Acculturation Experiences of Asian Indian Immigrant Math and Science Teachers in a K-12 Urban School District in Ohio

Loveleen Sharma-Chopra

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ACCULTURATION EXPERIENCES OF ASIAN INDIAN IMMIGRANT MATH AND SCIENCE TEACHERS IN A K-12 URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT IN OHIO

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work first and foremost to three key and important women in my life: my maternal grandmother Late Mrs. Prakash Tiwari, who raised me and instilled in me her values of honesty, integrity and uprightness and an attitude of never giving up; my aunt Mrs. Indu Sharma, who has been a sister, guide, and mentor and, always encouraged me to use my voice; and lastly, to the memory of my late mother, Mrs. Sneh Prabha Sharma, who would have been happy to see me follow in her steps as a fellow educator.

- Thank you.
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ACCULTURATION EXPERIENCES OF ASIAN INDIAN IMMIGRANT
MATH AND SCIENCE TEACHERS IN A K-12 URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT IN
OHIO

LOVELEEN SHARMA-CHOPRA

ABSTRACT

The study examined the acculturation experiences of Asian Indian immigrant
math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district. The study was preceded by a
pilot study in 2008 to develop a protocol for dissertation, which examined the
acculturation experiences of professional Asian Indian females and cultural values
conflict in the United States. The current research investigated if being a math or science
teacher in an urban school district has influenced the participants’ acculturation process
in the United States. Framed in social constructivism theory, the researcher used the
phenomenological approach to investigate the meaning-making process of immigrant
professional teachers in their new social environment. The study explored factors, such as
gender roles, work environment, and cultural values to extrapolate if participants’
perceptions changed regarding these after interacting with the mainstream culture. The
results indicated successful acculturation of the participants by clearly adopting the
values of the host culture, and retaining their own-hence, finding a balanced approach
between the two. The research will benefit the new immigrants, teaching professionals in
K-12, counselors, and school administrators to assist the immigrant populations in
schools and professional environment.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Immigrants in United States have always played a key role in the growth of this nation. United States has become more ethnically and linguistically diverse over the past several years. These individuals from different nations, having the ability to speak more than one language, and along with their diverse backgrounds, have been contributing to the US economy and culture in multiple ways (Bhatia, 2008). The proliferation of Asian Indian immigrants in United States in the past decade has posed a need to speculate the acculturation challenges they might be facing in their new culