis, 2013; Muriel & Nguyen, 2012; Chennamsetti, 2010; Hite, 2007), or religions (Furseth, 2011). Thus, the second goal of this study was to include professional immigrant women representing a variety of races and countries. A third goal of this study is to add new knowledge to the understanding of professional immigrant women. Finally, this study provides information for future researchers who wish to study immigrant professional women in organizations in the United States.

Definitions of Terms

Culture. "Culture is the distinctive way of life of the group, race, class, community, or nation to which the individual belongs. It is the product of the values, ideas, perceptions, and meanings that have evolved over time. These values, ideas, perceptions, and meanings constitute the individual's knowledge and understanding of the world in which he or she lives, and they derive from, and are embodied in, the physical environment of birth and upbringing, in language, institutions, family and social relationships, child rearing, education, systems of belief, religion, mores and customs, dress and diet, and in particular uses of objects and material life. Culture embraces all of these, and the individual may regard each of them, or any number of them, as culturally significant" (O'Hagan, 1999, p. 273).

Cultural diversity. Cultural diversity includes aspects of cultures within the same national group (Hamde, 2008). Cultural diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind (UNESCO, 2002).

Conflict. For this research study, conflict is defined as the perceived and/or actual incompatibility of values, expectations, processes, or outcomes between two or more parties from different cultures (Tingo-Tomey, 1995).

Immigrant/Foreign Born. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (n.d.) defines an immigrant (Permanent Resident Alien) as an alien admitted to the United States as a lawful permanent resident. Permanent residents are also commonly referred to as immigrants. The definition of foreign-born individuals, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, is persons residing in the United States who were not U.S. citizens at birth. That is, they were born outside the United States or one of its outlying areas, such as Puerto Rico or Guam, to parents of whom neither was a U.S. citizen. The foreign-born population includes legally-admitted immigrants, refugees, temporary residents such as students and temporary workers, and undocumented immigrants. The survey data, however, do not separately identify the number of persons in these categories.

Medium and large business. The U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, defines “medium business” as a business with 500 to 10,000 employees, and a business with 10,000 or more employees is defined as a large business.

Migrant. In this study, international migrants are excluded because they come to the United States temporarily. In this study, to indicate differences between an immigrant and a migrant, the following definition of “migrant” is taken from the U.S. Department of Labor: “The definition of “migrant” varies among the multitude of federal government agencies and programs that provide services to migrant and seasonal farm workers” (2005a). In the U.S. Department of Labor’s National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) (n.d.), migrants are defined as persons who travel at least 75 miles during a 12-month period to obtain a farm job.

Professional. The U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division (2005b) has defined “professional” in explaining that the primary duty test under the learned professional exemption includes three elements: (1) The employee must perform work requiring advanced knowledge; (2) the advanced knowledge must be in a field of science or learning; and (3) the

advanced knowledge must be customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction. The phrase “work requiring advanced knowledge” means “work which is predominantly intellectual in character, and which includes work requiring the consistent exercise of discretion and judgment as distinguished from performance of routine mental, manual, mechanical, or physical work.”

Overview of the Chapters

This dissertation is divided into five chapters, followed by appendices. The first chapter provides a brief introduction about communication and immigration, a statement of the problem, the purpose and goals of the study, and definition of the terms. Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive review of the literature. The third chapter describes the research methods, including the forms of data collection, how data is analyzed, and the role and background of the researcher. Chapter 4 describes, in detail, the themes that emerged from the interviews. Themes are presented, accompanied by relevant quotes from the study’s participants. In this chapter, the results of the cross-analyses are presented, accompanied by thick and rich quotes representing the different perspectives offered by those participating in the study. Chapter 5 discusses the results of the study, the implications of the study, future research, and the strengths and limitations of the study. It also includes a conclusion of this dissertation. The appendices include copies of the internal review board (IRB) approval from Sullivan University, the informed consent form, the interview protocol, the semi-structured interview questions, and the researcher’s curriculum vitae.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The man who reads nothing at all is better educated than the man who reads nothing but newspapers.

--Thomas Jefferson

Introduction

The conceptual framework of this study was the growing interest of the scholarly research on the phenomenon of skilled immigration and therefore, growing cultural diversity in organizations in the United States. The conceptual framework includes cultural diversity in the workplace; professional immigrant women in the United States; overall immigration history from past to present; verbal, nonverbal, and intercultural communication; gender issues in communication; and organizational culture, followed by communication barriers and conflict. Since immigration and communication are two different subjects, theories are differentiated as well. Therefore, two different theoretical frameworks are included in this study. For the topic of immigration, transnationalism, the acculturation model, push-pull, and modernization theory are examined, while uncertainty reduction, expectancy violation, and culture learning theory are applied to communication. Table 2 presents the list and concepts of these theories.

People are moving around the world seeking better lives and better opportunities. Because of technology and the trend toward globalization, people are more mobile than ever before (Dewaele & Stavans, 2014; Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013; Benería, Deere, & Kabeer, 2012; Breckenridge & Moghaddam, 2012; Henrietta, 2009) and because of that, people are interacting with people with different religions, languages, cultures, and races in workplaces (Shimpi & Zirkel, 2012; Aneesh, 2012; Breckenridge & Moghaddam, 2012) and in daily life (Jensen & Arnett, 2012; Marsella, 2012). Thus, cultural diversity is increasing in workplaces around the

world, and developed countries are receiving more immigrants than developing countries are every year (Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013). A number of factors associated with the most recent wave of globalization, including the development of new transportation and communication technologies, have changed social distances and make it easier to move than ever before (Goldin, Cameron, & Balarajan, 2011; Prilleltensky, 2012).

Cultural Diversity in the Workplace

The definition of "diversity" varies and changes with time. In the mid-1970s, when employers in the United States began to focus on affirmative action policies, Merlin G. Pope, Jr. began using the term "diversity" to refer to human differences in the workplace (Garmon, 1997; Faist, 2010). At that time, references to diversity focused on race differences, but today, diversity embraces more than race differences and includes issues such as gender, religion, country of origin, sexual orientation, and others. To reflect the changes in diversity, the term "super-diversity" was coined by Vertovec (2010). In this study, "cultural diversity" denotes country of origin; therefore, diversity concerning race, sexual orientation, and gender are excluded.

Onghena (2013) defined cultural diversity as "a dimension in which people from different cultures interact in a specific field" (p. 192). Since immigrants have different countries of origin, ethnicities, cultures, and religions, they are part of diversity. According to Pieterse et al. (2013), "With today's increasingly diverse workforce, the ability to manage the double-edged sword of cultural diversity is of ever greater importance to the organization" (p. 799).

Diversity in the workplace has become more important in recent years (Damelang & Haas, 2012; Woehr, Arciniega, & Poling, 2013; Neault & Mondair, 2011). Because of differences in cultures, managing diversity is still a challenge for organizations and countries,

and particularly for countries that are high immigrant receivers (Mavroudi, 2010). Countries are trying to find a way to promote tolerance and respect for group identities, especially for immigrants and ethnic minorities (Mavroudi, 2010; Vertovec 2010). Vertovec (2010) believes that "to better understand and more fully address the complex nature of contemporary migration-driven diversity, additional variables need to be taken into account such as country of origin, migration channel, and legal status" (p. 87). Furthermore, he says there is diversity among different groups, and these differences must be well understood. He takes Islam as an example and points out that there are several traditions within the faith as practiced by South Asians, such as Deobandi, Tablighi, Barelvi, Sufi, and more. He suggests that these traditions must be understood as well. Alan G. Lafley, Chairman, President, and CEO at Procter & Gamble (2008), confirms Vertovec's point by stressing the importance of understanding and valuing diversity in the business world:

We simply cannot create brands and products to improve the lives of the world's consumers unless we understand and value the diversity of those we serve and with whom we work. ...The people we serve, and those we have yet to serve, are unique individuals. The better we understand them, the better equipped we'll be to create products and brands that meet their needs (*Best Practices*, p. 2).

According to the *Best Practices* report (2008), while 63% of companies surveyed have goals for increasing diversity, only 36% have set goals necessary for recruiting diverse employee candidates. Workplaces that embrace diversity have the potential to recruit, retain, and fully engage individuals who have much to contribute (Neault & Mondair, 2011) and it is positively related to organizational commitment and individual empowerment (Wolfson, Kraiger, & Finkelstein, 2011), as well as job satisfaction (Selmer, Lauring, & Jonasson, 2013). Similarly,

Damelang and Haas (2012) concluded that immigrants' skills are complementary because they perform different tasks, and also they bring different skills and abilities to the same task.

Pieterse et al. (2013) found that limiting diversity is unfair and unwise and it not only causes organizations to overlook potentially valuable employees, but doing so may also cause them to neglect the competitive advantage cultural diversity may hold.

According to Passel and Cohn (2008), the United States' population will increase to 438 million in 2050, and 82% of the growth will be attributed to immigrants arriving in the United States from 2005 to 2050 and their descendants. The projections indicate that nearly one in five Americans (19%) will be foreign born in 2050. According to the World Bank (2010), the top three countries with the largest immigrant populations are the United States (42.8 million), the Russian Federation (12.3 million), and Germany (10.8 million). Since the United States is the largest recipient of immigrants, more research is needed to understand how diversity affects U.S. organizations so they can better manage it, resolve or prevent communication conflicts, and cut the high cost of legal expenses, all of which will improve productivity and employee retention. As the largest immigrant-receiving country in the world, the United States has become more culturally diverse and its organizations have followed suit.

The U.S. Census (2013) estimated that the total foreign-born immigration population under the age of 65 from April 1, 2000, to March 31, 2010, ranged from 11.0 million to 13.8 million, and 6.547 million of those immigrants are women. It is important to note that 11% of the total discrimination charges in 2012 were national-origin-based discrimination (U.S. EEO Commission, 2013). Bohlander and Snell (2007) noted that equal employment opportunity legislation requires managers to provide the same opportunities to all job applicants and employees regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or age.

According to Fitzsimmons (2013), because of immigration and intercultural marriages, the number of individuals who possess more than one culture is increasing. Accordingly, there will be people with multicultural backgrounds in organizations, and related issues will not dissipate soon; therefore, organizations should pay attention to the context of multiculturalism. Since immigration trends are expected to continue, more studies are needed to understand how immigrants fit into work culture in the United States.

Molinsky (2013) posited that people from different cultures find that the new cultural norms for appropriate and acceptable behavior are different from those of their native culture, and that sometimes these new norms also violate their culturally ingrained values and beliefs. Professional immigrant women endeavor to make a conscious effort to change or improve some of their native country characteristics, such as accents; yet, many professional immigrant women still find change difficult to achieve. Li, Mobley, and Kelly (2013) asserted, "The main source of differences in 'hows' is cultural differences (p. 32)." Blume, Baldwin, and Ryan (2013) defined multicultural appreciation as "someone's interest in participating in, contributing to, and influencing a multicultural environment" and multicultural appreciation includes "showing openness, tolerance, and interest of a diversity of individuals" (p. 161). Thus, to prevent negative conflicts, organizations should create a work environment where all employees accept and appreciate the differences among people.

Professional Immigrant Women in the United States

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013, Table 4) data that were derived from the 2010 U.S. Census, 42% of employed immigrant persons 16 years old and over are women. Immigrant women represent 17%, overall, of employed women in the United States. As Table 1 shows, out of total employed foreign-born persons, 28% employed foreign-born women hold

management, professional, and related occupations; 28% hold professional and related occupations; 11.6% are in management, business, and financial operations occupations; and 8.1% are found in healthcare practitioner and technical occupations. The percentage of immigrant women is higher than that of native-born women in computer and mathematical occupations; architecture and engineering occupations; life, physical, and social science positions; and healthcare support positions. Compared with native-born women workers, employed immigrant women were more likely to be in service occupations and in production, transportation, and material-moving occupations. The disparity was especially great in service occupations. In 2012, 33.2% of immigrant women workers were in service occupations, compared with 19.4% of native-born women workers.

The number of immigrant women in the United States grew from 2008 to 2012. According to the American Community Survey (2008), there were 18.9 million immigrant women who accounted for 12.3% of the 154.2 million women in the United States. Immigrant women represented approximately 6.2% of the total population of the United States.

Table 1

Employed Foreign-Born (Immigrants) and Native-Born Women 16 Years and Over by Occupation, 2012 Annual Averages

Occupation	Foreign born (Immigrants)		Native born	
	Total	Women	Total	Women
Total employed (in thousands)	23,006	9,663	119,464	57,251
Occupation as a percent of total employed				
Management, professional, and related occupations	30	28	39.5	43.1
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	1.61	11.6	16.7	15.3
Management occupations	8.1	6.9	11.9	9.6
Business and financial operations occupations	3.5	4.6	4.1	5.7
Professional and related occupations	18.4	21.2	22.7	27.7
Computer and mathematical occupations	3.8	2.1	2.5	1.4
Architecture and engineering occupations	2.2	0.8	3.2	0.5
Life, physical, and social science occupations	1	1.1	1	0.9
Community and social service occupations	0.8	1.1	1.2	3
Legal occupations	0.5	0.7	1.4	1.4
Education, training, and library occupations	3.7	8	6.4	10
Healthcare practitioner and technical occupations	5	8.1	5.7	9.1
Healthcare support occupations	2.7	5.6	2.4	4.4

Note. From U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/forbrn.t04.htm>. Reprinted with permission.

This data reveals the number of professional immigrant women in the workforce in the United States. Assuming that all of these women went through the acculturation process leads to the central research question of this study: What is the lived experience of professional immigrant women who have had communication conflicts that arose from language barriers?

History of Professional Immigrants (Brain Drain and Brain Gain)

Since this study is focused on professional immigrants, the history of professional immigrants is added to literature review to understand better the immigration phenomenon. The term “brain drain” is used for the country of origin of skilled workers, and the term “brain gain” is for the receiving country. The term “brain drain” was coined by the spokesmen of the Royal Society of London to describe the outflow of scientists and technologists to the United States and Canada in the early 1950s (Sarfaraz, 2008).

It is very difficult to trace early human migration, and immigration is as old as the history of humans (Shah, 2011). Early humans moved from place to place for improved living conditions, as is happening today. According to Goldin et al. (2011), around 4000 BCE, the first civilizations attracted people from different locations to cities as laborers, merchants, traders, and administrators. According to Karaca (2003), popular scholars of ancient Greece left their native countries for new experiences and studies. Goldin et al. (2011) asserted that by adapting, innovating, and combining knowledge across cultural barriers, migrants have advanced the frontier of development since humans departed from Africa some 50,000 to 60,000 years ago. Today, the trend of brain drain is happening around the world.

Immigration is influenced by two distinct factors: volunteer and forced immigration. Volunteer immigrants seek a better life and are enabled by the exercise of free will (van Ecke, 2005). On the other hand, as the latter term indicates, some immigrants are forced to leave their

homes. People from Africa were forced migrants who were brought to the United States and the Caribbean against their will (Singer, 2010). According to the U.S. Department of State (2012), 56,424 refugees, another kind of forced migrant, were admitted to the United States in 2011.

Professional Immigrants Today

International level. According to Goldin et al. (2011), because of international migration, sending countries, receiving countries, and migrants themselves benefit. International migration promotes innovation, boosts economic growth, and enriches social diversity, and it is a boon for the economies in receiving countries. It stimulates economies through the financial and social feedback of migrant networks in sending countries. Immigrants obtain the benefits of higher wages, better education, and improved health when they move to relatively more developed countries (Goldin et al., 2011).

Developed countries are continually competing to recruit and retain the best talent. To keep only the most talented immigrants, United Kingdom government officials planned to make changes to its settlement rules by taking away the right to remain in Britain for more than five years from any migrant worker earning less than £35,000 per year. They believe the £35,000 per year earnings threshold will ensure only the "brightest and the best" migrants settle in the United Kingdom. (Travis, 2012). The European Union (EU), with 27 countries, is also targeting highly skilled persons capable of filling well-paid jobs or creating their own small businesses. Targeting highly skilled workers is a common state policy in the global competition for talent.

Australia is also one of the largest recipients of skilled workers. In 2010, the Australian government made changes to its skilled immigrant policy. According to Australia's Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Chris Bowen (2010), immigrants make up a quarter of the Australian population, but they account for around half of Australia's doctors, dentists,

information technology (IT) specialists, and chefs, and more than one-third of Australia's pharmacists, geologists, mechanical engineers, painters, and decorators. He posited that without migrants, Australia's workforce would begin to shrink during the second half of this decade, as the cohort of baby boomers retires from work.

Canada also ranks as one of the largest recipients of skilled labor. For example, in 2012, more than 57,200 newcomers were admitted under the Federal Skilled Worker Program (Government of Canada, 2014) and 62% of these immigrants are professional (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). According to Türegün (2013), Canada receives about one-quarter million immigrants and refugees annually from all regions of the world. To compete better with other large skilled-immigrant- recipient countries, Canada created the Innovation Strategy program in 2002 to bring highly skilled immigrants to Canada and to boost research and innovation. The program aims to attract foreign IT and other skilled immigrants by boosting the number of highly skilled workers immigrating permanently to Canada, working with provinces and territories to develop a national approach to the recognition of foreign credentials, and encouraging businesses to more actively recruit qualified immigrants (Government of Canada, 2011).

People have always been moving to and from the countries of the world, but never as many as at present (Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013). In 2010, there were 214 million international immigrants in the world, and the United States and Canada currently host approximately 50 million immigrants. Western Europe hosts over 40 million immigrants, most of which settled in Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands (International Organization for Migration, 2010). Portes and Böröcz (2007) argued that unlike manual laborers, skilled immigrants immigrate legally and for permanent residence, and they

often represent a significant gain of highly trained personnel for destination countries. Therefore, it is important for developed countries to retain skilled immigrants in their workforce.

National level. This study focused on immigrants (Permanent Resident Aliens), not immigrants who come to the United States temporarily (up to two years). In 1908, Israel Zangwill played *The Melting Pot* in New York City, and it marked the first time the notion of the United States "melting pot" was asserted (Perreira, 2004). Today, the landscape of American business continues to be defined as "a melting pot of nations" (Rampy & Strand, 2010). Old images of race and place in America are changing rapidly (Doyle & George, 2008; Treas & Carreon, 2010; Frey, 2011; Lichter, 2013) because of immigration. The melting pot was originally conceived as the idea that all different cultures become reflected on one common dominant culture that assimilated other cultures. The term "melting pot" received much criticism. Later, the concept of "tossed salad" or "salad bowl" came into being. The difference between the melting pot and the salad bowl is explained by Gloor (2006), who asserted that, "in the salad bowl, cultural groups should exist separately and maintain their practices and institutions" (p. 29). Throughout the history of the United States, immigration has been repeatedly defined as an essential American phenomenon (Kimberlin, 2009), and this phenomenon is not expected to change. Although dramatic events like 9/11 made a significant impact on immigration regulations and the number of immigrants, the United States is still one of the largest immigrant-receiving countries. According to U.S. Department of Labor immigration statistics in 2012, there were 25 million immigrants in the labor force. In February 2013, at a House Judiciary Committee hearing, Wadhwa (2013) stated that skilled immigrants are getting frustrated and returning home and that the United States must stop this brain drain and do everything to bring more engineers and scientists to the United States. According to Shah

(2011), "brain gain received worldwide attention in 1960s when instigated by Soviet Union's advances in the space technology. The United States launched its space program to catch up with the Soviet Union and relaxed its immigration laws to permit transfer of scientists from the USSR, Germany, and others to the U.S." (p. 64).

The immigration literature emphasizes that several immigration periods are traceable distinctly to wars or economic difficulties in other countries. Kannankuty and Burelli (2007) looked at the reasons for immigrating to the United States among the worker population of scientists and engineers. They reported that the primary reasons immigrant scientists and engineers moved are family-related reasons (37%), followed by educational opportunities (30%), job or economic opportunities (21%), and scientific or professional infrastructure (5%). Similarly, Geis, Uebelmesser, and Werding (2011) found that many people prefer to immigrate to countries to which members of their family, their home town, or their ethnic group have previously immigrated and which constitutes an immigrant network.

The immigration literature revealed that wage and employment opportunities are also indicators for deciding destination countries among skilled immigrants. Geis et al. (2011) observed that 69% of immigrants in the United States are highly educated. Interestingly, they also observed that immigrants' wages are lower than those of natives.

Communication. Humans mainly use language to communicate, and doing so distinguishes humans from the rest of living beings (Fedurek & Slocombe, 2011). Communication is a process (Fryer, 2012) that uses language (Pärl, 2011). With language, two people represent and communicate complex abstract information (Watzlawick & Jackson, 2010), and it occurs in verbal, nonverbal, and written forms (Iizuka et al., 2013; Vanderstraeten, 2012). Since culture includes the spoken language, there are different languages and this information

leads to this study's first research sub-question: What kind of communication conflicts do professional immigrant women face in U.S. organizations as a result of language barriers?

Verbal communication. Words are interconnected dependently and groups of words give meaning to a sentence (Liberman, 2012) in communication and in writing (Fedurek & Slocombe, 2011). People coordinate actions, shape meanings (Hofstede et al., 2010), and form identities and relationships when they verbally communicate (Glenn & Kuttner, 2013). Words can be used to direct people to a context, where the communicators are able to discover resources for understanding the meaning of the words (Liberman, 2012; Fryer, 2012).

Verbal communication differs among people because of their experiences. According to Waltman & Wagner-Marsh (2010), in communication, "a person makes sense by comparing what is happening with what s/he has experienced in the past. The closeness of the sender's background with the receiver's helps determine how closely the receiver understands/interprets the message intended by the other party" (p. 93). Naturally, growing up in a different culture, immigrants have different resources; thus, in verbal communication, they perform differently than native English speakers.

In verbal communication, there are accents in all languages. For example, in the United States, accents are present among native English speakers (e.g., Southern English and Northern English). Inherently, native English speakers' accents are distinctive from immigrants' accents. Newman (2002) argues that accents identify and set people apart, and they are a tool for quick judgment. He also stresses that accents reveal the speaker's national and regional origin, race, class, and schooling. Foreign accents are formed by the speaker's native language; thus, if there are 172 main spoken languages (*Ethnology Languages of the World*, n.d.) then possibly there are at least 171 accents formed when non-native speakers speak English. Rajini (2009) asserted that

accent is the specific style of speaking a particular language, and a person's origin and roots can be traced from his or her accent. Huang, Dotterweich, and Bowers (2012) proved that adult non-native speakers have more high-tone-pitch accents than younger people, but they did not offer a description of how participants felt while speaking with an accent.

Identification of a foreign accent by listeners has several consequences. For example, a foreign accent may affect perceptions of the non-native speaker as a person, and accented speakers may receive less positive ratings or some accents may be seen as more favorable in social status (Cohen, 2012; Morales, Scott, & Yorkston, 2012; Pinet, Iverson, & Huckvale, 2011; Southwood & Flege, 1999). According to Munro and Derwin (1995), in a foreign accent, utterances are partially or completely misunderstood because listeners are unable to recognize phonetic segments, words, or larger units that pronounced with an accent. Schmid and Yeni-Komshian (1999) investigated the effects of target predictability and degree of foreign accents and the study's results showed that listeners were more accurate and faster in detecting mispronunciation produced by native speakers than non-native speakers.

This leads to this study's second research sub-question: How do professional immigrant women feel when speaking with an accent?

Nonverbal communication. In addition to the spoken words, nonverbal communication is utilized by body movements, facial expressions, and changes in voice quality in communication (Dumbrava & Koronka, 2009, Akhyamova, 2012). To understand messages in verbal communication, it is important to pay attention not only to what is said, but also to how it is said (Altrov, 2013). In understanding the nonverbal signals, the sender's meaning would be complete (Prabhu, 2010).

As Akhyamova (2012) stressed, nonverbal means of communication are necessary, always important, and primary, concerning the moment of speech expansion by the nonverbal component of communication. According to Dumbrava and Koronka (2009) and Smith (n.d.), “body language accounts for 65-70, even 90 percent of human communication. Using the 70 percent figure for body language, the voice accounts for another approximately 20 percent and specific words only about 10 percent. As Smith, (n.d.) stated, verbal communication and nonverbal communication vary among different cultures. Similarly, Rane (2010) stated that the different aspects of communication are comprised of 55 percent body movements and gestures, 38 percent vocal tone, and only 7 percent verbal communication. This description implies that about 93 percent of people's communication is nonverbal. These studies found that people from different cultural backgrounds send out different body signals than native speakers, which could be misunderstood.

For example, Oshima (2014) found that nodding played such a powerful communicative role among Japanese people. Participants were able to complete the whole communication despite having limited verbal resource available. Another study (Battersby & Bolton, 2013) found that nonverbal communication (through the use of gestures) was one way to reduce anxiety in the classroom, especially for those students who do not speak the dominant language.

This understanding leads to the third sub-question of this study: What is each woman's own culture's role in nonverbal communication (e.g., eye contact, body position, gestures, facial expressions, petting, caressing, hitting, tone, volume, and tempo, among others) conflicts?

Intercultural communication. Intercultural communication is important to society and particularly to societies with people who have different cultural backgrounds (Koch, 2009) and it occurs between people from different cultures (Singh, 2010). Ability in intercultural

communication has become a necessity for functioning effectively in multicultural societies (Liu & Dall'Alba, 2012) and successful communication between individuals who speak different languages requires the use of a language spoken and comprehended by both parties (Dombi, 2011). In sum, as Durant and Shepherd (2009) stressed, intercultural communication relies on an idea of culture.

The need for successful communication is ever growing, as it is vital in effective cooperation among individuals (MacNab, Brislin, & Worthley, 2012), especially among people with different cultural backgrounds who are speaking diverse languages (Hanulíková, van Alphen, van Goch, & Weber, 2012). Intercultural communication also requires people to learn and understand the cultural values (Basbagi, 2012), behavioral patterns (Gandolfi, 2012), and rules for interaction in specific cultures because individuals' reactions to corporations and their messages are strongly influenced by their beliefs, values, and culture (Oliveira, 2013). According to Elsegood and Papadopoulos (2011), "this means developing specific knowledge and insights into different cultures (e.g., ethnic-cultural background, religion, migration history, social economic position, etiquette)" (p. 214). It is very important to be responsive to cultural variations in today's global business field and developing an intercultural communication ability can assist people from different cultural backgrounds to develop common respect (Aritz & Walker, 2014), better working relationships (Caputo & Crandall, 2012), and better decision making (Henrietta, 2009).

Hofstede et al. (2010) emphasized that "the acquisition of intercultural communication abilities passes through three phases: awareness, knowledge, and skills" (p. 419). "Awareness" is the recognition of differences, "knowledge" is learning about other cultures, and "skills" is the practice that is based on awareness and knowledge. Hofstede (1980) investigated the

relationships between employees and managements in 40 different cultures and developed four dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and masculinity/femininity. Power distance is based on the value system of the less powerful members; uncertainty avoidance is the feeling of being threatened by unknown situations; individualism is the interest of the group prevailing over the interest of the individual whereas collectivism is vice versa; and masculinity is the clear distinction of emotional gender roles, while femininity is the overlapping of emotional gender roles.

Previous studies proved that communication behaviors differ clearly between countries (Hofstede, 1980; Hall, 1989; Gudykunst et al., 1996) and cultures. As stated above, studies identified three main cultural dimensions: individualism/collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980; House, 2004; Trompenaars, 1993). These dimensions reflect the basic values of a culture and are used to describe, explain, and compare cultures with each other (Yuksek & Bekmeier-Feuerhahn, 2013; Treven, Mulej, & Lynn, 2008). These dimensions are discussed further in Chapter 5. Hall (1989) asserted that in high-context cultures, communication is conveyed in a more explicit and less coded form, whereas low-context-culture communication is in a more coded and less explicit form. For example, in high-context cultures, people learn to understand others through nonverbal responses (Mosakowski, Calic, & Earley, 2013; Shuaib, 2012; Glowacki-Dudka, 2008).

Culture plays an important role in communication. Noma and Crossman (2012) stressed that in international organizations, any success will rely on effective intercultural communication among individuals and organizations because the quality of intercultural communication influences almost all conceivable business activities. They also argued that any norms of intercultural communication are strongly influenced by culture and the way people understand

and perceive the world. Meaning can be interpreted one way in one culture and differently in another. Kameda (2014) explained that cultural differences can change the interpretation of words, and gave an example of the statement, “That could be difficult.” According to Kameda (2014), within the American culture of “can do,” the word “difficult” is not used to mean that something is impossible. However, in some other cultures, particularly in Asia, saying, “That could be difficult,” indicates unacceptability and it is a problem of literal translation among non-native English speakers.

Bouchet (2010) stated that meaning in communication permanently transforms cultural elements and patterns into something new. For example, meaning in nonverbal communication (Mezhova, 2013) is related to power distance (Madlock, 2012). Intercultural communication at the interpersonal level involves various cultural elements in manifold forms that do not have to have a common denominator. She also indicated that each interaction calls upon a variety of issues that differ not only from person to person, but also from time to time, which, depending on the situation, includes the motivation, expectation, purpose, and participants. Similarly, Machado (2011) stated that the “general mechanism of culture does not only maintain information, but also preserves it and processes it continuously by encoding, decoding, recoding, and translating languages” (p. 100). For example, Aritz and Walker (2014) found that because of the values of being considerate and respectful of others, the cooperative style of leadership generated more balanced participation and contribution among East Asian participants.

To be able to communicate, adapt, and understand a new culture, people have to be able to speak and understand the spoken language of the host country’s culture. Hernandez (2009) stressed that "immigrant adaptation can be assessed in terms of the adequate use and knowledge of communication skills needed to integrate into a new environment" (p. 725). If usage and

knowledge of communication skills are essential for adaptation to a new environment, then lack of communication skills will decelerate or postpone the adaptation to a new culture.

When people start living in another culture, acculturation takes place (Gómez, Urzúa, & Glass, 2014; Jae-Pil et al., 2014; Barón, Mendoza, & Ochoa, 2014; Oluwatoyin, 2013). Main acculturation patterns can be identified as assimilation: the old culture is abandoned and the new culture is fully adopted; integration: aspects of both the old and new culture are retained; separation: the old culture is retained without adopting the new culture; and marginalization: both old and new cultures are abandoned (Jae-Pil et al., 2014; Liou, Tsai, & Cheng, 2013; Samnani, Boekhorst, & Harrison, 2013; Xingying & Liangmei, 2011; Hernandez, 2009).

Gender issues in communication. Since this study focused on women immigrants' language barriers, gender issues in communication are a very important subject for this study. Gender issues in communication have been an important subject among researchers. Torppa (2010) stated that gender differences in communication are minor issues. She asserted that women are typically the experts in "rapport talk," which refers to the types of communication that build, maintain, and strengthen relationships, whereas men are typically the experts in "report talk," which refers to the types of communication that analyze issues and solve problems. She agreed that rapport talk reflects skills of talking, nurturing, emotional expression, empathy, and support, while report talk reflects skills of being competitive, lacking sentimentality, analyzing, and focusing aggressively on task accomplishment. Similarly, Bowles (2009) and Onea (2012) asserted that men and women have different communication styles, reflected by different objectives and strategies.

Even though it received much criticism, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, by John Gray (1992), became very popular and led to more research on communication differences

between men and women. In his book, Gray argued that there are significant and consistent differences in communication styles between men and women. Some of the differences included concepts such as: men like to get to the point and women enjoy talking for its own sake; in talk, men use literal terms and women employ artistic license and dramatic vocabulary to fully express and relate their feelings; and men like to sort their thoughts out before communicating them and women sort their thoughts out in the process of communicating. The findings of many scholars (e.g., Dindia, 2006; Wood, 2001; Murphy, 2001; Eisenberg, Martin, & Fabes, 1996; Kim & Bresnahan, 1996) and the result of Ahmad and Rethinam's (2010) study were contradicted by Gray's statements.

Another book about gender communication that became very popular is titled *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*, by Deborah Tannen (1990). She proposed that because women and men interpret messages in fundamentally different ways, they have difficulty communicating with one another, and researchers (Edwards & Hamilton, 2004; Chefneux, 2010; Galvin, Dolly, & Pula, 2013) have evaluated the empirical support of her claims. According to Edwards and Hamilton (2004), Tannen's notions were based on anecdotal evidence and linguistic analyses of small numbers of individuals, yet these ideas have sparked a significant response in the scholarly community. They also tested two models of gender communication and the results revealed inadequate support for the Tannen model and stronger support for a complex model of gender communication. The complex model is a multidimensional gender model, which proposes that individual differences within the sexes explain more variance in important consequent variables, such as inferences about cooperation and difficulty with communication, than does a basic model that examines only sex differences (Edwards & Hamilton, 2004).

Organizational culture. As Sabharwa (2014) concluded, recognizing differences and having policies that promote employee-friendly workplaces are important, for any organizations. Importantly, employees bring their own culture to the organization, and there are many levels of culture that influence them and even within an organization that has employees from its own country, communication problems still occur (Onea, 2012). Organizational culture plays an important role in organizational communication. Every employee should understand the organization's culture because it outlines how things are done and what is important in the organization (Vazirani & Mohapatra, 2012). A study by Sarangi and Srivastava (2012) has established "the role and contribution of organizational culture and communication as important determiners and predictors of employee engagement" (p. 29). According to Acar and Acar (2014), organizational culture denotes a wide range of social phenomena that help to define an organization's character and norms. The norms include customary dress, language, behavior, beliefs, values, assumptions, symbols of status and authority, myths, and ceremonies and rituals.

Communication Barriers and Communication Conflict. There are several aspects that contribute to communication barriers, which can be intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental (Shetach, 2012; Žikić, Marinović, & Trandafilović, 2012). According to Waltman and Wagner-Marsh (2010), communication barriers in a workplace “can arise from within the sender or the receiver (intrapersonal), between them (interpersonal), or barriers can be a product of the nature of the particular environment in which the interaction takes place (environmental)” (p. 92). In their study, intrapersonal barriers include perceptual differences, whereas interpersonal barriers include language differences, lack of feedback, boss consciousness, emotional barriers, and listening barriers. Individual differences reflect in the manner in which conflicts arise at workplace (Shweta & Jha, 2010) and individuals having

differences in attitudes, opinion, beliefs, culture, emotional stability, maturity, education, gender, and language also contributes to workplace conflicts (Martínez-Corts, Boz, Medina, Benítez, & Munduate, 2011). Not being able to ask for clarification of the meaning of a word also leads to communication conflict. According to Maynard (2011), communication conflicts occur because questions about “meaning” are unwarranted most of the time and thus may lead to misunderstanding. Congruently, Liberman (2012) pointed out that during intercultural communication, when misunderstanding is apparent, people continue the conservation and then deftly redirect the developing semiotic resources to the forthcoming meanings.

Huang et al. (2012) observed that with the development of a global economy and technology, it became possible and even common for people speaking different languages to interact. They explained, “intercultural miscommunication occurs when there is a breakdown in communication between speakers of two different cultures and languages due to cultural differences and/or sociolinguistic transfer” (p. 36). According to Huang et al. (2012), the differences in communication between people who are from the same language and cultural background, compared to communication between people who are from different languages and cultural backgrounds, is due to different social assumptions in each context. They asserted that having different social assumptions among speakers could cause a barrier in communication. Similarly, Tanaka (2014) stated that perception differs among people with different cultural background, also leading to communication conflicts. Cultural differences related to linguistic affiliation refer not only to the language, but also to all the idiom-related elements. Saussure (1998) distinguishes between idiom (as a possibility to use a language), language (as a set of signs used by a community), and speech (as a speaker’s formulation in a particular language).

These reflect possible areas of building barriers within the organizational communication (Onea, 2012).

All of the participants of this study speak with a foreign accent, and having an accent was one of the criteria to be able to participate to the study. The accent of the speaker is also listed as another contributor to communication barriers (Vajini, 2009). Foreign accented speech can be especially difficult to understand (Baese-Berk, Bradlow, & Wright, 2013; Stevenage, Clarke, & McNeill, 2012) and receives less positivity than native speech (Tsurutani & Selvanathan, 2013) by native speakers and it can also cause communication barriers in interaction between native speakers and non-native speakers. Schmale and Seidl (2009) asserted that, traditionally, a non-native accent is thought to hinder language processing. Southwood and Flege (1999) stressed that the observation of a foreign accent leads to the realization that the speaker is not a native, and native speakers can often identify a foreign accent in the speech of a non-native talker after hearing a few syllables. Deprez-Sims and Morris (2010) studied accents at the workplace and the effects of accents during a job interview. The study's results showed that the applicant with the Midwestern U.S. accent was evaluated more positively than the applicant with the French accent. According to the results of the study, the capacity of accent to trigger bias underlined the importance of distinctiveness that can lead to discrimination in employment settings.

Waltman and Wagner-Marsh (2010) reasoned that communication barriers at the organizational level include: *serial transmission effect* – "the truth becomes hopelessly distorted in its passage through the grapevine" (p. 99); *too many transfer stations* – "as messages moving down or up in an organization might have elements left out or altered at different organizational levels during successive iterations" (p. 101); *information overload* – "it is not just the amount of information; the time element can add urgency to some messages and some message may require

specialized skills or knowledge for processing" (p. 101); and *wrong medium* – "using a different medium for familiar messages may create a barrier because the receiver's expectations suddenly are not met" (p. 103).

Theoretical Framework of Immigration

Although strategies of adjustment or adaption to new culture is not the main concern of this study, these concepts are still important for understanding professional immigrant women's coping strategies for verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts. Four theoretical frameworks on immigration informed this research project. Immigration has been one of the most attractive topics among researchers (Kurunova, 2013) and in different disciplines in social science. Kimberlin (2009) indicated that the decision to immigrate can be explained through concepts from economics and political science, and immigrant identity and behavior can be explained through concepts from psychology, anthropology, and sociology. Because immigration is of interest to different disciplines, it leads to the development of different theories within each discipline. Furthermore, immigration theories are described as they are related to understanding adaption and adjustment to U.S. culture.

Transnationalism theory. This theory refuses the view of immigrants being totally assimilated within the new country and being removed completely from their country of origin and ignoring their original culture. Transnationalism, in contrast, brings a view of immigrants as people who maintain strong ties with their home country and oppose total assimilation into the new culture (Bacigalupe & Cámara, 2012; Mügge, 2011; Faist, 2010; Ebaugh, 2010; Ullman, 2010). Through the interdisciplinary perspective of transnationalism, economics and political science emphasize the impact of the social environment, and psychology, anthropology, and sociology focus on human behavior. According to Kimberlin (2009), social science immigration

theory has shifted toward an emphasis on transnationalism, in which immigrants maintain simultaneous ties to both their countries of origin and their countries of residence. With transnationalism theory, assimilation is replaced by acculturation.

The acculturation model. The acculturation model assumes that the individual becomes competent in the majority culture while retaining and identifying with her/his minority culture (Samnani et al., 2013). In other words, this model also refers to the changes that arise from intercultural contact (Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013). The most widely accepted acculturation model is theorized by Berry and he asserted that there are four acculturation strategies. These strategies include integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. According to Berry (1997, 2001), it is important for immigrants to maintain both original culture and to have positive relations with the host culture in integration; only positive relations with the host's culture are important in assimilation; only maintaining original culture is important in separation; and neither culture is important in marginalization. He also suggested that immigrants experience a development of changes in language, cognitive styles, personality, identity, attitudes, and acculturative stress. Kearney (1995) emphasized that instead of assimilation, immigrants go through a process of acculturation in which they hold on to elements of the country of origin while they acquire the values, mores, and life ways of the new culture.

Most often, the new immigrants who have different cultural standards are forced to learn the behaviors and practices of members of the new culture in order to survive in the host country (Cohen, 2011; Riedel, Wiesmann, & Hannich, 2011; Alfred, 2010; Bourhis, Montaruli, El-Geledi, Harvey, & Barrette, 2010). Over time, with the acculturation strategy, home cultural standards change (Samnani et al., 2013; Horn, 2013; Cohen, 2011) and immigrants become more proficient at cultural changes (Ergin & Kaufman-Scarborough, 2010).

Push-pull theory. One of the most widely accepted approaches to immigration is “push-pull” theory, which looks at immigration through an economic perspective. Such theories state that the “push” factor drives immigration labor flows as an outcome of lower standards of living or lack of economic opportunities in the home country, while the “pull” factor attracts the immigrants for better jobs (Kumpikaite & Zickute, 2012; Yang, 2010; Horevitz, 2009; Kimberlin, 2009; Portes & Böröcz, 2007). According to this theory, the basic idea is that migration takes place because of push factors and pull factors that motivate the immigrant to leave the home country (King, 2012; Yang, 2010).

Modernization theory. The connection between economic development, cultural change, and political liberalization is frequently explored through the view of modernization theory (Abdollahian, Coan, Oh, & Yesilada, 2012). Modernization theory argues that modernized (economically well-developed) countries attract more immigrants (de Haas, 2010) than less modernized countries. It is also true that international perspectives of a country make contributions to immigration (Okolski, 2012).

Table 2

Immigration Theories

Theory	Defining Features
Transnationalism Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assimilation is replaced by acculturation • Strong ties with the home country
The Acculturation Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority culture is retained and identified • Strategies of integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization • Development of changes
Push-pull Theories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic perspective of immigration
Modernization Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development, cultural change and political liberalization perspectives of immigration

Theoretical Framework of Communication

Additionally, three theoretical communication frameworks informed this study. All three theories are outlined as they are related to understanding intercultural communication, and the third relates to understanding organizational culture and communication. Table 3 presents communication theories.

Uncertainty reduction theory. The first theoretical framework that informed this study was uncertainty reduction theory. This theory is widely accepted in different fields. This theory suggests that when strangers meet, because of their uncertainty level, they may not be sure how to behave, nor how the other person will behave; in addition, they are not sure what they think of the other, as well as what the other person thinks of them (West & Turner, 2009). According to this theory, people will use communication to reduce their uncertainty. Kasper, Légaré, Scheibler, and Geiger (2012) see "the initial motivation to communicate not in the provision of information but in the uncertainty perceived by one of the two parties in a communication" (p. 5). Under the view of uncertainty reduction theory, Stock and Genisyürek (2012) assessed the expatriate leaders who are unfamiliar with the host's culture, and they suggested that "if uncertainty toward local employees is high, cultural awareness training is necessary to communicate the advantage of working with employees from different cultures and encourage trust toward foreigners" (p. 3280).

Based on research conducted in an organizational setting in Singapore, Malik and Kabiraj (2010) argued that interpersonal communication tends to reduce the uncertainty related to the organizational mission. Interdepartmental communication can lead to a better understanding of the role of the department and its mission in the organization, and interpersonal communication

within the department decreases functional uncertainty of the task-performing personnel in that department.

According to Kacmar, Andrews, Harris, and Tepper (2013), uncertainty has been associated with undesirable individual and organizational outcomes including stress, lower performance, and burnout. They argued that feelings of being threatened and worried would be stronger for those who lacked political skill, as they are less able to manage the uncertainty in an organizational political work environment than those with political skill.

Expectancy violation theory. The second theoretical framework for this study is expectancy violation theory. This theory examines how humans react when their expectations are violated. According to West and Turner (2009), expectancy violation theory advances that when communicative norms are violated, depending on the receiver's nonverbal observation of the receiver, the violation may be perceived either favorably or unfavorably. Kawamoto et al. (2012) stated that people often expect other people to follow an unwritten rule in which they include others as they would expect to be included, such that social exclusion involves some degree of expectancy violation. Kernahan, Bartholow, and Bettencourt (2000) concluded that because of expectancy violations, group members are likely to be affected by a confluence of factors.

This theory is also accepted widely in different fields. For example, Harris and Fiske (2010) applied this theory in neurosciences and suggested that some of the neural regions in the brain are involved in an expectancy violation for competence information. Bartholow, Fabiana, Gratton, and Battencourt (2001) indicated that valence is an important determinant of affective responses of expectancy violation and social perceivers automatically evaluate other people and their behavior. Dickter and Gyurovski (2012) examined how early attention to race differs on

the basis of previously-formed stereotypic expectancies and suggested that attention to race can be affected by positive or negative expectancies. In addition, results of the study by Compton et al. (2010) supported the value of that theoretical model in understanding individual differences in performance monitoring. Clor-Proell (2009) used this theory in accounting and found that users' credibility judgments are extreme when a firm's actual accounting choices do not match expectations. In marketing, Bailey and Bonfield (2010) employed expectancy violation to explain how consumers are likely to respond to different companies when they fulfill or fail to fulfill their promises or obligations; the results from the study indicated that, in the case of firms with positive reputations, consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions were significantly affected by whether or not a company fulfills promises.

Culture learning theory. The third and final theoretical consideration underlying this study was cultural learning theory as it relates to understanding intercultural communication. Since immigrants are from different cultures, this theory is applicable to foreigners who live in different cultures. Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, and Colby (2003) defined culture learning as “the process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures” (p. 1). They also believe that culture learning is a dynamic, developmental, and ongoing process and this process engages the learner cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively. Similarly, Hernandez (2009) asserted that culture learning theory focuses on the social psychology of “intercultural” encounters, with a focus on communication competence, knowledge of norms and values, and sociocultural adaptation. She also emphasized that during face-to-face interactions, rules and conventions are important in cultural learning. For example, Crossman and Noma (2013) found that in intercultural communication, when managers and subordinates do not mutually

understand each other, they fail to learn from each other and create a negative communication cycle.

Lack of communication skills may also lead to separation, which is one of the four main patterns of acculturation under cultural learning theory. In the separation pattern, it is assumed that immigrants' old culture is retained and the host country's culture is not adopted (Jae-Pil et al., 2014; Liou et al., 2013; Samnani et al., 2013; Xingying & Liangmei, 2011; Hernandez, 2009). Masgoret and Ward (2006) asserted that speaking the host country's language would increase participation with the host community, improve cultural learning, increase social support, and, ultimately, increase adaptive sociocultural adjustment.

Table 3

Communication Theories

Theory	Defining Features
Uncertainty Reduction Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other people thoughts are important• Communication is used to reduce uncertainty
Expectancy Violation Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation of other people and their behavior and how they react when their expectation are violated• Nonverbal communication plays an important role
Culture Learning Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on intercultural communication• Culture learning is dynamic developmental and ongoing process

Summary

Since this study focused on professional immigrants, this chapter presented a review of the history of professional immigrants, including the international and national level, with a primary focus on professional immigrant women in the United States. This study utilized data about professional immigrants from the 2010 U.S. Census. Although immigration theories of transnationalism, acculturation, push-pull, and modernization are included in literature review,

this study mainly emphasized the acculturation theory. This chapter also included a review of cultural diversity in the workplace.

There are numerous studies focusing on immigration, communication, and communication barriers. This chapter contained a review of communication, including verbal and nonverbal communication. Since this research study examined lived experiences of professional immigrant women in medium and large organizations in the United States and the language barriers of those women, intercultural communication was also examined. Because the participants of this study are women, a review of gender issues in communication is added to the literature review. This section of this chapter is followed by a review of organizational communication, communication barriers, and communication conflicts. The literature review revealed that numerous studies conducted thus far have focused only on a specific race and ethnicity or a region in relation to immigrants' communication problems. Not including all races, ethnicities, and regions is a gap in the literature review within the field of management.

Chapter 3: Research Method

We didn't set out to be educators or even scientists, and we don't purport that what we do is real science but we're demonstrating a methodology by which one can engage and satisfy your curiosity.

--Adam Savage

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to explore the lived experiences of professional immigrant women in medium and large organizations in the United States and to identify the communication barriers of those women. A review of literature identified that there is a gap with regard to how management addresses intercultural communication conflicts in workplaces. Another gap the literature review revealed is that people from all races and regions are not included in previous studies. The available literature has only focused on the experience of professional immigrant women from specific countries, races, or religions (e.g., Barrett, 2010; Furseth, 2011; Hite, 2007; and Muriel & Nguyen, 2012). As Kimberlin (2009) stated, “immigration is a topic that cannot be confined to a single social science discipline, and contemporary scholars view the field of immigration studies as inherently interdisciplinary. Nonetheless, different social science disciplines bring different approaches to the topic of immigration” (p. 763). To understand intercultural communication, culture must be understood first. The methodological framework used in this study focuses on the effects of intercultural communication barriers that lead to communication conflicts.

Research Questions

This qualitative research utilized a phenomenological approach. Its main purpose was to generate in-depth information to understand the lived experiences of professional immigrant women. The central research question that this research study sought to answer is: What is the lived experience of professional immigrant women who have had communication conflicts that arose from language barriers?

This study also addressed the following research sub-questions:

1. What kind of communication conflicts do professional immigrant women face in U.S. organizations as a result of language barriers?
2. How do professional immigrant women feel speaking with an accent?
3. What is each woman's own culture's role in nonverbal communication (e.g., eye contact, body position, gestures, facial expressions, petting, caressing, hitting, tone, volume, tempo, among others) conflicts?

Research Methodologies

There are three approaches to research that can be chosen by a researcher depending on the research questions. The three approaches are exploratory (qualitative), descriptive, and explanatory (quantitative). The qualitative method incorporates the values and perspectives of both researcher and participants, whereas the quantitative method involves reasoning from general theories to specific instances.

Bogdan and Taylor (1975) pointed out that “qualitative methodologies refer to research procedures which produce descriptive data; people's own written or spoken words and observable behaviors” (p. 4). Detailed data is gathered through open-ended questions that

provide direct quotations. The interviewer is a primary part of the research. This is the difference between quantitative and qualitative research.

Qualitative Method

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), “qualitative researchers were and have been influenced by their political hopes and ideologies, discovering findings in their research that confirmed their prior theories or beliefs” (p. 19). They asserted that early American ethnographers studied the American Indians and that later studies focused on the immigrants at the beginning of the era of industrialization. They stressed that colonizing nations relied on the human disciplines because of colonial projects. An observer went to a foreign setting to study the culture, customs, and habits of another human group, which was often a group that stood in the way of white settlers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Lyons et al. (2013) noted that qualitative research enables researchers to gain a perspective that uncovers the meanings of individual experiences from within a cultural context.

Qualitative Method - Phenomenology

One of the major approaches to qualitative research is phenomenology, which is a descriptive study of how individuals experience a phenomenon. Creswell (2007) asserted that the qualitative researchers who study individuals choose phenomenology from among five qualitative traditions. According to Johnson (2006), the foundational question in phenomenology is, “What are the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon by an individual or by many individuals?” In this approach, the researcher gains access to individuals' lived experiences and searches for the invariant structures of experiences, which is also called the essence of their experience. Phenomenological researchers search for commonalities among individuals instead of focusing on what is distinctive to a single

individual. Van Manen (1990) stated that phenomenology asks, "What is this or that kind of experience like?" (p. 9). He also asserted that phenomenology does not offer the possibility of effective theory, but it offers the possibility of plausible insight that brings people in more direct contact with the world. According to van Manen (1990), phenomenological research is the study of lived experience; the explication of phenomena as they present themselves to consciousness; the study of essences; the description of the experiential meanings we live as we live them; the human scientific study of phenomena; the attentive practice of thoughtfulness; a search for what it means to be human; and a poetizing activity.

Van Manen (1990) pointed out that "hermeneutics phenomenology is a human science which studies persons" and the distinction between hermeneutics phenomenology and phenomenology is that phenomenology "describes how one orients to lived experience, hermeneutics describes how one interprets the 'text' of life" (p. 4). It is very important to note that phenomenological research is a caring act (van Manen, 1990) in which a researcher would want to know that which is most essential to being. He also explained that "hermeneutics phenomenological research is fundamentally a writing activity" (p. 7) and "it is interpretive because it claims that there are no such thing as uninterrupted phenomena" (p. 180). The hermeneutics phenomenological approach was utilized in this study. It is important to mention that phenomenology is not an empirical analytic science, nor is it mere speculative inquiry in the sense of unworldly reflection; it is neither mere particularity, nor sheer universality; nor does it solve a problem (van Manen, 1990).

Designing of Method

This research study used a qualitative, hermeneutics phenomenological approach, for which van Manen introduced specific guidelines to conduct human science research that is

rooted in hermeneutic phenomenology. This particular method has been employed in professional disciplines (Earle, 2010) and listed six distinct research activities that van Manen provided. These activities include: (1) turning to a phenomenon of particular interest to the researcher; (2) investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it; (3) reflecting on the essential themes that characterize the phenomenon; (4) describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting; (5) maintaining a strong and oriented relation to the phenomenon; and (6) balancing the research context by considering parts and whole (p. 290). This study was designed to be consistent with the above activities.

Population and Sample

Research Participants. The criterion for the sampling was professional immigrant women 25 and older who work in or are retired from medium and large U.S. organizations. The reason for those parameters was that, in general, people graduate from college in their early twenties. Thus, it was logical to assume that people may hold a professional position at the minimum age of 25. The focus of the research study was communication conflicts of those women and effects of communication conflicts at work due to their verbal and nonverbal language barriers. Other immigrant women who do not work in a professional career were excluded from this research. Although native English-speaking professional women may have communication barriers, only non-native English-speaking professional women were included in this study. Professional women who immigrated to the United States at an early age were also excluded. One of the reasons that only English as Second Language (ESL) speakers were chosen was to determine whether an accent contributes to communication conflicts, and immigrants who have been in the United States for a long period of time are likely to have dropped most or all of their accent.

For this study, the definition of “professional” was taken from the U.S. Department of Labor (U.S. Department of Labor, Wage, and Hour Division, 2005b). Under 29 C.F.R. § 541.301(a), the primary duty test under the learned professional exemption includes three elements:

1. The employee must perform work requiring advanced knowledge;
2. The advanced knowledge must be in a field of science or learning; and
3. The advanced knowledge must be customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction.

Other immigrant women who do not work in a professional career are excluded in this research.

Recruiting Participants for the Study

In this research study, a snowball sampling strategy was utilized. A potential participants email list was created from different organizations by visiting those organizations’ websites. For example, on a university’s website, each department’s website was visited and each faculty member’s biography was reviewed to discover where they received their degrees. If a faculty member received a degree from another country, that faculty member’s email address was added to the mailing list, which consisted of approximately sixty email addresses. The invitation letter, which included a summary of the study and criteria for being a participant, was emailed to the potential participant. The recipient was asked to forward the letter to someone else who would be interested in participating in the study. As a result, three participants agreed to participate in this study. The invitation letter for this study is included as an addendum (Appendix C).

LinkedIn and Facebook were also used as recruiting tools. A short summary of the study was posted and requested participation, and one participant agreed to participate from each networking medium.

A list of phone numbers of contacts who might help with recruiting more participants was also developed. This contact list was developed in any kind of setting, such as while shopping, attending a conference, and talking to co-workers and friends who may know someone who would fit this study as a participant. Using this approach, 10 participants were recruited. Email media was the most frequently used format for communication, and approximately 250 emails were sent and received during the course of the study; many phone calls were also made.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

According to Ghooi (2014), Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) are an important association in the participants' protection program and ethical credentials of research. As with other research projects, this study also required approval from Sullivan University's IRB. The Sullivan University Graduate School of Business (GSB) IRB oversees research involving human subjects conducted by students and faculty associated with the GSB and by students and faculty associated with other programs at Sullivan University.

Subject to Sullivan University's IRB requirement, an Informed Consent Form (ICF) was created (Appendix B). In addition to the ICF, forms of Application, Conflict of Interest, an Invitation Letter to Participate, IRB Concerns, and Certificate of Completion from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research were also created and submitted to the IRB for approval of this study. After submission of this study, Sullivan University's IRB had concerns about uncovered discrimination issues. This issue was handled by each participant's transcript approval. Each participant approved her transcript to use in this study.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

Interviews. After receiving approval for the study from Sullivan University's IRB, participants were initially recruited. Semi-structured interview questions were developed for this research study (Appendix A). Semi-structured interview questions consisted of questions about the participants' experiences of communication barriers as non-native English speakers and contexts or situations that influenced their experiences of communication barriers. These questions were chosen because they focus attention on gathering data that leads to a textural description and a structural description of the experiences. These questions were asked to provide an understanding of the common experience of the participants. Other open-ended questions were also asked regarding the language experience, such as questions about feelings about language, questions about language in the family, and questions about suggestions and/or advice to other non-native speakers. The last section asked participants to provide any information they would like to add that they feel is important.

Interviews were conducted over 2.5 months; 10 of them were face-to-face, and 5 of them were held via Skype. Face-to-face interviews took place in different settings: three participants invited the researcher to their homes; four participants chose a public library meeting room; and three participants chose a coffee shop, where the researcher bought coffee or dinner for each participant. Two of the face-to-face interviews took place in the participant's office.

The first section of the interview consisted of demographic questions, which were asked of all of the participants. The second section was about verbal conflict and continued with nonverbal conflicts. During the interviews, specific questions were varied according to the flow of the interview. Specific questions were asked to solicit detailed descriptions following a participant's remarks; these questions included prompts such as: *can you describe...; how did*

you feel...; can you remember...; can you give me an example...; and what happened next...; among others. Five of the participants asked for a copy of the completed research, and the researcher made a commitment to send each of them a copy when the study is completed. All of the interviews were transcribed verbatim and copies of the transcripts were emailed to the participants to ask for their approval for use in this study. An Excel worksheet was created that recorded the interview process and information for each participant. The worksheet consisted of an assigned number to the participant (indicated with “P”), how each was recruited, her home country, current state of residence, education level, interview date, type of interview, interview location, transcription, approval of transcript, her age when she came to the United States, years living in the United States, and contact information.

For the face-to-face interviews, the signed ICFs were collected before the formal interview began. For the Skype interviews, ICFs were emailed to the participants, and they emailed the signed form in a PDF file and returned it to the researcher before the scheduled interview date.

Confidentiality Issues. The interviews were recorded to capture the data accurately. The recorded digital files were kept locked and no one had access to them other than the researcher. The researcher assigned a number for each recorded digital file to protect participants’ identities. The data was stored in a flash disk and external hard drive and accessed with a personal computer without internet or network connections. Digital files are kept until the study is completed. The data (not recorded files) will be retained for future use. After completing the research study, the researcher destroyed all of the digital files by deleting them from the computer and flash disk. To protect further participants’ identity, words that would

identify the participants were omitted in transcripts; for example, if a participant said “in Korea,” it was transcribed as “in my country.”

Instrumentation. The interviews with the professional immigrant women lasted between one and six hours. All of the face-to-face interviews were recorded on a Sony ICD-PX312 digital voice recorder. Only one interview was video recorded, using an Apple iPhone 4. For the Skype interviews, Version 5.10.0.116 was employed. To record the Skype interviews, Evaer Video Recorder Version 1.2.9.35 was utilized. Although the participants agreed to the interview being recorded, the Evaer program automatically warns the user that the video is being recorded, which gave each participant an opportunity not to participate before beginning the interview. The researcher recorded video calls to analyze body language of the participants.

Data Analysis

The heuristic process of phenomenological analysis described by Moustakas (1994) includes:

- Immersion: the researcher is involved in the world of the experience;
- Incubation: a space for awareness, intuitive or tacit insights, and understanding;
- Illumination: active knowing process to expand the understanding of the experience;
- Explication: reflective actions; and
- Creative synthesis: bring together to show the patterns and relationships.

Creswell (1998) stated that phenomenological data analysis proceeds through the methodology of reduction, the analysis of specific statements and themes, and a search for all possible meanings. The researcher needs to set aside all prejudgments, bracketing his or her experiences. In this study, as Creswell (1998) suggested, the below steps were followed for bracketing.

- Key phrases and statements that spoke directly to the phenomenon in question were placed;
- Meanings of these phrases were interpreted;
- The subject's interpretations of these phrases were obtained;
- Meanings for what they reveal about the essential recurring features of the phenomenon being studied were inspected;
- The phenomenon in terms of the essential recurring features were identified and defined.

The analysis process goal was to examine the lived experience from the perspective of the participants who shaped the experience rather than from the point of view of other people's interpretations. The analysis examined the interpretations of the participants in the phenomenon under this research study that defined the commonalties of the lived experience in the phenomenon. It is important to note that interpretations are not the researcher's own perspective of the phenomenon, the other researchers' experience of the phenomenon, or the theoretical descriptions of the phenomenon that are under analysis.

As van Manen (1990) suggested, focused attention was paid to the records and the transcripts, which were read several times. Every sentence was examined for what it revealed about the phenomenon being studied. From each transcript, significant statements that were directly relevant to the lived experience of professional immigrant women's language barriers were recognized.

Bogdan and Taylor (1975) suggested that the researcher "must create technique rather than slavishly follow procedures" (p. 101). In this study, the researcher combined all of the transcripts under a focal point, which related to the research questions, and created a new file in

Microsoft Word. Focal points included: experiences living in the United States; verbal communication included speaking English as a second language, speaking with an accent, subordinates/coworkers' behavior, and coping with verbal communication conflicts; nonverbal communication including body language differences between the home country and the United States; and coping with nonverbal communication conflicts. Accordingly, each interview question had 15 answers. A color was assigned to each focus point. The process continued by color-coding the significant statements according to their assigned colors. For instance, yellow is assigned to experience of living in the United States. When the researcher was analyzing the data, she examined the yellow coded text to understand what had been said about the experience of living in the United States. Subsequently, results were incorporated into an in-depth description of the phenomenon.

Coding the Data

From 15 verbatim transcripts, a total of 177 significant statements were excerpted. Significant statements were grouped under experience living in the United States (22), speaking English as a second language (30), speaking with an accent (38), coworkers'/subordinates' behavior (27), coping with verbal conflicts (18), body language differences between the native country and the United States (31), and coping with body language conflicts (11). A list of significant statements is presented in Appendix D.

From 177 significant statements, seven themes and seven sub-themes are emerged. The coding, grouping, and analysis were recorded on the transcript documentation, which utilized Microsoft Word. The data was color-coded and each color represented different meaning units; for instance, communication was coded magenta and the textual translation was coded dark red. Composite group textural descriptions and composite group structural descriptions are also

color-coded differently. Table 4 presents composite group textural descriptions and Table 5 presents composite group structural descriptions.

Table 4

Composite Group Textural Descriptions

Themes	Sub-Themes	Sample Quotes	Color Coding
Being an immigrant		You are always somebody else. You are always somebody who is from there.	Yellow
Communication		Because sometimes we do not know all the words in English and we just have to explain in a different way, probably with more words, and sometimes you say things and they do not understand.	Magenta
	Fear	I fear that people will not understand. I don't have confidence in doing some things like service or explaining things to people.	Gray
	Textual Translation	Sometimes I say the wrong words, but it turns out to be a funny thing, and people laugh about it	Blue
	Defense	I would throw their face anytime to make a joke. I said, well, try to do what I do: 'Can you speak my native language?	Red
	Accent and feeling deficient	They cannot even hear you; keep asking, 'What did you say?' That's the worst part. Some places you don't even want to talk.	Green
		Even though I am good in what I do, but I could not even go further. I think English is a barrier for me.	

Table 5

Composite Group Structural Descriptions

Themes	Sub -Themes	Sample Quotes	Color Coding
Different culture		American way is individualism; and my country's way is unite.	Blue
	Physical contact	In my country we do not do hugs. Sometimes I do feel uncomfortable receiving hugs from males.	Brown
	Personal space	In my country, distance is a little bit closer, so I am just learning that Americans like to give much more distance when talking.	Pink
	Tone of voice	When we speak in my country, we speak louder. But here most people speak lower.	Orange
Time		In the beginning I was embarrassed; but now I kind of laugh about it.	Cyan
Place		I found that sometimes it is difficult for me, especially being in here, in this city.	Light gray
Work environment		They would tease me at work sometimes when I mispronounced something, but not to be mean.	Purple
Coping strategies		Often times I would say I don't speak perfect English kind of disclaimer before I say anything.	Light green

Summary

This chapter introduced the methodology, rationale for the phenomenological approach using qualitative methodology, data collection, and definition of samples for this research study. The following chapter, Chapter 4, summarizes findings, which are retrieved from an analysis of collected data from interviews.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Presentation

The noblest pleasure is the joy of understanding.

--Leonardo da Vinci

Introduction

Chapter 4 presents the analysis of data that developed from this phenomenological study. First, demographics of the participants are presented, followed by a detailed description of each participant. Then, a group textual description and a summary are provided. The data are presented by developing 1) a textural (what) description, 2) a structural (how) description, and 3) an overall description of the experience (essence) (Creswell, 2007). The textural description is an explanation of what was experienced, a description of the meaning individuals have experienced; the structural description is an explanation of an experience, addressing how the phenomenon was experienced; and the essence is a combination of these two description into a longer description that describes the essence of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2007). To protect the identity of the participants, the letter P (indicating "participant") and a number is assigned to each participant.

Demographics of the Study Participants

The study participants included 16 professional immigrants, mostly from Kentucky (86%). The mean age was 46.5 years, and ages ranged from 28 to 69 years. The mean number of years living in the United States was 19.5 years, and ranged from 3 to 51 years. The mean age of participants when they moved to the United States was 22, and their ages at date of immigration ranged from 18 to 34 years old. Fourteen participants out of the 16 learned English in their country, but also spoke their native language. Two participants came to the United States

without knowing English, and they learned English after their arrival. The participants' educational background (noted in parenthesis) included Ph.D. Degrees (4), Master's Degrees (4), Baccalaureate Degrees (5), Associate Degrees (2), and High School diplomas (1). Two participants received their Ph.D.; 4 participants received their Master's; and 2 participants received their Baccalaureate Degrees from U.S. institutions. The rest of the participants received their degrees from schools in their home countries. Industries represented by these participants (indicated in parentheses) were: education (6), private sector (7), healthcare (1), and government (2). Participants' socioeconomic and marital status, race, and sexual orientation were not collected for this research. This study's participants represented 14 different countries: Bosnia, China, Germany, Ghana, Haiti, Pakistan, Mexico, Palestine, Philippines, Russia, Syria, Taiwan, and Turkey. These countries represented the continents of Asia, Europe (Eastern and Western), and Africa. Table 6 below presents demographics of the study participants.

Table 6

Demographics of the Study Participants

Country	Resident State	Age to U.S.	Years Living in U.S.	Education	Sector
Bosnia	Kentucky	28	17	Associate	Education
China	Kentucky	30	13	Master's	Private
China	Kentucky	25	8	Ph.D.	Education
China	Kentucky	25	5	Ph.D.	Education
Germany	Kentucky	34	9	Ph.D.	Education
Ghana	Kentucky	24	3	Master's	Government
Haiti	Kentucky	18	51	High School	Private
Mexico	Kentucky	26	20	Baccalaureate	Private
Pakistan	Kentucky	28	20	Ph.D.	Healthcare
Palestine	Kentucky	20	16	Associate	Education
Philippines	Nebraska	25	24	Baccalaureate	Private
Russia	Kentucky	25	14	Baccalaureate	Private
Syria	Kentucky	18	41	Baccalaureate	Private
Taiwan	Kentucky	20	8	Master's	Education
Taiwan	Kentucky	32	25	Master's	Government
Turkey	Texas	27	19	Baccalaureate	Private

Individual Phenomenal Descriptions

In this section, repeated words, crutch words, and “ums” are eliminated from the direct quotes.

Textural description of participant 1. P1 came to the United States at the age of 20 and has been living here for eight years. She has held various jobs in the education sector and still works in this field. She holds a Master's degree from a North American University. Although she has been here for eight years, she has a slight accent and she speaks rapidly. She describes

her experience when someone does not understand her because of her accent as follows: "When I was a TA [teaching assistant], I was teaching and received teacher evaluation, and in my evaluation I think one or two students said that I am hard to understand. To me I wasn't aware. That made me to feel uncomfortable." As a professional woman, she finds living in the United States difficult, especially adjusting to American culture. She prefers to keep her identity while living here. At the same time, blending into U.S. society is very important for her. She states, "I feel like accent is sort of related to identity. It is very important for to fulfill certain expectations, so to me, if I speak without an accent then I can melt into the society better." Because of her native culture, she shifts her eyes while talking. She explains, "the amount of time to spend to give eye contact is very different from my culture." She lived in other states and had different experiences. She explains, "This is in Kentucky and I hate to say this but they do not travel a lot outside like I have. People say 'you live in ... you guys wear clothes.' I say 'yes, we wear clothes and we do not live on a tree house.'" She thinks that because people in Kentucky do not travel much, that makes them unaware of other cultures and countries.

Structural experience of participant 1. P1's experience with verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts that arose from language barriers is predisposed by her native culture and the effect of being an immigrant in the United States. She describes, "A lot of time in culture we use little bit strong words. For example we say 'should': 'you should do this, you should do that.' My husband, who grew up in Western culture, told me that it is very strong and not polite. The best way would be 'would you like to do this' or 'I would like to do this,' so that's an example where I learned cultural differences in communication." In nonverbal communication, physical contact differs in her native culture. She explains, "In my country we do not do hugs, no, no, yeah! Sometimes I do feel uncomfortable receiving hugs from males.

Here it may or may not be receive inappropriately, but I do feel uncomfortable receiving hugs from males."

Essence of participant 1's experience. P1's experience of being a professional immigrant woman in the United States would be considered difficult. This is supported by her statement, "I found that sometimes it is difficult for me especially being in here in this city. I had lots of experiences living bigger cities in the North America. In the United States particular I found it little bit different. The United States is also a melting pot. Canada is more diverse in terms of I can keep my identity. So here I feel like little bit more pressures as a professional woman to demonstrate or to so-called to fit in the culture and to fulfill certain expectations."

Additionally, in describing her experience, P1 frequently referred to a discrepancy in superior/subordinate relationships and work environment, which she was not used to. She gave the following incident as an example: "I was asked to train a new hire and I have to track his work. Through the process, I realized that he thought that I tried making his work more difficult. One point he thought I was sabotaging his work. He actually said he did all the work, but somebody went in there and deleted his work; insinuated that I did it. I actually went to my supervisor to try to solve the conflict. My supervisor, I think she was very frustrated by my communication style. She said unless I have physical evidence, do not go to her. I learned in a situation like that be able to provide physical evidence of the work he did or he did not do. So I start taking screen shots of his work."

Textural description of participant 2. P2 came to the United States at the age of 30 and has been living here for 13 years. She works in the private sector. She is very shy and speaks in a very low tone with a heavy accent, and she laughs when she talks about herself. While talking, she used lots of filler words and phrases, such as "you know." Although she had to take English

courses in her country from elementary to the college level, she still experienced and is experiencing language difficulties. She explained, "We had English lessons since elementary school at back in my country, but it is just some basic things. And we had until college we have to pass some examination English examination to graduate from college. So that's the all the way from elementary to college." Her experiences with language problems were harder when she came to the United States. She said, "When I just got here, I was afraid to make any mistakes. I am thinking about the grammar and pronunciation and then now I totally forgot about it. It was very hard at the beginning, but still have issues to understand people and make people understand me. I think maybe because the different languages use different muscles. That's why it is hard." Referring to her work as a high-tech professional, she explained, " I am kind of technical person in the computer field most time because of computer language that help little bit we can understand each other when talking about technical issues, because using the computer language. But when we talk about want to chat with you coworker something else beside the work, especially the culture, what kind of show they saw, they watched it before, maybe 10 years ago, we have no knowledge about that, I have no idea what they are talking about. So technically we still have issues communicate with them but is a less issue than we would chat daily life."

Structural experience of participant 2. P2's experience with verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts that arose from language barriers is influenced by her native cultural norms and the effect of being an immigrant in the United States. She said, "Especially when two American coworkers they talk something to each other. I cannot understand what they are talking about. If they are talking about something I am not familiar for example the baseball or some show I never saw before I never watch before it was very hard for me to understand. If

they talk something some I am familiar with maybe it is easier to understand." She feels very uncomfortable when people do not understand her. She elucidated, "It is embarrassing. Of course it is embarrassing-- yes yes embarrassed. I tried to improve my oral English, but I am too old. I cannot make too much progress. My son already started correcting my pronunciation." She explained tone of voice difference: "when we speak in my country we speak loud that's a high bid for us but here most people speak low. Do not talk too loud that impact me. If I compare to my country American speaks very low." She is intimidated by bringing her lunch to work. She explained, "If I bring some food from home that I made I will be careful about the smell of that food. I could not believe some other day I brought something for lunch and that smells delicious, it smells delicious to me but somebody said "hmm what is that' oh my god!, that's kinda thing you don't want to hear I pay attention to food be sure has any smells."

Essence of participant 2's experience. P2's experience with language barriers would be considered embarrassing by her following story: "One day they were laughing at my pronunciation of some words, so I just teach them I just tried to teach them some my native language words. Say that! No! They tried but it was not correct. See it is hard to speak another language. The language is kind of a gift. Some people grab that very quickly and they can tell the difference very quickly pronunciation of the words but for me, I cannot tell the difference. That is a problem and you try to pronounce the same ways hard for me." She also stated that because of her pronunciation, being misunderstood embarrasses her.

Her experience with language barriers would be considered comfortable by her following statements: "I was afraid to make any mistakes I am thinking about the grammar and pronunciation and then now I totally forgot about it. I don't care. I do not think about that, I do not care, I do not mind because but I see a lot of foreigners here speaking English not speaking

perfect English. I just tried to make people to understand me. Even in America they have different accents." Although she is still making an effort to improve her English, hearing foreign and native English speakers' accents, she feels comfortable with the level of her English.

Textural description of participant 3. P3 came to the United States at the age of 18 and has been living here for 41 years. She retired from the private sector. She is quiet, very calm, and speaks slowly. Although she says that she does not get angry when someone says something bad about immigrants, she does seem to get angry because she tries to explain to the person that immigrants are here for a purpose, they are working, and they are paying taxes. She remained silent about some of the unfairness, thinking that she could not change the people who were being unfair. She also did not oppose her superiors even when they were wrong, thinking that they would ruin her life. When a native speaker corrects her English, she defends herself by asking the person how many languages she/he speaks, which seems to indicate that if a person makes her feel uncomfortable, then she tries to make that person feel uncomfortable, too. She thinks that American women are friendlier than American men are.

Structural experience of participant 3. P3's experience with verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts that arose from language barriers is influenced by her native culture, her personality, and the effect of being an immigrant in the United States. She described, "My experience was good. There were some guys at work that they felt like they are above the ladies, especially, foreign ladies, and if you are successful, they go 'why she is successful.'" Her personality played a significant role in her experience with communication conflicts. She explained, "If anything bothered me little bit, I did not make a big deal of it. I always think positive. I got upset many times at work where the guys were treated better than the girls because the girls get pregnant that. I mean few incidents not too much but I did not let it bother

me. I said I have a goal, first I want to be what I wanted to do and it did not bother me much." She had unpleasant experiences with speaking with an accent in the beginning. She explained, "It bothered me before, I mean when you are young, because I came here when I was 18, and you are young and you are not sure how to pronounce things some people will correct me. It bothered me a little bit. But then I was really good about telling them how many language do you speak, talk to me in a different language. So I can fight for myself, so I did." In spite of unpleasant experiences with speaking with an accent, she had pleasant experiences with her female coworkers. She explained, "The girls loved me because I was like a mother figure, because when I worked I was older than the other workers and I was friendly and nice."

Essence of participant 3's experience. P3's experience of being a professional immigrant woman would be considered positive from her following statements: "I had good experience, and I think I am successful in that case because I accept everyone and I do not get angry if someone says something about immigrants or something. I tried to understand the difference between our heritage and our way to do it and theirs. I am not the person who comes and says you are wrong. I say okay, but, I say 'I will show you one day' to myself. I will show you one day. Some of those days never did come." She experienced American people not being as friendly as people are in her country. She explained, "People from my region have more eye contact, they smile more, and they welcome strangers much better. I mean just like, c'mon, they are very hospitable." In terms of physical contact, she experienced different cultural norms here. She explained that in her country, "They don't touch much. I mean maybe ladies to ladies, but if I see a friend I don't come and hug him, even though he is a good friend, a guy. So we have to respect them. I think it was because of the religion rule. So I do not hug and kiss a guy."

Textural description of participant 4. P4 came to the United States at the age of 18 and has been living here for 51 years. She retired from the private sector. She advanced in her career very quickly. She started working as an administrative assistant, and later on, became a liaison and opened up call centers in other countries, and finally retired as a system manager. She is very confident in herself. She said that in the past, her managers tried to hold her back because of her accent. Like P3, when people say something about her accent, she asks them if they can speak her native language. She strongly believes that immigrants have to learn the language and not speak broken English if they want to receive respect. She says, "if you do not communicate properly, people can use it against you." She thinks that communication can be improved.

Structural experience of participant 4. P4's experience with verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts that arose from language barriers is influenced by her native culture, her personality, and the effect of being an immigrant in the United States. Her experience as a professional immigrant woman was very positive. She said, "The experience was wonderful. It was not without hurdles and it goes by people's temperament because I have a very strong temperament and I do not take no for an answer. It is really up to your determination; people can try to hold you back because you have an accent. In fact, I had people tried to hold me back. I had idiotic managers you know that could not pass my accent." She was very ambitious about her profession and welcomed any kind of challenges. She explained, "When they did not let me to go to customer service, I complained about it. It was individuals. Because I do not care what, it's not the company's policy. It is just that who you are working with and their own prejudices or stupidity. I became an administrative specialist in customer service, because many told me that I could not go, that's where I wanted to go, it was my motivation. Instead of taking as a

negative, I took it as a goal. My native language was a negative, but it turned to positive. It turned to a skill." To her, speaking with an accent and not speaking proper English are not the same. She explained, "I say, do not talk to me, because I make the extra effort to speak proper English. I do not have much respect for people who come here and do not learn language and continue to speak brokenly; there is no reason for that. If you do that, you do not get respect. English is equally my first tongue, but just I have a different accent. I still have after being here for 50 years really people would tell me 'I don't think I quite understand your accent' you know so pardon let mine. Because they think being funny but I shot them up very quick."

Essence of participant 4's experience. Overall, P4's experience of being a professional immigrant woman is similar to that of the other women in this study. Being a foreigner somehow bothered her. She explained, "I've noticed one thing when I am in a business mood my voice becomes little more harsh and I know why is because I am fading the accent. Trying not to have such a strong accent so therefore people do not quite know where I am from when I do that and it's not even conscious. After taking a pause, she continued, "somebody from the management said to me, twice 'when you are talking on the phone to someone, you became almost like not communicating,' and I became very aware of it. I think it was a way of not to be taken seriously, because I have a very strong accent. It was a self-imposed thing." Like other women, she experienced the desire to blend into society. She described, "I tried to be kind to people when I saw them, but on the phone with someone, I know I had a phobia to be different. It is a huge company and you deal a lot of people. I really did it when I was talking to customers to be taken seriously so then they would not have to talk to somebody else."

She also experienced differences in nonverbal communication. She explained, "In my culture we speak with hands, we shake hands, and we do the cheek thing. I had to learn not to

gesture too much. Because we have a tendency do some hand gesture, but it is very offensive here and I did not realize that until very late." Similar to other women, she had experiences with the lexical translation of a word. She explained, "I even learned from my kids. My son told me, 'mom, do not ever use the word disappointed,' and it is a very common word in my native language. In English, in America, you don't want to use that."

Textural description of participant 5. P5 came to the United States at the age of 21 and has been living here for 3 years. She worked in the education sector and now works in the government sector. She came to the United States to obtain a Master's degree. She is also very quiet, speaks very slowly, and thinks a lot before speaking. She believes that international people have to develop a thick skin and have to do more and be the best in the job market. She also thinks that international women, in their minds, have to know that they are going to face hurdles and there is nothing they can do about it. Like P1, she has been asked questions such as how she came to the United States (mode of transportation) and if there are air conditioners in her home country. She commented that, "the advantage about most immigrants is we have a motivation. You need to have a very good reason why you left your home country to come to another country to do something. You do not stop working. You are just aiming for good and it keeps you going. No matter how hard it is and I guess that's why some people wonder why internationals are so hard-working. There has to be a reason why you left home."

Structural experience of participant 5. P5 described her experience with verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts that arose from language barriers by stating, "I think is more of, is less of saying the wrong thing but more of people not understanding what I am saying. They cannot even hear you, so they keep asking what did you say, that's the worst part. I think for me I've had a lot of other international friends it makes them timid, it makes them shy. Some

places you don't even want to talk. And I feel very uncomfortable when tell me to do phone services or go and interview people because I always feel that there is going to be this barrier that they will not even understand and it gets embarrassing. Sometimes the way that they looked at you make you feel like "you are not talking any sense." I guess that would be the way I feel in general that it can be embarrassing sometimes." Like other participants in this study, she experienced the anxiety of not being understood because of her accent. She said, "I don't have confidence in doing some things like service or explaining things to people because of my accent. Because I fear that people will not understand me, so it limits me in a certain way."

Language barrier experiences had impacts on her social life. She explained, "I think I have had more problems with social than professional. Just because with professional, people have to, they know that they have to understand so there is a cautious effort. But social, like you go to restaurants, you go to places well like to the big chains like Subway, stuff like that or pizza and they think you should know everything you should be able to speak fast. And some do not have the patience to realize that you cannot and they get impatient. They think they you are wasting their time, you should know this by now and they do not realize that you are an international that you don't know everything."

She also observed that people tend not to listen. She explained, "Everybody has an accent I think the thing is just people don't listen slowly. Because if you listen quietly, sometimes someone doesn't need to say all the words in a sentence for you to understand what they are trying to say. You just need three words in the sentence and you can tell what they are trying to say. All you need is to listen. That's what I did with my international friend. She would say just three words and I know what she is talking about. It's just taking time that's just

what it is but most people will not. It takes time it takes continuous hearing of the person to be able to understand."

Essence of participant 5's experience. P5's experience of being a professional immigrant woman appeared to be different from other women in this study. She expected to face challenges before coming to the United States. She commented, "When you are an immigrant it is a mindset. You know that you are going to face these things. Someone is not going to understand you, someone is not going to try to understand you because they just don't like the fact that you are an immigrant, and there is nothing you can do about it. And so you foresee the problems that you are going to face. So whenever those conflicts arise you don't take it too personally. It is normal." She developed some coping strategies to be able to be understood. She said, "Sometimes I try to, I speak slowly just a little bit slowly and I think until I live here in the U.S. for a while you tend to pick the accents the words and so it gets whole lot better after a while. But it is more of a mental, it is not their fault, sometimes it is just a different culture you do have a different accent but I guess the thing is we are able to understand them for me but I was exposed to these all accents to movies, music and internet. It makes a difference but they have not being exposed to my accent makes it more difficult. That's just how I cope with it."

Additionally, in her country, nonverbal communication is different from that of the United States. She stated, "We are more community-based and more flexible in my country. It's okay to touch your colleague on the shoulder, to laugh really loud. It's not all about you; it's more about community. It's more individualized here in the U.S., and then the next thing you know they are going to talk about sexual harassment or something so there is always a line to be more careful here than we would be back home. See if you laugh loud someone here would think you are being disrespectful: 'I am working, you are making noise.' Back home it is okay.

It depend which part of America you are to, it depends on the culture and the area where you are.

There are some nonverbal differences. We are more relaxed back home. Here it is more strict."

Textural description of participant 6. P6 came to the United States at the age of 32 and has been living here for 25 years. She held different positions while here and now works in the government sector. She is very confident and makes jokes about herself. She also came to the United States to obtain a Master's degree. Later, she began her Ph.D., but could not complete it. According to her, her advisor was picking on her because of her English writing skills. She thinks that by coming here at the age of 32, she knew exactly who she was and knew about her culture and her roots. She is proud of her roots, and she picked and adopted what is good in this country, kept what is good from her home country, and made the best out of it. She believes that she will never be able to speak English without an accent; indeed, she does not want to speak without an accent, as that accent is unique to her nationality, and people need to have the self-confidence to say, "You know, that's me." However, she has not been as proactive about public speaking. She said that she was really good with public speaking in her country. After coming here, because she is self-conscious about her accent, she avoids that kind of opportunity. She fears that people would not understand her because of her accent. She realized at a meeting that people would not be sitting right next to her most of the time. She says, "I don't know if sometimes people are afraid that they may not be able to communicate with me or whatever the reason. So I do notice people would not sit right next to me right away until the chairs were filled and then people moved little bit."

Structural experience of participant 6. P6's experience with being a professional immigrant woman was positive. Even though she learned English in her home country, she experienced difficulties in communication. She explained, "When I came here the first year my

classmate was a high school teacher and she would help me, especially pronunciations. Sometimes I say the wrong words, but it turns out to be a funny thing and people laugh about it, and I think the key is if you could make fun of yourself, and if you don't take it personal, that it will make it easier." Before she speaks, she warns the listeners. She said, "Often times I would say, 'I don't speak perfect English' as a kind of disclaimer." Like other women in the study, she experienced the anxiety of not being understood. She explained, "I would not be proactive about public speaking. In my first language I was really good with public speaking, and coming here being conscious about my own accent, I kind of avoid that kind of opportunity, and I think part of the reason is because I don't want people to have a difficult time understand me. I would not be the first to speak and get out in front of public because I am very conscious about my own accent."

Essence of participant 6's experience. Being an immigrant and a woman, P6 felt she had to work harder than native people do. She expressed, "I do remember in my second job I was firing an African-American guy. And he was telling me 'you don't understand how it feels to be a minority.' I remember I told him 'oh yes I am a minority and a woman' and I said 'but I do not use that as a crutch and I, in fact, just because I am a minority and a woman I work extremely hard to prove to others and therefore I have never been disrespected in my career in my whole time I have been here.'" Similar to other women in this study, she observed cultural differences between her country and the United States. She said, "American way is individualism and my country's way is unite, is a family or company or group of friend and it is not individual. So Americanism is individualism, 'if I got hungry I got food for myself.'"

Living in a different culture, she had to make adjustments, regardless of whether those adjustments would be considered acceptable or not in her native culture. She explained, "I think

in other cultures the hierarchy is more clear. Here is so blur. I tried to fit in, which means sometimes I would do things that line staff would do. And that's my way of getting steps into support showing that 'I am in with you' that's my leadership style. And if I keep my own culture I probably would stand up and say 'this is your job, you are below me, you are the one doing it' and that might not be perceived as well by your supervisee and that is the peace that I make a decision to give up my culture and fit in into this culture which I did not mind. Actually, sometimes I took out the trash, sometimes I help swept to floor or something like that. But I don't do that often because they don't pay me the money to do that job, but from time to time I would do that just to show them that 'I am in with you, whatever you are suffering I am suffering with you too.' So that's my leadership style. That's how you get buy-ins even though I am a foreigner but because they know I am in with them and so that invisible line is kind of disappeared because of that."

Textural description of participant 7. P7 came to the United States at the age of 25 and has been living here for 8 years. She held different jobs in the education sector, and her most recent position is in the education field. She speaks very rapidly and pauses often. She finds American culture to be very different from her own culture. She says that when they talk, Americans keep a polite distance from each other; even if they know the person well. In her culture, they have physical body contact more frequently, such as touching somebody's shoulder, elbow, or back, even when they first meet them. Physical body contact is a way to show intimacy, a way to show closeness, even sometimes a way to show respect in her culture.

Structural experience of participant 7. P7's experience with verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts that arose from language barriers is influenced by her native culture, and the effect of being an immigrant in the United States. During her early years in the United

States, she was embarrassed when she made grammatical mistakes in verbal communication. She said, "At first I was very embarrassed but at the same time I was, I am very conscious, I am very well aware of the mistakes or errors I made in pronunciation and in articulation, and in forming sentences because the way I talk is definitely not native like but I have a very clear understanding of the language barriers so I adjust. So I have this mental adjustment almost like throw myself up so that even if I made mistakes I am fine. I can still try other ways to explain myself to get meaning across."

Concerning nonverbal communication, P7 also experienced the social differences between her country and the United States. She explained, "In my culture we are such a collective society so the nonverbal communication is everywhere. People don't have a really clear idea about personal space so they don't have such a high demand. We need to keep a little distance from each other if we don't know each other really well. So in that aspect American culture is very different because in the States when you talk to someone even you if know them very well you still keep a polite distance from each other. You try to, almost like there is a box around you. You are trying to, 'okay this is my space.' Americans are very conscious, they will not be intrusive, they will try to stay away from others' space. So that's the distinctive difference between my culture and American culture in terms of nonverbal communication. That is in my culture we will probably have body or physical contact more frequently, we would touch somebody's shoulder, someone's elbow, or we would even touch someone's back even when we first meet them. It is a way to show intimacy, it is a way to show closeness, it is even sometimes way to show respect."

Essence of participant 7's experience. P7's experience of being a professional immigrant woman appeared to be different from the others' experiences since in her profession,

she uses her native language. Essences of her different experiences are taken from her following statements: "It is little bit different from other professors and professionals because I am teaching in my native language. When my students come to the class, they already have expectations that the professor will not pronounce perfectly and then it is also a two-way communication as well. And then I use myself as a model as an example to illustrate that they may not be able to pronounce perfectly in the language that I am teaching. But it does not interfere the meaning so it does not interfere the communication. So my audience, my students are very tolerant, very understanding of the situation. So and then I touched topics in my country's culture those courses I taught in English. Even in those classes, students are very understanding, sometimes they would tell me in class or after class 'I am not sure if I get it or not.' they would ask for clarification. So in one hand I learned from the process and the other hand I have developed some strategies to address such kind of miscommunications."

Similar to other women in this study, P7 had to make adjustments to fit into U.S. culture. She explained, "For me it is more like a learning process than as a problem. It is a readjustment. In my end I have to be aware where the differences between American culture and my culture in terms of the body language in terms of the space. That's individual concept so I think over the years I have made adjustments, for example, when I talk to someone I try to keep little more distant from them than otherwise in my own culture. And also I will not touch them so frequently, for example, I will not pat the back or I will not touch the elbow unless I know them very well so it's more like adjustments, it's not a problem."

Textural description of participant 8. P8 came to the United States at the age of 25 and has been living here for 5 years. She held different jobs in the education sector and her most recent position is in the same field. She came to the United States to further her education, too.

She finds that living in Kentucky is different. Although she does not interpret it negatively, when she has gone to a restaurant and was the only international there, people kept looking at her. When it comes to speaking with an accent, she said, "For me, there are difficulties that's more above the way that I cannot understand them rather than they understand me. The problem is sometimes when people talk I would not be able to understand. Also, sometimes when I talked to people with accents – I mean in Kentucky there are some people with accents. It took me a while to actually adapt to that but it was okay."

Structural experience of participant 8. P8's experience with verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts that arose from language barriers is influenced by her native culture, and the effect of being an immigrant in the United States. When she talks, she sees from the listeners' facial expressions whether they comprehend or not. She explained, "When I pronounced something incorrectly, then I can see from my students, then, I know that something is going on wrong with me, but they are pretty good indicators."

Essence of participant 8's experience. P8's experience of being a professional immigrant woman is very similar to that of other women in this study. The essence of her experience of not being able to understand the native English speakers is their accent. She explained, "Sometimes when people talk, I would not be able to understand because of their regional accent." She also made adjustments to fit into U.S. culture and fully adopted some customs, which made her forget that they were not the same in her country. She explained, "It is okay to have sexual discrimination in my country, but it is not okay here in America. I saw some job description [in her home country], says men only, and it also specified like what type of age range you must be within. Apparently, they don't want to hire some older people and they just put it specifically in their job description. I did not feel anything wrong before I came here. But

then I figure out, 'Hey, wait a minute! That is not right!' If it is here it must be almost illegal to do that. At least you would not put at your job description right." In her native culture, expectations of young women are dissimilar to expectations of young women in U.S. culture; she said, "For women to pursue a Ph.D. would be, 'WOW! Is something wrong with her?'"

Textural description of participant 9. P9 came to the United States at the age of 34 with a terminal degree and has been living here for 9 years. P9 learned English at school in her country, where she started learning English when she was 11. She traveled throughout the world, and the primary language she used was English. Then, she moved to the United States. She said, "English was always there but obviously I have an accent. I never learned it early enough so I could get rid of the accent." She held different jobs in the education sector and her most recent position is in the same field. She said she would like to get rid of her accent so she can blend into U.S. culture, so as not to be the person who is different. Although she likes her heritage, she would prefer not to have an accent.

Structural experience of participant 9. P9's experience with verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts that arose from language barriers is influenced by her native culture, and the effect of being an immigrant in the United States. Although she has positive experiences living here and loves the United States, she experienced being a foreigner. She explained, "You are always somebody else, you are always somebody who is not from there, even though you love the U.S. Even though I have U.S. citizenship by now, I am always a foreigner and always will be by the way I talk. Not by the way I look, people cannot tell, but by the way I talk as soon as I open my mouth 'hello'; 'Oh you are not from here.' So as a professional immigrant woman I would say that people here are very open and they usually make the first step. I do not necessarily want to talk about me, but they want to and usually it is a very positive attitude – 'Oh

where are you from'; 'Oh I have been there,' and so on and very often that gives me an advantage for communication. The people are genuinely interested in me and my culture, where I come from. It is easy to get in to contact with people. So, Americans are very open and positive and that's why I became one too." To her, one of the disadvantages of having an accent is that the accent shifts listeners' attention. She explained, "Although I really like my heritage and I would always speak of myself as [...] and American, I would prefer not to have an accent. Because sometimes in lecture people listen to me, listen to the accent instead of listening what I am talking about. So, they just go and sit there and like 'oh! Love the way she talks' and then when I asked them questions they cannot recall." Like other women in this study, P9 also developed coping strategies to deal with language barriers. She commented, "I have learned laughing about myself and I kind of try to mask over it. I have learned to not take myself that seriously for example I say 'Okay I am stuck, forget the last two minutes' then start again so, that happens."

With regard to nonverbal communication, she discussed body language and Americans not being direct. She explained, "When you do not get an answer from Americans, right away that is always bad. And I had to learn it and I had to learn that Americans are not direct. They are trying to hide everything negative. They are coming out with anything positive in your face. Yeah everything is just 'Yay!' As soon there is a critic or remark it is hidden until you detect that it's take a long time until you realized that. So, with the positive attitude you can read any body language easily but if somebody has a negative aspect, I still find it hard sometimes to read. Like my department head, when I make a suggestion and he does not like it, now I know. But several years earlier I would not. Now I say 'all right, never mind' and then he is positive again and we continue. Before, in my native way of thinking straight, right on the road, I would have insisted and following this until I got a definite 'NO! We will not pursue this.' Americans don't

do that. Americans have certain body language when they try to shield themselves from any directness of non-Americans. So when they don't want to pursue a certain issue they just become quiet."

Essence of participant 9's experience. P9's experience of being a professional immigrant woman in the United States would be considered pleasant from her statement, "The people are genuinely interested in me and my culture where I come from. It is easy to get in to contact with people." To her, the longer an immigrant stays in the United States, the better her situation becomes. She stated, "Actually, in the beginning, I recall the situation where was really, really hard but I think also as you aged and as you get little bit more into what you do now, job routine and so on, then I think it gets easier because of that."

She sees not being a native English speaker as an obstacle in advancing a career. She stated, "Immigrant women have a disadvantage. I think we get to where we want to be longer time than, for example, people from Britain, or from Australia or New Zealand. Also, being an educated immigrant woman, we are trying to make a career and try to pursue ideas. I think it is definitely harder if you are not a native English speaker." She thinks she would have advanced in her career more quickly in her home country than she is advancing here in the United States.

Textural description of participant 10. P10 came to the United States at the age of 27 and has been living here for 19 years. She started learning English in high school in her home country. She said, "In my country they teach as a selected choice German, French, or English, so I chose English because I know it is an international language. Actually, wherever you go you can speak English." She held different positions while here, and now works in the private sector. She expressed that for the first couple of years, she had low confidence in her communication skills and because of that, she felt that she was not able to get a position, which prevented her

from applying for better positions. Sometimes she feels embarrassed speaking with an accent, and some words are very complicated for her to pronounce. Instead of using those words, she chooses other words that she can say more easily. She also finds American culture to be different, and some of the cultural norms do not make sense to her.

Structural experience of participant 10. P10's experience with verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts that arose from language barriers is influenced by her native culture, her personality, and the effect of being an immigrant in the United States. She had experiences similar to other women in the study with using a wrong word. She explained, "In the past I chose a wrong word. This was a long time ago, it doesn't mean it cannot be happen today, but by 19 years, I know more now, but at that time I would explain them by saying, 'I am not from here and in my country, it is okay to say it and it is not bad thing to say,' so they understand and never get offended." Her accent made her uncomfortable. She explained, "It makes me embarrassed sometimes because some words are very complicated to say it for me. I tried my best to say and they go, 'What? What do you mean?' Sometimes it makes me embarrassed, and because of that I try not to use that word, so I just try to find something else that I can say it better."

To her, relationships with subordinates and coworkers depend on the personalities of others. She explained, "I do not think it depends what country you are from, whether you are an international or not. I think it is your personality." She had a hard time accepting some cultural norms here. She explained, "Here, managers or employees are all in same level. For example in my country we never call a superior by their first name, we always say Mr., and I had a problem in the past just because of that. For a long time I could not call my boss with her first name." She also experienced issues because of being a direct person. She explained, "They told me that I am direct. Sometimes people call it rude. I do not consider being rude, it is just a reality. If

you do not like it, I am sorry. They think I am rude sometimes, but no! Why it is rude? I am just saying it. Why I have to put things in words that they make it look nice. That's what it is. Sometimes I get a face because I am so straight I say what I want to say, they say, 'Oh that's rude,' and I say 'really? It's not rude for me but okay.'"

Essence of participant 10's experience. P10's experience of being a professional immigrant woman would be considered positive based on her following statements: "I do not feel any different. They treat me not different than the others. Sometimes they even respect me more. For example, in my country there is special holiday we do and they do know that so my manager goes 'Are you wanna day off, this holiday is coming up to celebrate?' That's so awesome. I did not have confidence someone I may not understand or sometime I have a feeling if I apply that position I may not get because of my English but not because people treated me differently. Just it was about myself." Like other professional immigrant women in this study, her accent exposed her as being an immigrant. She said, "In the past as soon as I talked, before they asked me anything, they asked 'where are you from?' After I told them, they say, 'Oh! I got you from your accent.' But recently they do not know the difference." To her, being a direct person is being straightforward. She explained, "I say what I would like to say again because that's what I believe. So before, I say 'don't take me wrong but bla bla.' Well it depends if I am talking to somebody whom I trust and told me that I was rude, I ask that person 'how should I ask, I just wanna know first, how should I address this what I would like to say' so he or she is telling me however it should be and I do not see a difference I mean. So it depends on person who is telling. Sometimes I adjust, sometimes don't, but it depends situation, it depends who I am talking of course. If I am talking to my president or CEO of course I am just gonna be very

polite and be very careful with my words but if I am talking to someone under me I will be more authoritative."

Textural description of participant 11. P11 came to the United States at the age of 26 and has been living here for 20 years. She held different positions in the United States and now works in the private sector. She came to this country not knowing English and took ESL courses, then graduated from a college. She believes that the United States is the land of opportunity, depending on how people want to approach it. She is proud of her accent because her accent is a part of her identity. She is proud of where she is originally from, and she is proud to be a [...] -American in this country. When native speakers speak loudly or slowly, it bothers her very much. She says, "We don't speak the language, but we are not deaf and we are not stupid; it is only a different culture and different language."

Structural experience of participant 11. P11's experience with verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts that arose from language barriers is influenced by her native culture and the effect of being an immigrant in the United States. To her, her family is more important than her career. She stated, "I would say I've been reaching the point that I want to reach with my own limitation so I put my own limits because of my family. Always my family is been my priority. So I wanna go the job that offers me a professional level but no more than I can or I want to handle because other than that I mean I don't have any problems with job offers so something like because I like a person I like to go everywhere and do whatever we have to do to accomplish. So it has not been that difficult honestly." She also views her accent as a part of her identity. She said, "I feel proud. I feel proud because that's part of my identity. I am proud to where I am from and to be the one [...] -American in this country we can do in different languages so I like it." In verbal communication, she experienced problems with idioms and

words that had more than one meaning. She explained, "First part of my life in the United States, it was more like understanding the slangs and colloquial words and accents, all those idioms. It was hard for me. That was the time I could not understand things, people were looking at me like 'you don't understand.' No, I did not. We pretend but we don't honestly. And I was like 'sorry can you explain that.' And other like words, when you translate, it has different meanings and that was really hard for me when people say like a cuss word and for them it was like kind of normal, to me it was really offended. But it is a normal word in lots of communications that people doesn't mean it that way. So for me at first I was like 'he called me what?' And I got mad but when I understood, then it was not a big of a deal. It was just a form than they talk, the way they talk. We say in my language, I say it in my language all the time but when they say to me in English I thought it was a different meaning so. But after I understand now I say it too." She experienced differences in nonverbal communication. She commented, "We are more touchy people. We hug and kiss. American are not like that they just say 'hi how are you doing?' They take distance and personal space, 'don't get on my personal space.' We are very friendly, and American people are like more formal in a lot of ways."

Essence of participant 11's experience. P11's experience of being a professional immigrant woman would be considered positive in view of her following statements: "It has not been difficult. This is the land of opportunity, it is. All depends on how you want to approach it." She was familiar with U.S. culture before she moved to the United States, and that helped her acclimate to life in this country. She said, "Culture shock did not happen to me because I was familiar with it because we got lots of influences from the Sates."

Textural description of participant 12. P12 came to the United States at the age of 28 and has been living here for 17 years. She has worked in the same institution the entire time,

which is in the education sector. She learned the basics of English in her country in a very different way than other women in this study. She explained, "I always had a desire to learn English and I never had a chance. When the war started back at home and we were surrounded for four years so we could not go anywhere. My friend was teaching English classes, the first year I paid for the class with flour, cooking flour because we had no currency or anything. And then I did the level two so I learned back at home not even knowing that I would live in the U.S.A. Because I wanted to know, it was a personal interest and as soon as I took the course I started constantly talking to myself English whatever I knew, words, grammar so that was basic what I learned. And then that was it. I came here and never had a real opportunity to talk to anybody."

She thinks she was fortunate to have such opportunities, because there are so many intelligent women with whom to compete. Speaking with an accent, she said, "I do have accent, always everybody knows I am from somewhere, and I am very self-conscious of it." Although she gets embarrassed sometimes because of using incorrect words, she said, "I am speaking another language. I was not born here, so if you don't understand, that's your problem, not mine, because I do understand them." From time to time, she still has a language barrier in the middle of a conversation. She explained, "Sometimes I get stuck when I explain something. Everything is here but it is not coming out the way I wanted to in English and then I get frustrated. And then it goes a wrong way. Those things happen. I am not, everything is not perfect, so there are challenges."

Structural experience of participant 12. P12's experience with verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts that arose from language barriers is influenced by her native culture, her personality, the situation of her country, and the effect of being an immigrant in the United

States. Her accent makes her self-conscious. She said, "I do have accent always everybody knows I am from somewhere. I am very self-conscious of it. There are sometimes embarrassing situations." Like other women in this study, she experienced being teased because of her accent. She explained, "They would tease me at work sometimes if I pronounce something but not to be mean." Although she can read her employees' emotions, she hides her emotions. She related, "My employees would show emotional gestures. You could tell if they are unhappy. If something bothers them, if they angry with you, they would but they would not say it and I would confront them. I would say 'what's happening, what's going on, what is the problem.' So I mean not happy with me but unhappy, just unhappy with something at work. You could tell and read them something wrong but they would not communicate. 'It's all fine.' 'No, no! It is not!' That's what they do and I do not show. If I don't think that it would not make any difference than I won't just tell anybody. I won't show anything because it is something that I have to deal with it; nobody has to deal with that. If I catch myself with the perception because of my understanding of the situation and of maybe I am thinking okay maybe I did misunderstood so I don't want to show any gesture anything that it is not, that something is going on. I am thinking of something or worrying about something because, I am thinking maybe it's me, maybe I just did not understand what they meant. I learned and I worked on myself not to allow to show emotion. It is hard and I am not always successful all the time but I learned not to allow your perception to dictate your feelings. Because you don't know if what you are thinking is right. They say don't believe everything you think, especially with English when you hear when somebody say something very often it's not what they meant. Because when you are translating, we tend to translate literally."

Essence of participant 12's experience. P12's experience of being a professional immigrant woman would be considered pleasant based on her following statements: "I was lucky that I had the opportunity because there are so many smart women out there. Considering that I came with a high school diploma equivalent to associate degree here, people get my job with Master's degrees. I do not even know how all this happened. I've been always praised at work because I have my own standards, which are very high. I work with very good group of people; we support each other. Everybody at work has some issues going on, but we try not to address it. I don't know how I got this lucky." Knowing her country's situation, she received empathy from her coworkers. She said, "They knew my story, personal story, and what we have been through when I came here, and most of the time, people around me at work would be very supportive." She believes her language barriers prevent her from advancing in her career. She explained, "I think English is a barrier for me because when you get the higher level, those people are very articulate, they are very good with their vocabulary, their quick mind, and they know this problem solving. Because of English I think I reached the top for now. I cannot articulate on that level; that is what requires getting into upper executive levels. Sometimes I am thinking this is great where I am right now."

Textural description of participant 13. P13 came to the United States at the age of 20 and has been living here for 16 years. She held various positions in the United States and now works in the government sector. She also came to the United States not knowing English and took ESL classes from different organizations. She has an accent, but it is not native English speakers, but her own people, who tease her about it. About her accent, she said, "It is hard, especially people from your own skin. Friend of mine 'say purple' you know I just got stuck with

that word. I said 'well American people never picked on it and you keep saying repeat it and you thought it's funny.' Some words you cannot just master."

Structural experience of participant 13. P13's experience with verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts that arose from language barriers is influenced by her native culture and the effect of being an immigrant in the United States. She experienced difficulties with lexical translation. She explained, "I liked my hair to be cared up and that's in my country called Negro. Yeah I went and I said "I need my hair to be Negro" and they thought I am cussing the girl because she was black. And it was really creative situation there. They take it differently, and then you have to explain yourself. When that kind of situation comes down I say 'Please, I am sorry I did not mean this,' and you have to explain yourself over. If you translate word to word, it does lose meaning."

Essence of participant 13's experience. P13's experience of being a professional immigrant woman would be considered positive according to her following statements: "It was pretty much good experiences. People was exactable, they was willing to help most of them was patient. Pretty much it was good experience. I cannot see better experiences." She found saying curse words in English easier than in her native language. She described, "I cannot say it in my language, but I in English could say it easy. I guess because I did not grow up with, it is really bad to me, and here everybody says it."

Situation of participant 14. After receiving her interview transcript for permission to use in this study, P14 made significant changes. The text remaining in the transcript was not proper data for a phenomenological study; thus, P14 was removed from this study.

Textural description of participant 15. P15 came to the United States at the age of 25 and has been living here for 14 years. She was fascinated with anything English and American

culture since she was a young child. She began learning the English language in the fourth grade in her country. Her profession involves teaching ESL and literature classes, but she had her own business in the United States and now works in the private sector. She is a very outspoken and humorous person. When she came to the United States, she experienced culture shock. She said, "I had a problem with people smiling to me. Like why are you smiling to me? Am I funny? Do I look like a clown? Do you know me? I was speaking in fight." She said that on some days she has a heavier accent than on other days, which she believes may happen when she is missing her mother. She also does not want to lose her accent, because she does not want to be like others, and she does not want others to be like her. She strongly believes that English has to be the official language in the United States. According to her, putting official documents in different languages creates cultural handicaps, especially in ghettos, and encourages discrimination. She says the United States has spoiled immigrant people.

Structural experience of participant 15. P15's experience with verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts that arose from language barriers is influenced by her native culture, her personality, and the effect of being an immigrant in the United States. She never felt an urge to lose her accent. She said, "I think in English, I don't think in my native language. I see dreams in English. If I ever felt that my way to be successful in business I would lose it, but never feel that way. It is okay when somebody says you are different. It's okay because I am." To her, everyone has to speak English in this country and she is opposed to having some official documents written in languages other than English. She explained, "This country has to adapt English as official language, and I am even not going to apologize. Okay, I can speak it, you can speak it, everybody has to speak it. I went to elect president eight languages on the ballot. None of them was in my native language, why? Do you think I am not worthy of putting my language

for me to elect the president, or do you think my people are smarter than other immigrants, you don't have to put my language because we are pretty good in English? Or you are just ignoring me because I am not high segment of the society here? Or we are just going to talk about only Mexicans immigrating here? It is all about exactly how you take it. So discrimination goes both ways. You can speak five languages, but every official document has to be only in English."

Essence of participant 15's experience. P15's experience of being a professional immigrant woman would be considered pleasant, based on her following statements: "I experienced America, to me this country is, I don't even remember not be born in this country. To me, my country would be immigration. I do not see myself more than anywhere; I mean, I can only for a while." To her, when she says something, she means it, and she had a hard time accepting people saying something they do not mean. She explained, "When you meet them they always, 'Hi, how are you? Oh, yeah, good, fine, nice to see you. We need to get together?' 'Hey, come tonight,' 'Oh, No! Not tonight, I cannot,' 'Okay, so tomorrow,' 'Oh, no, tomorrow I am busy, too.' Well, then you know what we should not be getting together. You just have to understand that it is a self-expression."

Textural description of participant 16. P16 came to the United States at the age of 24 and has been living here for 24 years. She held various positions in the private sector and continues to works in the same sector. When she came to the United States, she was already a professional woman in her country, but she had to start from the beginning and she advanced quickly. She says her biggest obstacle for being successful was people from her own home country. She thinks her own people have a group mentality that is like peer pressure. She says, "Because I have to make a decision at that time to grow and I came to America and I am curious, I wanna grow and the people that I thought that would support me and my own people actually

they discouraged me. They try to tell me like, 'oh no you cannot, if you don't have an American education and if you did not grow up here you are not really rise to the management.'" Despite their discouragement, she accomplished her goals.

Structural experience of participant 16. P16's experience with verbal and nonverbal communication conflicts that arose from language barriers is influenced by her native culture, her personality, and the effect of being an immigrant in the United States. Her previous experience in her country assisted in advancing her career here. She explained, "I became like the subject matter expert. Of course my management skills and leadership skills was honed to the American way at that time. I already had leadership skills back in my country. I had an advantage coming here; I was not just like a new graduate. So I was already leading some stuff in my country. I was a business director so I was exposed to stuff like that. So that, actually that helped me because from my perspective it doesn't really matter, people are people and as long as you know how, when you are a leader I think it doesn't matter whether it is in America or somewhere else. It is the same skills and same competency that needed or required. The same human motivation to do a good job and the basic of everything people want to do good job as long as you can find what motivates them and you're a successful as a leader."

Essence of participant 16's experience. P16's experience of being a professional immigrant woman would be considered successful. According to her, her success came from her previous experience in her country, being a hard worker, and working with the right people in the United States. She commented, "I was in the right place and right time wanting to do the work, and also I found my mentor. Having a mentor and a champion is also important. She was the one who was heading the operations and she was also the head of, but she was like three levels above me at that time. She was like COO, Chief Operating Officer. And when we moved to

another state she got to know who I was; before, she just heard my name. But when we went to other state she actually witnessed the way I do work, the way I handle meetings. There was language barrier, they would laugh at me sometimes, but I had just fun with it. I am different and I have an accent." To her, being a direct person is a commonality of many cultures. She explained, "Directiveness, I think part of our culture, a lot of culture that upsets Americans and there are some people in here that can be direct but not direct as we are and that can get in the way sometimes when in the politics of things. I can see that holding back, and I had probably held me back for all. I know because I am too direct, I am not very subtle, so maybe there was some positions that could have been mine that did not became mine because when I handle things I am too direct, and I do not sugar coat the things I say. I think that's a commonality of people that did not grow up here is being direct."

Group Descriptions

From 15 verbatim transcripts, a total of 177 significant statements were excerpted. Significant statements are grouped under: experience living in the USA (22), speaking English as a second language (31), speaking with an accent (39), coworkers'/subordinates' behavior (29), coping with verbal conflicts (18), body language differences between the native country and the United States (31), and coping with body language conflicts (11). A list of significant statements is presented in Appendix D. For a clearer understanding of the commonalities among all participants, the following sections are presented: Composite group textural descriptions, Composite group structural descriptions, and Group of essence of being professional immigrant women.

Composite group textual descriptions. In this section, repeated words, crutch words, and "ums" are eliminated from the direct quotes. These composite textural descriptions were

formed from the entire group of individual textural descriptions. The significant statements and the themes of all interviewed participants were studied to represent the experiences of the group as a whole. Data analysis discovered two composite textural themes: 1) being an immigrant, and 2) communication. Data analysis also identified four sub-themes under communication: a) fear, b) textual translation, c) defense, and d) accent and feeling deficient. Table 3 represents composite textual descriptions.

Being an immigrant. Although all of the women had positive experiences of being an immigrant in the United States, there were and continue to be challenges. Even though they have been here for a long time, they still feel like foreigners. One woman explained, "You are always somebody else; you are always somebody who is not from there. I am always a foreigner and always will be by the way I talk." Participants explained that professional immigrant women have to work harder than native women to prove themselves: "It is difficult even getting a job sometimes in the first place. You have to prove that you can write, you have to prove that you can speak, you have to convince people to do a lot more," said one woman.

Communication. As non-native English speakers, participants had to spend additional time rethinking a word, sentence structure, or pronunciation while they were speaking. One woman said, "Because sometimes we do not know all the words in English and then we just have to explain in a different way, probably with more words, and sometimes you say things and they do not understand ... or you say in a different way." Most of the participants already knew English when they came to the United States, but they still had problems communicating in English, especially with the perception of idioms. One woman explained, "English is something that I grow up with and also I am a reader. I read a lot, so some of the context of the words, probably it's more of not an issue but more idiomatic. I am talking about idioms but it's more in

a funny way that I was rather than in a position where in, it caused conflict but it was really, it caused humor and humor is good way to win other people's heart. Because it's means human. I never really use the words that I did not know that would hurt somebody. It is really more the idioms that I don't understand that it becomes humorous." Learning or improving English is an ongoing process for all of the participants and each participant has a different style. One woman said, "Watch as much, as I mean as many, American movies as I can, try to get myself educated."

Fear. Participants expressed having a fear of not being understood, making mistakes, and public speaking. One woman described her experience, "public speaking and I am terrified with public speaking. I forget everything. I can talk one-on-one with friends and express myself; but when it comes to public speaking, that's it! My English stops!" Another woman said, "When I was a TA ... in my evaluation, one or two students said that I am hard to understand. To me it made me to feel uncomfortable." Another participant explained, "I fear that people will not understand. I don't have confidence in doing some things like service or explaining things to people." "I did have low confidence; someone I may not understand," said another woman. "I feel very uncomfortable when tell me to do phone services or go and interview people because I always feel that there is going to be this barrier that they will not even understand; and it gets embarrassing. Sometimes the way that they looked at you makes you feel like 'you are not talking any sense,'" explained another participant.

Textual translation. All of the participants had and/or have challenges with choosing a word, depending on textual translation from their native language that does not have the same meaning in English. This difficulty also occurs when a word is translated from English to other languages. One woman said, "Especially with English, when somebody says something, very often it's not what they meant. Because their perception what they heard, really not what this

people meant. Because they got stuck to one word it might means something bad and then the rest of it actually when you put in a sentence does not matter." Another participant explained, "Disappointed is very common word in my native language, it's not the end of the world. In English, in America you don't want to use that. I even learned from my kids." Another woman expressed her experience saying, "Sometimes I say the wrong words, but it turns out to be a funny thing and people laugh about it."

Defense. All of the women forged a defense mechanism against correction of their English by native English speakers. They defend themselves, asking the person who corrected their English or made fun of their accent, if she/he can say some words in their (the participant's) language. In doing this, the respondent demonstrates to the native English speaker that she/he cannot say a foreign word correctly; thus, the native English speaker realizes how difficult it is to speak another language, and he or she is likely to be more tolerant. One woman explained, "I feel like, I would throw that in their face anytime to make a joke. I said, 'Try to do what I do. Can you speak my native language?' That's how I dealt with it." Another woman stated, "One day they were laughing at my pronunciation of some words, so I just tried to teach them some my native language words. 'Say that! No!' They tried but it was not correct. 'See, it is hard to speak another language.'" Another woman explained, "Sometimes they just make fun if I say something and they say 'Oh! It is not that way,' then I make fun of them, I say something in my native tongue, they try, and I say, 'Ah, no!'"

Accent and feeling deficient. Three of the participants perceived their accent as part of their identity, and the rest wanted to lose it to blend better in U.S. society. The participants' experience was that the American people have an interest in foreign accents, and sometimes the accent begins a conversation with a stranger. The foreign accent is the most important indicator

of a person not being from the United States. One participant said, "I do have accent, everybody always knows I am from somewhere." Another participant explained, "In the past as soon as I talked, before they asked me anything, they asked, 'Where are you from?' After I told them, they say, 'Oh! I got you from your accent.'" One woman described her experience speaking with an accent in this way: "They cannot even hear you so they keep asking, 'What did you say?' That's the worst part. ... Some places you don't even want to talk." Another woman said, "I would like to get rid of it sometimes. I just like to blend in and not be the person who is different. Although I really like my heritage and I would always speak of myself as my country and American I would prefer not to have an accent." Another participant said, "I feel proud. I feel proud because that's part of my identity." One woman said, "Listen, nothing you can change about it so you should not be yourself down about it. Because we will never be able to speak perfect English and I would not want to be anyway and I think that's unique about ourselves and again just need to have self-confidence to say 'you know that's me.'"

Some of the women felt deficient in English and felt that not being a native English speaker prevented them from advancing their careers: "Even though I am good in what I do, I could even go further if I didn't have English barrier for me. ... Because of English, I think I reached the top for now. ... I cannot articulate on that level, that is what requires getting into upper executive levels." Another woman said, "I have a feeling if I apply for that position, I may not get it because of my English, but not because people treated me differently."

Composite structural descriptions. In this section, repeated words, crutch words, and "ums" are eliminated from the direct quotes. These composite structural descriptions were formed from the entire group of individual structural descriptions. The significant statements and the themes of all interviewed participants were studied to represent the experiences of the

group as a whole. Data analysis discovered five composite structural themes: 1) different culture, 2) time, 3) place, 4) work environment, and 5) coping strategies. Data analysis also identified three sub-themes under *different culture*: a) physical contact, b) personal space, and c) tone of voice. Table 4 shows composite group structural descriptions.

Different culture. Participants shared that cultural differences exist between their country and the United States. One participant said, "American culture is different; but being here for 19 years ... I accepted it." Another participant explained, "American way is individualism; and my country's way is unite. Americanism is individualism; if I got hungry, I get food for myself." One woman said, "Americans have certain body language when they try to shield themselves from any directness of non-Americans. So when they don't want to pursue a certain issue they just become quiet." Another woman explained, "We were talking about like 'oh remember when were little, we were doing this, we were doing that.' We were talking about the past. So I said 'you remember all these how old are you?' He turned to me said 'What did you ask me?' It was it! Then he goes 'how rude you asked my age!' Oh my gosh! Is it really rude to ask this? To me I was shocked. He tried to give me HR [human resources] issue. I was like, 'Really?' I was panicked so I tried to explain. I said 'you know we were talking about the past, like 1980s. I was just wondering if we were same age when we were little.' He is like, 'I am not telling you my age. It is rude to ask people.' I did not know that. I mean, in my country it is not rude. My purpose was not to try to finding out if he was younger or older than my age, it was related to subject so we could talk more about it, like, 'oh do you remember this and that.' So my experience here is with the coworkers you do not go personal at all. You cannot talk anything personal. So because of that fact you can never get close friendship with the people. That's how I believe. I cannot even ask what your horoscope is, because I don't wanna know

which month. I mean I cannot ask personal question to get closer or to get know more person, because it is too personal and you can get into trouble." One participant said, "There is one thing that we have to try to adjust into this country is to learn not to bring our own culture into the mix because you are on their turf and their culture and you need to learn their culture. They have their own culture we are here in melting pot in America so people will bring little bit everything but finally the bottom line is we are all Americans. We have to merge as being one culture." "We have to be willing to integrate, integrate into the community, learn the country and the language, the culture," said another participant.

a) Physical contact. "In my country we do not do hugs. Sometimes I do feel uncomfortable receiving hugs from males. Here it may or may not receive inappropriately, but I do feel uncomfortable receiving hugs from males. I guess it depends on relationships. I imagine a hug very differently from an older male who really cares for me versus a younger male," said one woman. Another woman said, "For the female friend we always touch each other like arm to arm you do shopping. But here it is totally different. You are not allowed to touch even you are best friends." Another participant described, "If you are my friend I like to touch, we like to hug. Especially the hugging, if you are my friend I will hug you and kiss you all the time when I see you and Americans are not like that. They are very cold. Very distant. We are not like that. If you are my friend I will be over you, I am going to get over you. Americans are not like that."

Another woman said, "In my country, we are touchy. If I like you, I am gonna to smack you; I am gonna to beat you. That means I like you. Here it's considered harassment." Another participant mentioned, "It's more individualized here in the U.S. and then the next thing you know they are going to talk about sexual harassment or something so there is always a line to be more careful here than we would be back home."

b) Personal space. One participant explained, "In my country is definitely little bit closer, so I am just learning that Americans like to give much more distance." "Actually in my country the distance between people is very close, actually we do not have much distances between," said one woman. Another woman said, "Personal space... there is no such thing in my country." One participant explained, "In my culture we are such a collective society so the nonverbal communication is everywhere. People don't have a really clear idea about personal space so they don't have such a high demand. We need to keep a little distance from each other if we don't know each other really well. So in that aspect American culture is very different because in the States when you talk to someone even you if know them very well you still keep a polite distance from each other. You try to, you know almost like there is a box around you. You are trying to, 'okay this is my space.' Americans are very conscious, they will not be intrusive, they will try to stay away from others' space."

c) Tone of voice. "When we speak in my country we speak loud. That's a high bid for us but here most people speak low. Do not talk too loud that impact me. If I compare to my country American speaks very low," said one woman. Another woman explained, "Here they kept telling me, 'You have a small voice. You have to shout or you have to speak loud.'" "To laugh really loud is not all about you, it is more about community. If you laugh loud someone here would think you are being disrespectful: 'I am working, you are making noise.' Back home it is okay," said another participant

Time. Participants shared that experience is a process that changes over time. One participant described her first year as such: "I had a problem with people smiling at me. Like why are you smiling at me? Do you know me? Am I funny? Do I look like a clown? Do you wanna talk now, or do you wanna wait? I was this way." Another participant explained, "In the

beginning, from the very start here, sometimes I would not get the correct words out. Sometimes I would just be blank and, in the beginning I was embarrassed but now I kind of laugh about it, say 'oh! I got my bilingual blackout, let me get back to you, we will come back to that later.' So at first it was little bit hard and definitely had times where conversation froze and I say 'okay let me phrase it like that.' That is weird for people but I wanted to be as precise as possible." One participant expressed, "When I just got here, I was afraid to make any mistakes. I was thinking about the grammar and pronunciation."

One participant had also a different attitude at the beginning: "It bothered me before. I came here when I was 18, you are young, and you are not sure how to pronounce things some people corrected me. It bothered me a little bit." Another participant noted, "Beginning of my employment at the organization, and that's the second year of being here in this country. I was the most embarrassed and still carry this embarrassment in my head sometimes." One participant said, "In the beginning, I definitely had these problems, I think because of the culture and because of the language. Actually, in the beginning, I recall the situation where it was really, really hard; but I think also, as you age, and as you get little bit more into what you do, now it gets easier."

Place. Participants who lived in other states in the United States had different experiences in comparison to those living in Kentucky. One participant recently moved to a medium-sized city in Kentucky and she expressed her experience as follows: "I kept seeing people looking at me, when entering a place like Applebee's. All of the people are basically white, just like simple white-white, and then people looking at you, and I simply looked back to them and then smile, and they smile me back, and it is not necessarily bad, it is just interesting experience." Another participant also expressed a similar experience about living in the state of

Kentucky: "I found that sometimes it is little bit difficult for me, especially being in here because I had lots of experiences living in bigger cities in North America. In Kentucky, and I hate to say this, but they people don't travel a lot outside like I have people say 'you live in ...you guys wear clothes.' In Kentucky, in a job interview, another participant also had similar experiences. She said, "I have had interviews that I have faced people made comments, I have had questions like people ask you, 'How did you come, mode of transportation?' And you would feel like telling them I swam across the ocean. How can you ask me how I came here? Someone asked me, Are there air conditioners in your country?" Really, what do you think I live like?" Another participant commented, "In Kentucky not that many people are from out of the country or out of state, and I think seeing somebody talking with an accent gets their interest."

Work environment. Fourteen participants mentioned that they have been called a direct person. To the participants, being a direct person is equal to being honest, and getting to the point. Being direct, unlike in the United States, is seen as a very good skill in communication in participants' cultures. One woman said, "people know me as straight. I mean how you say it? Direct under direct language. I don't because in my mind this is not personal, we are not talking about family, children. I am giving you information, I am asking you to do this, that's all I am doing. And I am not very skilled to in English to really make it all pretty and all their phrases ... so I am very direct because to me, I cannot articulate that well. So I chose to do direct and I think by now they know where we are in verbal conversation face to face." "I am too direct, when I handle things, and I do not sugar coat the things I say. I think that's a commonality of people that did not grow up here, is being direct," said another woman. Another participant explained, "They told me that I am direct. Sometimes people can call that rude. I do not consider it to be rude, it is just a reality. They think I am rude sometimes, but no! Why it is

rude? I am just saying. Why I have to put things in words that they make it look nice. That's what it is. Sometimes I get a face because I am so straight I say what I want to say, they say, 'Oh that's rude,' and I say, 'Really?' 'It's not rude for me but okay.'" One participant said, "I had to learn that Americans are not direct. They are trying to hide everything negative. They are coming out with anything positive in your face."

Although they do not take it seriously, participants shared experiences of being teased by their coworkers. One participant said, "They would tease me at work sometimes if I mispronounce something, but not to be mean." Another participant explained, "There are times when people make fun of you, and want to mock you, try to speak the way you speak, and it's in a good nature. But when it's day after day and time after time, it is not that mean, you can tell."

Coping strategies. All of the participants developed coping strategies with verbal and nonverbal communication. Some of the participants alert the listener before they start speaking. One participant said, "Often times I would say, 'I don't speak perfect English,' kind of disclaimer before I say anything." The other strategy that most of the respondents utilized is not taking it seriously and making fun of themselves before the listener does it. One participant explained, "I think in English. I don't think in my native language. I see dreams in English. You have to stand your own, and I think this world is all about; I actually make fun of other people's accent. I say, 'Oh my God, your accent is so funny,' and they are like, 'Look who is talking?' 'Hey! I speak perfect English.' So I always have a way to joke about it. And I think a sense of humor can get you further than anything else." Another participant described, "Because I know how to laugh at myself when they say, 'Hey, it is that what you really mean?' and I was like, 'Oh! I did not know that's what it means,' and it still happens. I never really use the words that I did not know that would hurt somebody." "Whenever those conflicts arise, you don't take it too

personally. It is normal. And sometimes I try to speak just a little bit slowly." Participants also developed a tactic to observe the listener's body language while speaking to see if the listener is following the communication. When they see confusion or a lost look on the listener's face, they reword the sentence or restructure the entire sentence for the listener to understand. One participant said, "Once you knew the communication was not going right, you knew something was not quite right, and pick it up right away and clarify it right away. I try to solve it before it gets big." Another participant explained, "I know when I see the face then I would explain to them by saying, 'I am not from here, and in my country it is okay to say it, and it is not a bad thing to say,' so they understand and never get offended. Well, I have to explain sometimes."

The most common strategy to cope with nonverbal communication among the participants is adoption of American cultural norms. All of them learned the new culture through their experiences. Participants who are married to an American person received help from their spouses in exploring the new culture and what is socially unacceptable. Thus, their adaptation to the new culture took less time than that of the other participants. Although the participants adopted the new culture, they retained their own cultural norms, too. One participant said, "I tried to understand the differences between our heritage and our way to do it and theirs." Another participant explained, "For me, it is more like a learning process than as a problem, it is a readjustment. In my end I have to be aware the differences between American culture and my culture in terms of the body language, in terms of the space that's individual concept, so I think over the years I have made adjustments. For example, when I talk to someone I try to keep little more distant from them than otherwise in my own culture. And also I will not touch them so frequently; for example, I will not pat the back or I will not touch the elbow unless I know them very well." "My husband helped me a lot because he is an American. So my husband actually

explained lots, lots of situations back to me so I could understand. If I had not had his help and his support, I would probably be back in my country," said another participant.

Group essence of being a professional immigrant woman in the United States.

Essence of the phenomenon in this study is what it means to be a professional immigrant woman in the United States. Seven themes were identified through analysis of the interview protocol and interview transcriptions (see Tables 3 and 4). The participants in this study revealed a range of textural and structural variables that influenced professional immigrant women's experiences of being an immigrant, speaking with an accent, and coping strategies with verbal and nonverbal communication. These experiences are affected by their personalities, native languages and cultures, and professions, as well as place and time.

These professional immigrant women experienced cultural differences between their home countries and the United States. They perceived that American culture values friendliness and that direct communication is not common. The participants also experience differences between their home countries and U.S. norms for nonverbal communications. They perceive that physical contact here occurs less frequently than their cultures. In addition, to be successful in a different culture, they focus on cultural similarities and learn cultural differences. They adapt to differences if possible, but if it is not possible, they respect them.

The participants experienced both positive and negative interactions with coworkers. Although these professional immigrant women often face challenges during the first couple of years due to lacking confidence, feeling uncomfortable, and struggling to communicate effectively, they feel that this is a learning process that improves over time. In addition, idioms in English are often challenging for them.

These professional immigrant women experience the development coping strategies with verbal and nonverbal communication barriers. They use strategies to communicate effectively. They continue learning and improving their English language and understanding of American culture. Most importantly, they maintain positive attitudes.

Summary

In Chapter 4, the data that were collected during the interviews with each research participant are presented. Through each interview, significant statements that emerged from the participants' interviews were identified. The significant statements were grouped under the following categories: experience living in the United States, speaking English as a second language, speaking with an accent, coworkers' and/or subordinates' behavior, coping with verbal conflicts, body language differences between the native country and the United States, and coping with body language conflicts. The last section of Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the commonalities of the participants' lived experiences as professional immigrant women in the United States.

Chapter 5: Discussion, and Recommendations

If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?

--Albert Einstein

Introduction

This research analysis provided an in-depth view of communication conflicts that arose from language barriers and lived experiences of professional immigrant women in medium and large organizations in the United States. Their experiences and challenges, as well as their coping strategies, are presented herein.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to learn directly from professional immigrant women about their experiences in communication conflicts that arise from language barriers. To answer the research question, 17 professional immigrant women who had all experienced the same phenomenon and who had worked or presently work in medium and large organization in the United States, were interviewed.

This study revealed that professional immigrant women had positive experiences living in the United States. Participants of this study adjusted their style of speaking to others (e.g., tone of voice and calling a superior by his/her first name). This study also discovered idioms in English remain the most problematic area for the participants. Most of the participants wish not to have an accent, but they have accepted the fact that they cannot change their accent. Although there are similarities, this study's participants experienced the differences of body language between their native cultures and U.S. culture. Until they became familiar with U.S. culture, the participants of this study experienced differences in the amount of eye contact, personal space, and physical contact allowed by social norms. They had to adjust their body language to U.S. culture to be able to be accepted by the society.

Research Question

What is the lived experience of professional immigrant women who have had communication conflicts that arose from language barriers?

The main research question stated above guided the selection of participants, interviewing, data gathering, data coding, and analysis of results. Although they experienced challenges and hurdles, the current study discovered that professional immigrant women, in general, had positive experiences living in the United States. Culture shock contributed to the first couple of years being the most difficult. Rajasekar and Renand (2013) stated, "Culture shock is seen as uncertainties that cause anxiety, depression, and isolation when people are faced with an unknown culture" (p. 157). According to the authors, the important issue is that unfamiliar circumstances require adaptation, which is a lengthy and difficult process. All of the professional immigrant women in this study experienced this lengthy and difficult process. Rajasekar and Renand (2013) also posed that there are "many factors that influence culture shock such as the cultural flexibility, ethnocentrism, and stress reactions of the expatriates" (p. 157). Depending on their own culture and personality, these professional immigrant women had slightly different experiences and coping strategies with culture shock. As Rajasekar and Renand (2013) stressed, because unfamiliarity makes people unable to understand the ideology of another and how they should behave with them, professional immigrant women experienced this challenge in their first couple of years living in the United States.

Types of Communication Conflicts Faced

The study's first sub-question informed the research: What kinds of communication conflicts do professional immigrant women face in U.S. organizations as a result of language barriers?

Verbal communication. As uncertainty theory (West & Turner, 2009) suggests, when strangers meet, because of their uncertainty level, they may not be sure how to behave nor how the other person will behave, and they are not sure what they think of the other nor what the other person thinks of them. According to this theory, people will use communication to reduce their uncertainty. Kasper et al. (2012) asserted that, "the initial motivation to communicate [is] not in the provision of information but in the uncertainty perceived by one of the two parties in a communication" (p. 5).

In this theory's intercultural contexts, the effects of attitude similarity, cultural similarity, culture itself, and self-monitoring on attraction, intent to cross-examine, intent to self-disclose, attributional confidence, and intent to display nonverbal affiliative behaviors are positively correlated, indicating that uncertainty varies transversely in cultures. The results of the current study support and extend uncertainty theory. Participants experienced uncertainty and tried to reduce it in communication by using another word, restating sentences, not using unfamiliar words, and explaining themselves during communications. As Malik and Kabiraj (2010) argued, interdepartmental communication can lead to a better understanding of the role of the department and its mission in the organization, and interpersonal communication within the department decreases functional uncertainty of the task-performing personnel in that department. For instance, participants of this study found that the hierarchy is not clear in organizations in the United States, thus leading to uncertainty and confusion.

Another theory that is supported by the current study is the communication accommodation theory. According to this theory, people will try to adjust their style of speaking (West & Turner, 2009). Participants of this study adjusted their style of speaking to others (e.g., tone of voice and calling a superior by his or her first name).

Speaking English as a second language. Participants of this study expressed that speaking another language is difficult and challenging. Idioms in English stand out as the most problematic area for the participants. Although the participants do not feel bad when their English is corrected by a native speaker, they expect appreciation and empathy from native speakers. The other problematic area is choosing the wrong word because of textual translation from their native language.

Speaking with an accent. The study's second sub-question informed the research: How do professional immigrant women feel speaking with an accent? Although each participant has a different accent in this study, all of the participants speak English with an accent. While some of them consider the accent part of their identity, others consider it an embarrassment. Most of them wish not to have an accent, but they have accepted the fact that they cannot change their accent. A study by Woodrow (2006) found second-language speaking anxiety to be a significant predictor of oral achievement. Professional immigrant women in this study speak English as a second language, and the experiences of the participants in this study supported Woodrow's finding.

Coworkers' and subordinates' behavior. Analysis of the data revealed that location makes a significant difference in American coworkers' and subordinates' behavior toward professional immigrant women. Most of the participants lived in other states before they moved to Kentucky, and their experiences were different in other states. Data analysis also revealed that their profession or field makes a difference in behaviors. For example, medical doctors and university faculty had a different experience than those in other professions. Most of the participants experienced being teased by their coworkers and subordinates because of their English communication. Jung (2013) stated "A personal-relational identity gap refers to the

difference between an individual's existing self-concept and the individual's perceptions of how another person views him/her" (p. 165) thus teasing by co-workers creates a gap.

Coping with verbal conflicts. Participants of this study foresaw some of the conflicts that they were going to face when they came to the United States. They expected that someone would not be able to understand them, and some even would not try to understand them because they are immigrants. They accepted those realities, and learned not to take them personally. Participants' strategies to cope with verbal conflicts included: speaking slowly, spelling out the word, and asking the listener if he/she speaks another language or is able to pronounce some words from their native language. When a listener does not understand the word because of the pronunciation, they spell out the word, or try to find another word that has a similar meaning; thus, they had to be proficient in spelling and in vocabulary.

In their study, Jain and Krieger (2011) found that non-native English-speaking participants use multiple convergence strategies that included repeating information, changing speaking styles, and using nonverbal communication. Kaur (2010) also discovered that non-native English speakers use paraphrase and repetition to increase the comprehensibility. Po-Chi and Craigie (2013) also found that positive thinking was the coping strategy that the international participants used most often. The current study agrees with these studies.

Nonverbal communication. The study's third sub-question also informed the research: What is each woman's own culture's role in nonverbal communication (e.g., eye contact, body position, gestures, and facial expressions, among others) conflicts? Although there are similarities, this study's participants experienced the differences of body language between their culture and U.S. culture. Until they became familiar with U.S. culture, the participants of this study experienced social norm differences in the amount of eye contact, personal space, and

physical contact, among others. They had to adjust their body language to U.S. culture to be able to be accepted by society.

In some of the participants' cultures, physical contact is not allowed, especially between different sexes. Participants from those cultures felt uncomfortable when they received a hug from a male coworker in the United States. According to expectancy violation theory, they perceived a hug unfavorably because of their own culture.

In parallel with Gabor's study (2014), most of the participants of this study emphasized being called a direct person. From the perspective of participants, being a direct person means being an honest person. On the contrary, being direct means being rude in U.S. culture; thus, participants' coworkers perceived directness unfavorably, as expectancy violation theory suggests. A study by Rampy and Strand (2010) found that one of the more common difficulties among professional non-native English speakers is finessing the language. They stated that although non-native professionals' English may be accurate and understandable, these people wish they could use the language in a more polished, professional way. The authors also found that, because professional non-native English speakers "don't have that kind of confidence, they end up holding back and avoid making the kinds of contributions that help them succeed" (p. 2). The current study substantiated their findings.

Coping with nonverbal conflicts. Among participants, the most common strategy for coping with nonverbal communication is adaptation to American cultural norms. Rampy and Strand (2010) posited that, "Getting accustomed to American business culture is notably more difficult for foreign-born professionals than getting used to language-related issues" (p. 4). All of the participants of the current study learned the new culture through their experiences. Although the participants adopted the new culture, at the same time, they kept their own cultural

norms. They tried to understand the differences between their culture and U.S. culture, and then acted upon those understandings. Yun-Hsi, Ming-Chia, and Yi-Fan (2011) found the same results among Chinese immigrant and this study supported their findings.

Discussion of Hofstede's Four Dimensions

In this study, 16 out of 17 participants represented large power distance societies. Society in the United States is identified as a small power distance society. It is observed that large power distance influenced professional immigrant women's experience in the United States. For example, as Table 7 shows, in large power distance societies, subordinates expect to be told what to do and subordinate-superior relations are emotional. Professional immigrant women experienced these differences and it took time for them to accept and apply these differences in their professional life.

Table 7

Key Differences between Small and Large Power Distance Societies

	Small Power Distance	Large Power Distance
Workplace	<p>Hierarchy in organizations means an inequality of roles, established for convenience.</p> <p>Decentralization is popular.</p> <p>There are fewer supervisory personnel.</p> <p>There is a narrow salary range between the top and the bottom of the organization.</p> <p>Managers rely on their own experiences and on subordinates.</p> <p>Subordinates expect to be consulted.</p> <p>The ideal boss is a resourceful democrat.</p> <p>Subordinate-superior relations are pragmatic.</p> <p>Manual work has the same status as office work.</p>	<p>Hierarchy in organizations reflects existential inequality between higher and lower levels.</p> <p>Centralization is popular.</p> <p>There are more supervisory personnel.</p> <p>There is a wide salary range between the top and the bottom of the organization.</p> <p>Managers rely on superiors and on formal rules.</p> <p>Subordinates expect to be told what to do.</p> <p>The ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat, or "good father."</p> <p>Subordinate-superior relations are emotional.</p> <p>White-collar jobs are valued more than blue-collar jobs.</p>
General Norm	<p>Inequalities among people should be minimized.</p> <p>Social relationships should be handled with care.</p> <p>Less powerful people and more powerful people should be interdependent.</p> <p>Less powerful people are emotionally comfortable with interdependence.</p>	<p>Inequalities among people are expected and desired.</p> <p>Status should be balanced with restraint.</p> <p>Less powerful people should be dependent.</p> <p>Less powerful people are emotionally polarized between dependence and counterdependence.</p>

Note. From *Culture and Organizations, Software of the Mind, Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*, by Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 72, 76.

Just as power distance societies were represented in the study, the same number of participants represented a collectivist society, while the United States is identified as an individualist society. This dimension also influenced professional immigrant women's experience in the United States. For instance, as Table 8 presents, the employer-employee relationship is moral, similar to a family link, in collectivist societies. Professional immigrant women coming from a collectivist society expected the same kind of relationship at work and collectivist society's features influenced their behaviors at work as well.

Table 8

Key Differences between Collectivist and Individualist Societies

	Collectivist Society	Individualist Society
Workplace	<p>Occupational mobility is lower.</p> <p>Employees are members of in-groups who will pursue in the in-group's interest.</p> <p>Hiring and promotion decisions take employee's in-group into account.</p> <p>The employer-employee relationship is basically moral, like a family link.</p> <p>Management is management of groups.</p> <p>Direct appraisal of subordinates spoils harmony.</p> <p>In-group customers get better treatment (particularism).</p> <p>Relationship prevails over task.</p> <p>Use of the word "I" is avoided.</p> <p>Interdependent self.</p> <p>People introvert.</p> <p>Showing sadness is encouraged, and happiness discouraged.</p> <p>Slower walking speed.</p> <p>Social network is primary source of information.</p>	<p>Occupational mobility is higher.</p> <p>Employees are "economic persons" who will pursue the employer's interest if it coincides with their interest.</p> <p>Hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on skills and rules only.</p> <p>The employer-employee relationship is a contract between parties in a labor market.</p> <p>Management is management of individuals.</p> <p>Management training teaches the honest sharing of feelings.</p> <p>Every customer should get the same treatment (universalism).</p> <p>Task prevails over relationship.</p> <p>Use of the word "I" is encouraged.</p> <p>Independent self.</p> <p>People are extravert.</p> <p>Showing happiness is encouraged, and sadness discouraged.</p> <p>Faster walking speed.</p> <p>Media is primary source of information.</p>
Language, Personality, and Behavior		
General Norm	<p>Value standards differ in-groups and out-groups: exclusionism.</p> <p>Harmony should always be maintained and direct confrontations avoided.</p> <p>Friendships are predetermined.</p> <p>High-context communication prevails.</p> <p>Frequent socialization in public places.</p> <p>Trespasses lead to shame and loss of face for self and group.</p>	<p>The same value standards are supposed to apply to everyone: universalism.</p> <p>Speaking one's mind is a characteristic of an honest person.</p> <p>Friendships are voluntary and should be fostered.</p> <p>Low-context communication prevails.</p> <p>My home is my castle.</p> <p>Trespasses lead to guilt and loss of self-respect.</p>

Note. From *Culture and Organizations, Software of the Mind, Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*, by Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 113, 117, 124.

Just as participants were represented in other dimensions, 16 participants represented the weak uncertainty avoidance society, while the United States is identified as a strong uncertainty avoidance society. As listed in Table 9, in the weak uncertainty avoidance societies, rules should be established only when it is strictly necessary. This dimension helps explain professional immigrant's experience of culture shock in their earlier years in the United States.

Table 9

Key Differences between Weak and Strong Uncertainty Avoidance Societies

	Weak Uncertainty Avoidance Societies	Strong Uncertainty Avoidance Societies
Workplace, Organization, and Motivation	<p>More changes of employer, shorter service.</p> <p>There should be no more rules than strictly necessary.</p> <p>Work hard only when needed.</p> <p>Time is a framework for orientation.</p> <p>Tolerance for ambiguity and chaos.</p> <p>Belief in generalist and common sense.</p> <p>Top managers are concerned with strategy.</p> <p>Focus on decision process.</p> <p>Intrapreneurs are relatively free from rules.</p> <p>Better at invention, worse at implementation.</p> <p>Motivation by achievement and esteem or belonging.</p>	<p>Fewer changes of employer, longer service, more difficult work-life balance.</p> <p>There is an emotional need for rules, even if they will not work.</p> <p>There is an emotional need to be busy and an inner urge to work hard.</p> <p>Time is money.</p> <p>Need for precision and formalization.</p> <p>Belief in experts and technical solutions.</p> <p>Top managers are concerned with daily operations.</p> <p>Focus on decision content.</p> <p>Intrapreneurs are constrained by existing rules.</p> <p>Worse at invention, better at implementation.</p> <p>Motivation by security and esteem or belonging.</p> <p>The uncertainty inherent in life is a continuous threat that must be fought.</p> <p>High stress high anxiety.</p> <p>Aggression and emotions may at proper times and places be vented.</p> <p>Acceptance of familiar risk; fear of ambiguous situations and of unfamiliar risks.</p> <p>Strong superegos developed.</p> <p>Different modes of address for different others.</p> <p>What is different is dangerous.</p>
General Norm	<p>Uncertainty is a normal feature of life, and each day is accepted as it comes.</p> <p>Low stress low anxiety.</p> <p>Aggression and emotions should not be shown.</p> <p>Comfortable in ambiguous situations and with unfamiliar risks.</p> <p>Weak superegos developed.</p> <p>Similar modes of address for different others.</p> <p>What is different is curious.</p>	<p>The uncertainty inherent in life is a continuous threat that must be fought.</p> <p>High stress high anxiety.</p> <p>Aggression and emotions may at proper times and places be vented.</p> <p>Acceptance of familiar risk; fear of ambiguous situations and of unfamiliar risks.</p> <p>Strong superegos developed.</p> <p>Different modes of address for different others.</p> <p>What is different is dangerous.</p>

Note. From *Culture and Organizations, Software of the Mind, Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*, by Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 203, 217.

In keeping with the statistical representation of the previous three dimensions, 16 study participants came from feminine societies, while the United States is identified as a masculine society. As Table 10 exhibits, in feminine societies, management is based on intuition and consensus, whereas in masculine societies, management is based on decisiveness and aggressiveness. Again, coming from a feminine society into a masculine society, there is a high likelihood that professional immigrant women would face challenges and conflicts because of societal differences.

Table 10

Key Differences between Feminine and Masculine Societies

	Feminine Societies	Masculine Societies
Workplace, Education	Job choice is based on intrinsic interest.	Job choice is based on career opportunities.
	Men and women partly study the same subjects.	Men and women partly study different subjects.
	Management as ménage: intuition and consensus.	Management as ménage: decisive and aggressive.
	Resolution of conflicts by compromise and negotiation.	Resolution of conflicts by letting the strongest win.
	Rewards are based on equality.	Rewards are based on equity.
	Preference for smaller organization.	Preference for larger organization.
	People work in order to live.	People live in order to work.
	More leisure time is preferred over more money	More money is preferred over more leisure time.
	Careers are optional for both genders.	Careers are compulsory for men, and optional for women.
	There is higher share of working women in professional jobs.	There is lower share of working women in professional jobs.
Gender and Sex	Sexual harassment is a minor issue.	Sexual harassment is a big issue.
	Women's liberation means that men and women take equal shares both at home and work.	Women's liberation means that women are admitted to positions so far occupied by men.
	Homosexuality is considered a fact of life.	Homosexuality is considered a threat to society.
General Norm	Relationships and quality of life are important	Challenge, earnings, recognition, and advancement are important

Note. From *Culture and Organizations, Software of the Mind, Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*, by Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 155, 159, 170.

Discussion of the Findings in Relation to Prior Studies

As discussed in the literature review, transnationalism brings a view of immigrants as people who maintain strong ties with their home country and oppose total assimilation into the new culture. Kearney (1995) explained that in transnationalism, immigrants experience a process of acculturation in which they hold onto elements of the country of origin while they acquire the values, mores, and life ways of the new culture. The acculturation model assumes that the individual becomes competent in the majority culture while retaining and identifying with her minority culture. Most often, the new immigrant is forced to learn the behaviors and practices of members of the new culture in order to survive economically (Alfred 2010).

The current study is in agreement with these studies and further adds that regardless of their country of origin, professional immigrant women in this study still retained elements of their countries' cultures and simultaneously learned and accepted U.S. culture. As the acculturation model assumes, these professional immigrant women became competent in U.S. culture but also retained and identified with their minority cultures (e.g., being proud of their nation of origin, considering the accent as part of their identity).

As is described in the literature review, culture plays an important role in communication, especially in meanings. Meaning can be interpreted one way in one culture and differently in another. Bouchet (2010) stated that meaning in interaction permanently transforms cultural elements and patterns into something new. Similarly, Machado (2011) stated that the “general mechanism of culture does not only maintain information, but also preserves it and processes it continuously by encoding, decoding, recoding, and translating languages” (p. 100). This study agrees with these statements because of the ways in which professional immigrant women participating in this study experienced their culture impacting their communication. Intercultural

communication at the interpersonal level involves various cultural elements in multiple forms, which do not have to have a common denominator.

Another subject that is included in the literature review is culture learning. Paige et al. (2003) defined culture learning as “the process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures” (p. 1). They also believe that culture learning is a dynamic, developmental, and ongoing process and this process engages the learner cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively. Similarly, Hernandez (2009) asserted that “culture learning theory focuses on the social psychology of “intercultural” encounters with a focus on communication competence, knowledge of norms and values, and sociocultural adaptation. She also emphasized that during face-to-face interactions, rules and conventions are important in cultural learning. The current study affirmatively supports these studies and further adds that regardless of race, profession, and native cultural norms, professional immigrant women underwent this process and confirmed culture learning is an ongoing process.

According to Waltman and Wagner-Marsh (2010), intrapersonal communication barriers include perceptual differences, whereas interpersonal barriers include language differences, lack of feedback, boss consciousness, emotional barriers, and listening barriers. Vajini (2009) added the accent of the speaker to the list of communication barriers. This study agrees with those previous studies and further adds that regardless of race, profession, and native cultural norms, professional immigrant women experienced these communication barriers because they are perceptually different, speak a different native language, have accents, and have different emotional barriers than Americans.

Exploring the ways in which the imagined community is discursively patrolled through accents, Creese and Kambere (2003) found that immigrant women experience language as a problem in their daily lives because their accents identify them as immigrants. Huang and Jun (2011) investigated the age of arrival effect on the production of second-language prosody. The results revealed that the age of arrival impacted speech rate, degree of foreign prosody, the frequency of pitch accents, and the frequency of high boundary tones. The mean age of participants of the current study is 25.8, and their age at arrival has impacts on their English. A study conducted by Munro and Derwing (1995) identified an accent as an inevitable barrier to communication. A study by Tsalikis, DeShields, and LaTour (1991), consistent with the linguistic and social psychology literature, indicated that presenters speaking in the standard accent of the audience evoke more favorable judgments of credibility than presenters speaking a nonstandard accent. The present study confirmed these studies' findings. Although these studies were conducted on specific accents such as Mandarin, African, and Greek accents, the present study confirmed these studies' findings and further adds new knowledge to the literature that regardless of native language, having a foreign accent influenced the participants' experience in communication conflict in the United States.

Limitations of the Study

The research design of this study presents several possible limitations. The findings of this study represent the core essence of the experience of communication conflicts that arise from language barriers for the 15 professional immigrant women who participated, but the findings cannot be generalized to say that all professional immigrant women have this same experience. Qualitative research in general often utilizes a small sample size, as does this current study.

Although a small sample size leads to rich information and in-depth data, it also limits the ability to generalize the findings to a larger population.

Within the study, there were also some limitations that were not controllable. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore communication conflicts that arise from language barriers among professional immigrant women from around the world, and who are currently working in U.S. organizations. Although the participants represented different countries, 86% of them currently reside in Kentucky. Thus, the target population was effectively narrowed to the state of Kentucky.

This study relied mainly on self-reported data. Although the interviews emphasized the experience of participants and provided an opportunity to share the experiences, the data was limited to the enthusiasm and aptitude of the participants to reflect upon and coherently express their experiences. The participants may have chosen not to share certain experiences or may have had deficient remembrance on the communication conflict experiences that they had, which would have influenced the responses.

Furthermore, the scope of the study was limited to professional immigrant women. The study does not disclose what similarities, differences, or overlapping experiences exist in communication conflicts among immigrant women who are not professional. Another limitation of this study was the length of time. Participants shared that experience is a process that changes over time. Length of time had an impact on the participants' experiences of their behaviors, reactions to native speakers, feelings, and cultural adjustments. The longer they stayed, the more comfortable they became with the process of culture adaption.

Another limitation of this study was based on the researcher's ethnic background and gender. The data gathered by an American researcher, and/or of a different gender, may result in

a different conclusion. In addition, the relationships of the author with the participants may also have impacted the responses. Throughout the preliminary presentation of this study, the author's own experience was shared with the participants, with a goal of creating an environment in which participants would feel comfortable sharing their experience with the author. By doing so, this sharing may have influenced the participants' responses because they may have assumed the author's experience on the topic of communication conflicts.

Researcher's Reflection on the Study

For the researcher, the goal of the study was to identify the communication conflicts and language barrier experiences that professional immigrant women faced, as well as to identify what they learned from these experiences so that professional immigrant women who come to the United States in the future would learn from them. From the point of view of these women, they had to make adjustments through experiences and had difficulties in becoming successful individuals in their professions. The interviewed women showed strength, and they discussed their successes as well as their hurdles as professional immigrant women in the United States. All of them were genuine and honest about their experiences.

The researcher's views on professional immigrant women's adjustments in the United States have been shaped by personal experiences. The researcher made the transition from Turkey to the United States in 1992. Since then, the researcher experienced a variety of adjustment stages, utilized various coping strategies, and achieved personal transformation. The researcher's experiences increased her awareness and empathy toward many of the challenges encountered by professional immigrant women and assisted the researcher in working with the participants in this study. The researcher bracketed personal biases by utilizing the process of Epoche, in which the researcher separated her biases and predictions. Instead, the researcher

discovered the phenomenon under study as the phenomenon was introduced by the participants. During the process of data analysis, the researcher set aside all preconceived experiences to best understand the experiences of participants by completing the following tasks:

- Validated the transcript with the participants and included participants' remarks in the final description;
- Read through the written transcript several times to obtain an overall feeling for them;
- Identified significant phrases and sentences that pertained directly to the experience;
- Formulated meanings and clustered them into themes common to all of the participants' transcripts; and
- Integrated the results into an in-depth, exhaustive description of the phenomenon.

Implications of the Study

Implication for organizations. As cited in Chapter 2, Maselnik (2012) stated that highly skilled immigrant workers are attractive to host countries because of their capacity to contribute to the wealth of the host countries through higher spending on consumption and housing, as well as the perception that they can be easily blend into host societies. He also pointed out the world political actors are already competing to attract migrants to meet the needs of their economies. Accordingly, organizations in the United States have an important role in keeping these highly skilled workers to support the economy, at the very least.

As the literature review revealed, immigration trends are not going to change soon. Accordingly, there will be people with multicultural backgrounds in organizations, and related issues will not be resolved without focused effort; therefore, organizations should pay attention

to the context of multiculturalism. Organizations should create a coherent work environment for all employees to prevent negative conflicts. This environment can be constructed by providing training to all employees on understanding, acceptance, and tolerance of cultural diversity. In particular, multicultural and international organizations that assign employees overseas should provide training on the differences of the host country's cultural norms or request training from the organization in the host country. Human resource departments should also design talent management processes to attract, develop, motivate, and retain productive, engaged employees. Organizations with a large number of multicultural employees should offer a support system for those employees. Talent management and support system will also support a coherent work environment. Community organizations should also take responsibility for helping their members in understanding, tolerating, and accepting different cultures. This end can be accomplished by inviting host speakers or organizing cultural events and other forms of informative events, depending on the community organization.

Implication for professional immigrant women. As is found in the literature review, immigration is influenced by two distinct factors, volunteer and forced immigration, and participants of this study are classified as volunteer immigrants. Ecke (2005) stressed that volunteer immigrants seek a better life and are enabled by the exercise of free will. Participants in the current study noted that the United States is a land of opportunity for immigrant women, and those immigrant women who are determined and meticulous reach these opportunities. The participants advised new professional immigrant women to overcome the initial cultural shock of transitioning into a new culture and to assimilate as quickly as possible in order to pursue their careers. The participants also noted that their own people were not supportive in the process of adapting to the new culture and advancing their careers. Thus, professional immigrant women in

this study advised professional immigrant women who are newcomers that they should not pay attention to people from their countries who are not supportive of them in advancing their careers. They also suggested that newcomers should work harder to reach their goals and ignore any negative attitudes from their own people.

Suggestions for Future Research

Most of the participants (88%) of this study live in Kentucky, and the current study revealed that location has a significant impact on the experiences of professional immigrant women. Thus, for comparison, further research could be conducted on professional immigrant women's communication conflict experiences while living in other states.

The current study included all types of organizations where professional immigrant women had worked or are working. Further research could be conducted by separating the public and the private sectors to determine whether that has an influence on professional immigrant women's experiences in the United States.

The current study also revealed that the field or profession has a different impact on experiences, especially on coworkers' and subordinates' behavior toward professional immigrant women. Further research could be conducted focusing on a specific profession, such as academia or medicine.

All of the participants experienced being teased by coworkers because of their language barriers (i.e., having an accent). Although the participants interpreted it in a positive way, teasing is considered bullying and harassment at work. Further research could be conducted to determine how coworkers' teasing affects professional immigrant women at work.

A couple of questions emerged from the current study that were outside the scope of the research design. As in most phenomenological studies, paths of journeying and inquiry emerged,

suggesting future research possibilities. The following questions could be researched to explicate further the phenomena of native English speaker employees' experiences working with professional immigrant women:

- 1) How they feel working with professional immigrant women;
- 2) What their language barriers are that lead to communication conflicts; and
- 3) How native English speakers cope with language barriers and conflict.

Summary

This study was designed to answer the following research question, and it is addressed in the previous sections: What is the lived experience of professional immigrant women who have had communication conflicts that arose from language barriers? This study also addressed the following research sub-questions:

1. What kind of communication conflicts do professional immigrant women face in U.S. organizations as a result of language barriers?
2. How do professional immigrant women feel speaking with an accent?
3. What is each woman's own culture's role in nonverbal communication (e.g., eye contact, body position, gestures, and facial expressions, among others) conflicts?

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to identify communication conflicts that arose from language barriers among professional immigrant women in the United States who immigrated from around the world. Evaluating research findings and reaching conclusions from the research questions achieved this purpose. In addition to the conclusions related to the research questions, limitations were presented. Additionally, recommendations for the implication of the results of the study as well as suggestions for future research were

discussed. The results of this study indicated that there are common factors that significantly influenced communication conflicts because of language barriers.

The findings suggested that the process of adapting to the American culture and work environment is not easy for professional immigrant women. The successful transition of professional immigrant women into the U.S. workplace should motivate and assist new professional immigrant women to be successful and give them opportunities to advance their careers in the United States.

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Appendix A

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. What is your education level?
2. How old were you when you came to the U.S.?
3. How long have you been living in the U.S.?
4. What position do you hold or did you have?

Thank you. Now I will ask questions about your experiences on verbal communication barriers.

1. Tell me how you learned English.
2. Where did you learn English?
3. Tell me about your experience as a professional immigrant woman in the U.S.
4. How did you feel when you had conflicts that arose from communication barriers?
5. How do you feel speaking with an accent?
6. How were/are your subordinate's attitudes toward you?
7. How do/did you cope with verbal communication conflicts?
8. Tell me about your experience about verbal communication barriers.

Now we will talk about your nonverbal communication barriers experience.

1. Can you describe how nonverbal communication (body language) differs from your culture to U.S. culture?
2. Can you remember a nonverbal communication barrier that created conflicts at work?
3. What happened after that experience?
4. How did you feel when you had nonverbal communication conflicts?
5. How do/did you cope with nonverbal communication conflicts?

6. Tell me about your experience about nonverbal communication barriers
7. Thank you for all that valuable information, is there anything else you'd like to add before we end?

Your contribution to this study is priceless. I would like you to pick one these small gifts for yourself. Thank you again.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

- I. PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY:** I have been asked to participate in this research study conducted by HarikaSuklun. The purpose of this study is to explore lived experiences of professional immigrant women on communication conflicts. My participation in this study is expected to last an hour.
- II. WHAT WILL BE DONE/PROCEDURES:** Data will be collected by conducting in-depth interviews, where possible, by face-to-face, phone, chat room, and Skype methods. The face to face in-depth interview with the participant will last one to two hours and will be conducted in their preferred places and interviews will be audio-recorded. If location is left to the investigator a place open to public such as a library will be chosen. Also, during the interview, the investigator will take notes. Participants will be reminded that breaks are allowed if they felt the need to do so. Open-ended questions will be asked about the language experience, questions about feelings about language, questions about suggestions and/or advice to other non-native speakers, and the last section asks participants to provide any information they would like to add that they feel is important. During the interview the investigator will ask specific questions to seek detailed description to follow up participant's remarks. Although these specific questions will be depend on the interview's flow possible questions will be; can you describe...; how did you feel...; can you remember...; can you give me an example...; what happened and among others. The demographic sheet will inquire age, highest level of education and study area, time living in the U.S., and current position.
- III. POSSIBLE BENEFITS:** I have been informed that my participation in this research will Not benefit me directly. I understand that this study will provide information for future researchers who wish to study immigrant professional women in organizations in the USA, so that the researcher can see the "big picture" for future research.
- IV. POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:** I have been informed that the risks and discomforts of this study are minimal. I have been informed that being recorded means that confidentiality has potential to leak but my name used in recording will be a pseudonym and every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality by the investigator.
- V. CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS**

Any information learned from this study in which I might be identified will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with my permission, to the extent allowed by

law. All records and tapes will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked room. Only the investigator and members of the research team will have access to these records. If information learned from this study is published, I will Not be identified by name. By signing this form, however, I allow the research study investigator to make my records available to the Sullivan University Graduate School of Business Institutional Review Board (GSBIRB) Office and regulatory agencies as required by law.

VI. OFFER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH INJURY NOTIFICATION:

The principal investigator, Ms. HarikaSuklun responsible for this research study, has offered to and has answered any and all questions regarding my participation in this research study. If I have any further questions or in the event of a research related injury, I can contact Ms. HarikaSuklun at (859) 536-7610.

VII. PAYMENT TO SUBJECT FOR PARTICIPATION: I have been informed that I will not have a payment as a participant of this study but I will receive small gift from the investigator.

VIII. EXPLANATION OF TREATMENT AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY: I have been informed that the risk or participating this study is minimal. Thus I will not receive any treatment and compensation in case of injury.

IX. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION WITH RIGHT OF REFUSAL: I have been informed that my participation in this study is completely voluntary. I am free to withdraw my consent for participation in the study at any time.

X. IRB REVIEW AND IMPARTIAL THIRD PARTY: This study has been reviewed and approved by the Sullivan University Graduate School of Business Institutional Review Board (IRB). A representative of that Board, from the IRB Office, is available to discuss the review process or my rights as a research subject. The telephone number of the IRB Office is (502) 413-8529.

XI. SIGNATURE FOR CONSENT: The above-named investigator has answered my questions and I agree to be a research subject in this study.

Participant's Name: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C

Invitation Letter to Potential Participants

Invitation to Participate in Dissertation Research on Professional Immigrant Women in Medium and Large Organizations in the U.S.

I am a doctoral candidate of Conflict Management at Sullivan University in Louisville, Kentucky, and I am currently conducting a research for my dissertation. As a professional immigrant woman myself, I am interested in exploring the experiences of professional immigrant women who work or worked in medium and large organizations in the U.S. and who have had communication conflicts that arose from language barriers. My interest in immigration and immigrants continues to grow every year. As I was preparing for my dissertation, I realized the importance of conducting research in this understudied topic. The reasons for writing a dissertation in this area are both personal and professional for me.

Communication conflicts at work can arise from within the speaker or the listener (intrapersonal: perceptual differences), between them (interpersonal: language differences, lack of feedback, emotional barriers, listening barriers and the accent of the speaker), or barriers can be a product of the nature of the particular environment in which the interaction takes place (environmental). My dissertation research focuses on interpersonal language differences in verbal and nonverbal communications. Communication conflicts at work can lead to psychological, physical, and financial problems.

The participants' criteria that I set for this research are: female, 25 years or older, non-native English speaker, works or has worked for an organization that has 500 or more employees, an immigrant and hold or has held managerial or professional positions. All of the information given me by you is strictly confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

If you decide to participate, we will schedule a meeting to interview you either face-to-face or via Skype. For face-to-face interviews you will choose a location where you feel comfortable. During the interview I will ask questions about your experience of language barriers, such as how you felt, how was your subordinate's manner, among others. I expect the interviews will last between one and two hours. The interviews will be audio-recorded. I will categorize each recording by assigning a number to protect your identity. Nobody except me will have access to all of our recorded and written transcripts of interviews, and I will destroy them as soon as the research is completed.

As a participant, you would be asked to sign an informed consent that would give me permission to interview you, and then your responses to the interview would be included in the findings. Although your participation and your input to this study are priceless, you will be asked to choose a little gift as a small compensation for your participation of this study.

All of this research has been cleared by Sullivan University's Internal Review Board (IRB). If you would like to participate, or if you would like more information, please contact me at

hsuklu0814@my.sullivan.edu or call me at 859.536.7610. If you do not wish to participate, but know someone who may like to, please feel free to forward this letter to them. I have been in the U.S. more than twenty years and have had experience with communication conflicts during those years. I am very excited to hear your experiences.

Thank you,

Harika Suklun

Appendix D

List of Significant Statements

Experiences Living in the USA.

1. I found that sometimes it is difficult for me especially being in here in this city.
2. In the United States I found it particularly little bit different.
3. The United States is also a melting pot in terms of keeping my identity.
4. Here I felt like little bit more pressures as a professional woman to demonstrate or to so called to fit in the culture and fulfill certain expectations.
5. It was a good experience in general.
6. Well the experience was wonderful. It was not without hurdles.
7. I feel that sometimes because you are a professional, international, and woman you have to prove whole lot more that you are really good for the job.
8. My overall experience has been positive I have not any problem
9. Well, you are always somebody else; you are always somebody who is from there, even though you love the U.S. even though I have U.S. have citizenship by now I am always a foreigner and always will be by the way I talk.
10. The people are genuinely interested in me and my culture where I come from. It is easy to get contact with people. So, Americans are very open and positive.
11. It is a perspective right. You can look at it as obstacle. The biggest obstacles to me, is really my own people.
12. It is hard but you can make it.

14. Us coming here was like brain drain because a lot of us were really leaders at back home.

15. If they say something bad about immigrants I tried to explain to them you know we are here for a purpose, we are working, and we are paying tax.

16. There were some guys at work that felt like they were above the ladies especially foreign ladies.

17. I got upset many times at work where the guys you know were treated better than the girls.

18. Always is that cultural thing and I tried to be more familiar, sometimes people are more direct what they want to do, or to say or to hear.

19. Directiveness is part of our culture, that upsets Americans and I think that's a commonality of people that did not grow up here is being direct and there are some people in here that can be direct but not direct as we are, and it probably held me back because I am too direct, I am not very settled like, maybe there was some positions that could have been mine that did not became mine because when I handle things I am too direct and I do not sugar coat the things I say.

20. I kept seeing people looking at me; I mean it is not necessarily in bad way, kind of when you are entering such like Applebee's you know all of people are basically white just like simple white white and then you saw people looking at you and I simply looked back to them and then smile and they smile me and it is not necessarily bad it is just interesting experience.

21. We all feel like we are immigrants, strangers in this culture, so they take, you take, I think we all take, I for instance take time to listen because I have an accent, so they also take the time to listen.

22. I think that immigrant women have disadvantage, I think we get to go where we want to be but it takes longer time then for example; people from English speaking countries.

Verbal Communication

Speaking English as a Second Language

1. At first it was little bit hard and definitely had times where conversation was frozen.
2. You have to prove that you can write, you have to prove that you can speak, you have to convince people lot more than regular person.
3. Once some of the key pronunciation you learned it then you are able to say it more closely to the generic English speaking.
4. Sometimes I say the wrong words but it turns out to be a funny thing and people laugh about it.
5. I think the interpersonal communication is very straightforward and simple.
6. As a professional immigrant woman I would say that people here are very open and they usually make the first step. I do not necessarily want to talk about me but they want to and usually it is a very positive attitude "Oh where are you from" "Oh I have been there" and so on and very often that gives me an advantage I think for communication.
7. To the strangers, I try to speak as slowly as I can so they can adjust to my pronunciation.
8. To chat with coworker something else beside the work especially the cultural what kind of show they saw or they watched it before maybe 10 years ago, I have no knowledge about it, I have no idea what they are talking about.
9. It is kind of a prediction, technically you can predict what they are saying but you cannot predict when you are chatting someone.

10. I think is more of is less of saying the wrong thing but more of people not understanding what I am saying.
11. Sometimes I would just be blank and in the beginning I was embarrassed but now I kind of laugh about it.
12. My native language was a negative but it turned to be positive, it turned to a skill.
13. I am speaking another language yes I was not born here so if you don't understand it's your problem not mine because I do understand them.
14. When I came to U.S. I had a problem with people smiling to me.
15. Like we always throw parties in the house and very few people would reciprocated people from my country would, but not Americans.
16. They say it just to say it you just have to understand that it is a self-expression.
17. To me it was different culture I was different to them.
18. To me, I don't even remember to be not born not in this country; to me my country would be immigration.
19. When I first got here, I was afraid to make any mistakes I was thinking about the grammar and pronunciation.
20. Some people corrected me and it bothered me a little bit.
21. I make the extra effort to speak proper English.
22. I do not have much respect for people come here not to learn language and continues to spoke brokenly there is no reason for that, if you do that you do not get respect.
23. Often times I would say I don't speak perfect English as a kind of disclaimer.
24. I cannot understand them rather than they understand me, because if I am not sure if this is a correct way to say it.

25. Some of the concept of words probably more of not an issue but more of the idioms that I had difficulty but more in a funny way where it cost conflict but it was really, it cost humor and humor is good a way to win other people's heart.

26. I never really use the words that I did not know that would hurt somebody.

27. Native speakers speak with you very loud or very slow.

28. In my native language we use little bit strong words. For example we say "should" "you should do this, you should do that" the best way would be "would you like to do this" or "I will like to do this" so I learned cultural differences in communication.

29. Watch as much as American movies to try to get myself educated in English better.

30. Being educated immigrant woman trying to make a career and try to pursue ideas I think it is definitely harder if you are not native English speaker.

Speaking with an Accent

1. Of course it is embarrassing yes it is embarrassing.

2. It is really up to your determination; people can try to hold you back because you have an accent in fact had people tried to hold me back.

3. My classmate saw how I was struggling she helped correcting my pronunciations.

4. I tried really hard not to have an accent.

5. I am always a foreigner not by the way I look but the way I talk as soon as I open my mouth to say "hello" people say "Oh you are not from here".

6. I did have low confidence that I may not understand people or sometimes I have a feeling that if I apply that position I may not get because of my English.

7. One or two student said that I am hard to understand. To me it made me to feel uncomfortable.

8. They cannot even hear you, keep asking what did you say, that's the worst part.
9. Some places you don't even want to talk.
10. I feel very uncomfortable if I have to do phone services or go and interview people because I always feel that there is going to be this barrier that they will not even understand and it gets embarrassing.
11. Sometimes the way that they looked at you make you feel like "you are not talking any sense."
12. May be little bit misunderstanding the words.
13. I am very conscious and I am very well aware of the mistakes that I made in pronunciation and in articulation, and in forming sentences because the way I talk is definitely not native like but I should say I have a very clear understanding of the language barrier.
14. More they get used to your pronunciation and they get to know you they try to understand.
15. Sometimes you say things and they do not understand because of your accent.
16. I do have accent nobody knows and people try to guess.
17. Sometimes I am very self-conscious of it.
18. Sometimes accents actually starts communication starts the conversation, it breaks the ice word.
19. It is hard especially from your own skin.
20. Some words you cannot just master.
21. When I am in a business mood my voice becomes harsher and I know why it is because I am fading the accent and trying not to have such a strong accent so therefore people would do not know quite where I am from and it is not even conscious

22. Thinking of not to be taken seriously because I have a strong accent.
23. People tried to hold me back because I have an accent.
24. I don't have confidence in doing some things because of my accent.
25. I fear that people will not understand, it limits me in a certain way but I have realized in the professional world in at least in the offices and people realize that you have an accent and they make a conscious effort to understand what you are trying to say.
26. Everybody has an accent you have yours I have mine even Americans have accent.
27. It is the nature of me.
28. It's unique about me nothing you can change about it so you should not be yourself down about it.
29. We will never be able to speak perfect English and I would not want to be anyway.
30. I would not be as pro-active about public speaking, being conscious about my accent and I kind of avoid that kind of opportunity and I think part of the reason is because I don't want people having a difficult time understanding me.
31. It really doesn't bother me and I never thought of it.
32. We are so global now it's very much accepted.
31. I would like to get rid of it sometimes I just wanted to blend in not be the person who is different, although I really like my heritage and I would always speak of myself as my country and American I would prefer not to have an accent.
32. As long as people understand what I am saying I do not care.
33. I feel proud because that's part of my identity, I am proud to where I am from and to be one X/American in this country so we can do different languages.
34. I feel okay the problem is other people if they understand it or not.

35. I feel sexy; lots of people say "don't ever lose your accent."
36. Some days I have heavier accent than other days maybe something in the air or I miss my mom.
37. I don't want you to be like me, I don't want me to be like you as long as you speak understandable English.
38. Speaking without an accent is hard.

Coworkers/Subordinates' Behavior

1. I was training a new hire through the process I realized that he thought that I tried making his work more difficult and one point he thought I was sabotaging his work and a lot of time he took me as a hostile person even though I was not.
2. They did not want to give you hard time they would they try to understand.
3. When I talk English to my coworker who is not native speaker we could understand each other but Americans totally got lost.
4. I think they loved me, the girls liked me more because I was like a mother figure because I was older than other workers but some guys feel like they we are guys and smarter than and those guys wanted to be a manager right the way, but ladies would except that they have to wait.
5. I never let anybody on me because you have to be strong, I became an administrative specialist in customer service because many told me that I could not go, that's where I wanted to go.
6. We had every level of education that people on lower spectrum and they speak poor English so this people are not going anywhere either.

7. I had to correct my supervisors all the time, I had people that worked for me that had very poor English, and I had some very good people too.

8. People would not question my ability to writing or speaking.

9. Maybe 9-11 changed thinking about others and it became an issue being a foreign.

10. If they don't understand they will tell you, they kept telling me "you have a small voice you have to shout or you have to speak laud."

11. There are so many internationals in the university setting, so they all treat you the same they are used to having the accent and when I moved out of the university to other professional work, it was more often they were interested in understanding something new that they had not really come to in contact with an international so there is this excitement about trying to understand who you are, and your culture but same time sometimes they don't understand what you are saying.

12. I get more sympathy than criticism.

13. I work with kids, I remember one of little kid looked at me and said "you talk funny" they don't understand the accent and do not know about people from another country, a teenager would kind of mimicking the way I talk and often times I just ignore him and some other staff would address him "that's not polite for you to talk like that."

14. Sometimes they would tell me in class or after class "I am not sure if I get it or not" they would ask for clarification.

15. Sometimes in lecture, people listen to the accent instead of listening what I am talking about, so they just go and sit there and like "oh! Love the way she talks" and then when I asked them questions they cannot recall.

16. At my first job students seemed to be little bit more against to outsiders and even they said in evaluations "why could they not hire an American teacher?" some people said "I cannot understand her at all", some people said "she speaks with an accent but excellent and you can understand everything" so I had both.

17. With students conflicts as they always arrive, they are always tend to go to my department head to discuss situation whether then dealing with me if there is a real conflict or so.

18. They treat the Americans and me the same way.

19. One of my coworker an ESL teacher said "I would treat international people like they are deaf" we were like "No! You don't understand" we don't speak the language but we are not deaf and we are not stupid or dumb and she did not understand what is a different culture and a different language so that really bothers me.

20. Even though I speak the language it was not the same for one of my coworker, knowing that I spoke 2 languages, and she did not so she tried to treat me like her student so that was her approach with me.

21. People say "I wish I could speak another language" they always praise you, you came to a foreign country and they knew what I have been through and most of the time people around me at work would be very supportive and actually few more think highly of you just because to speak another language.

22. I wanted to be perfect and I am not sometimes I stop when I explain something everything is here but it is not coming out the way I wanted to in English then I get frustrated and then it goes in a wrong way so everything is not perfect so there are challenges.

23. When I was first promoted to management they, my own people stop talking to me at first but I really did not let that affect me because I do need them because they were also in my

team they ended up reporting to people who report to me, and I had to show them that although I am now in management I am still who I am but there is a line that line cannot be crossed and I had to establish boundaries but not being snappy about it.

24. I grow older I am less confident than when I was younger so I think before like I was just going blindly and just go for it and did not really mind what people say, but know I like to validate everything.

25. There are some positions that I went for that I did not get in the past but I just look at it like it was not my time so it could be that I was not the right person because of my accent I don't know, you have no way of knowing right. So they could be occasions that I should have been the best person but because of my accent and the way I talk that it was not given to me.

26. Sometimes I blame being a woman so if it was my accent or being a woman?

27. People are always afraid of something that is not known. That's more ignorance that once they get to know you they go like "oh you are not one of them, just I am talking about them" because you have a face so they know you and to me it is just ignorance right. But actually if you really look at it into heart of it, it's the idea of this immigrant but then when they get to know other people from other countries and they liked them then they tell you "it's not you it's the others" but it's actually yes and it is really more about education.

28. Some teasing

Coping with Verbal Conflicts

1. I took positive approach to everything.
2. I would throw their face anytime to make a joke by saying try to do what I do "Can you speak my native language?" that's how I dealt with it.

3. Even after being here many years, people would still tell me ‘I don’t think I quite understand your accent’ so let pardon mine, because they think being funny but I shot them up very quick.

4. You have to develop a thick skin, when you are an immigrant it is a mindset, you know that you are going to face these things, someone is not going to understand you, someone is not going to try to understand you because they just don’t like the fact that you are an immigrant and there is nothing you can do about it, and so you foresee the problems that you are going to face so whenever those conflicts arise you don’t take it too personally.

5. Sometimes I try to speak slowly just a little bit slowly and but more of a mental, it is not their fault, sometimes it is just a different culture you do have a different accent but I we are able to understand them.

6. I was exposed to these all accents to movies, music and internet and it makes a difference but they have not being exposed my accent and it makes it more difficult.

7. Sometimes ignoring works so then they change strategy.

8. If some people just absolutely unreasonable you would just have to give up. I always say you cannot reason with unreasonable people.

9. Any conflicts in general in communication just talk it over.

10. I can still try other ways to explain myself to get up, to get meaning across.

11. In one hand I learned from the process and the other hand I have developed some strategies to address miscommunications.

12. I have learned laughing about myself and I kind of try to mask over it.

13. I have learned not take myself seriously.

14. If I say something and they say "oh! It is not that way" then I make fun of them you say something in my native tongue they try and say "Ah nooo".

15. If I say a word that people do not understand I just repeat it several times until they get it, if still not get it then I spell it out.

16. When it is a sentence or something that I am trying to communicate and if they do not get it I just look for different words to express it.

17. Some words are very complicated say for me and I tried my best to say and they go "what? What do you mean?" and sometimes it makes me embarrassed and because of that I try not to use that word I just try find something else that I can say it better.

18. Some words have different meanings and when people say it I took it like a cuss word and to me it was really offended, so for me at first I was like "she called me what?", and I got mad but when I understood it was not a big of a deal.

Body Language

Differences between the Home Country and US

1. I feel like Americans like to give lots of eye contact that's not something I am not used to.

2. Amount of time to spend to give eye contact is very different in my culture.

3. In my country distance is little bit closer so I am just learning that Americans like to give much more distance when talking.

4. In my country we do not do hugs.

5. Sometimes I do feel uncomfortable receiving hugs from males.

6. Actually in my country the distance between people is very close actually we do not have much distances.

7. In my country we speak louder but here most people speak lower, "do not talk loud that impacts me."

8. The other thing is about food actually, if I bring some food from home that I made I will be careful about the smell of that food I could not believe some other day I brought some thing for lunch and it smells delicious to me but somebody said " what is that" that's kind of thing you don't want to hear.

9. At home we use lots of hand gestures.

10. We smile more and they welcome strangers much better, they are very hospitable.

11. Over there they use their hands while they are talking they have their hand more intimately when they talk.

12. In my country they will understand that you are uncomfortable with the question or conversation by looking at your face.

13. We do the chick thing and so we do not do that at work here.

14. I had to learn not to gesture too much.

15. Because I walk straight and I have square shoulders and they take it for arrogance, so I have been told one time from HR told me that an employee said that I was aloof that was a shocker to me.

16. You do not give things to someone with your left. You don't give something to an adult with your left hand because of respect, because using left hand is disrespectful.

17. I think we are more community based and more flexible in my country, it is more individualized here in the U.S. and then next thing you know they are talking about sexual harassment or something so there is always a line to be more careful here than we would be back home.

18. In my country to laugh really loud it's not all about you it is more about community but here if you laugh loud someone thinks you are being disrespectful "I am working, you are making noise".

19. If I say I am in a meeting that I do not know anybody and I am sitting there and people would not be sitting right next to me most of the time, again, they are not exposed to foreigners, so I don't know if people are afraid that they may not be able communicate with me or whatever the reason. So I do notice people would not sit right next to me right of the way until the chairs were filled and then people move little bit.

20. Americans drink coffee and their coffee is one cup but my people's way of drinking tea is the teapot and 7-8 little cups, so in American way is individualism and my country's way is unite.

21. In other cultures the hierarchy is clearer and here is so blur.

22. When you do not get an answer from Americans, right the way, that is always bad and I had to learn it.

23. I had to learn that Americans are not direct they are trying to hide everything negative and they are coming out with anything positive in your face.

24. Americans have certain body language when they try to shield themselves from any directness of non-Americans, so when they don't want to pursue certain issue they just become quite.

25. In my culture physical body contact is a way to show intimacy, way to show closeness, even sometimes way to show respect.

26. In my country not to stare at each other, not look in each other's eye so we are suppose to look down or ground when we listen to superiors or our supervisors or seniors talk that's the way to show respect.

27. There are lots of different cultural manner that I still continue to do if I am with my folks form my country but here it doesn't make sense.

28. In my country we never call superior by their name we always say Mr. or whatever we never call by name.

29. Most of the people at work more reserved, reserved to death!

30. Here employees would show emotional gestures that you could tell if they are unhappy or if something bothers them or if they angry with you, but they would not say it, they would not communicate and I would confront them.

31. Back home you could shake hands every female and kiss them but not with males.

But here they do the opposite you shake hands and kiss the male but not the female.

Coping with Nonverbal Conflicts

1. Now I am used to giving eye contact when talking.
2. I pay attention to food make sure has any smells.
3. I am a people person and noticed that they like to give hugs and touch each other and I like that and I picked it up very quickly.
4. Here I am talking to you and I am not moving my hands.
5. I tried to understand the difference between our heritage and our way to do it and theirs

6. There is one thing that we have to try to adjust to in this country is to learn not to bring our own culture into the mix because you are in their culture and you have to learn their culture.

7. It became a joke out for my employees that they always knew if I had enough as a manager, you cannot make it seen ever because you will be always be wrong so I learned very quickly that if I had something bothered me I would take off and just go my office.

8. If I have somebody I need to bring in, I bring them away from others you don't ever do a confrontation as a high level of managers or any person.

9. I tried to fit in which means sometimes I would do things that line staff would do and that's my way of getting into support showing and if I keep my own culture probably I would stand up and say "this is your job, you are below me, you are the one doing it" and that might not be perceived as well by your supervisee you know and that is the piece that I make a decision to give up my culture and fit in into this culture.

10. If there is something I feel need to resolve I am trying to phrase it, I am trying to verbalize it but I am also very direct; I say this is the situation, this is where I want to go, where I do not want to go, this is how I think that situation should continue and matter of effectively and if it is doesn't work I move on.

11. I learned and I worked on myself not to allow showing emotion it is hard and I am not successful all the time but I learned not to allow your perception to dictate your feelings.

Appendix E

Curriculum Vitae

HARIKASUKLUN

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EDUCATION

PhD, Management, Emphasis area; Conflict resolutions, Sullivan University, Louisville, KY, Dissertation Title: Professional Immigrant Women in Middle and Large Organizations in the USA: A Phenomenological Study Exploring Communication Conflicts, Advisor: Dr. LaVena Wilkin, 09/2014

MBA, Gordon Ford College of Business, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY, 05/2000

BS, Geography, Ogden College of Science and Engineering, Department of Geography, Western Kentucky, University, Bowling Green, KY, 05/1998

AS, Cartography and Mapping Techniques, Ogden College of Science and Engineering, Department Of Geography, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY, 06/1997

PUBLICATIONS

Suklun, Harika. Strategic Leadership in Government Organizations: Are They Behind? Global Journal of Management and Research, 2012, ISSN 2278-0955-0955

CONFERENCE PAPERS

Suklun, Harika. Is It Time to Go Back Home? Brain Gain to Brain Drain: Immigration Driven Diversity. Paper presented at Midwest Academy of Management in October, 2012

WORK IN PROGRESS

Benefits and Challenges of Telecommuting: Would Employees Participate? In preparation

Deviant Workplace Behavior: Employee Rage to Organization. In preparation

Perception Conflicts, Lexington Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (LAMPO): A Case Study. In preparation

Motivation: Motivation Differences between Private and Public Organizations. In preparation

Retaliation: A Case Study, Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG). In preparation

TEACHING AND TRAINING

Teaching Assistant, Conflict Management, Sullivan University, Louisville, KY, 2013

Reviewing all discussion boards, responding to students' postings, providing additional resources/recommendations to students, asking students follow-up questions, checking posts for proper citations and references and providing APA feedback. Reviewing and grading posts, cases, presentations and peer reviews, preparing lectures for face-to-face meeting

Instructor, Gordon College of Business, Western Kentucky Bowling Green, KY, 2000-2001

Teaching upper level marketing and freshman seminars to undergraduates, setting varied marketing content with innovative teaching methods, setting a marketing case study, using audio-visual materials, delivering one-to-one guidance on project, offering individual and group feedback in written and verbal forms, structuring inside and outside class activities for freshmen, grading students efforts, coordinating with the administration

Chief Cartographic Technician, Trainer, Defense Mapping Agency, Ankara, Turkey, 1987-1992

Training entry-level Cartographic Technicians on mapping techniques and theories, setting varied mapping content with innovative teaching methods, writing learner objectives in coordination with learning goals, testing learners' learning style, delivering one-to-one guidance on hands-on training, offering individual and group feedback in written and verbal forms, evaluating learners' effort

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS & SKILLS

Reviewer, Academy of Management, Southern Management Association and Midwest Academy of Management, 2012-Present

Reviewing research papers for conferences.

Senior Transportation Planner, Lexington Fayette Urban County Government, Lexington, KY, 2001-Present

Coordinating governments to develop transportation model inputs, researching and analyzing employment, population, housing and land use data, conducting socio-demographic research for use in the transportation model and in other long-range planning applications, developing and interpreting travel demand estimates for various transportation land use scenarios, participating in the public involvement process including, respond to public request modeling related information, attending public hearings and meetings, preparing clear, concise and comprehensive technical documents, reports, correspondence, and other written materials for a variety of technical and non-technical audiences, reviewing subdivision applications and making recommendations to either approve or deny, maintaining contact with and liaised with a variety of internal and external contacts and groups concerning general planning trends, community developments and other related development planning matters, assisting citizens in understanding and complying with the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, making public presentations.

Drafter, Warren County Water District, Bowling Green, Ky, 1996-1999

Working on civil and electrical engineering mechanical drafting for waterline projects, assisting certified surveyors in the field, making maps with different scales.

Chief Cartographic Technician, Defense Mapping Agency, Ankara, Turkey, 1979-1987

Working on digitalization of geographic Information for F-16 warplane flight simulation project, managing project of transformation of maps from metric system to US customary units system for US Air Force, supervising work of Cartographic Technicians, retouching negative films before printing, working on a variety of map drawing, edging, and mosaicking for printing such as political, topographic, physical, highway maps and atlases.

IT Skills: Computer Assisted Drafting (CAD), TRANSCAD, GIS software (IDRISI, ATLAS, TIGER, PcArcInfo, ArcView), Adobe, SPSS, Statistica and Microsoft Office

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Academy of Management • American College Personnel Association • Midwest Academy of Management • Society for Human Resources Management • Southern Management Association

HONORS & AWARDS

- Dean's List, Sullivan
- Outstanding Service and Support Award, Western Kentucky University
- Dean's List, Western Kentucky University
- Letter of Commendation, Director, Department of Cartography
- Letter of Commendation, Engineer Colonel, Deputy Commander
- Letter of Commendation, Lieutenant General
- Letter of Commendation, Engineer Captain, Chief, Department of Cartography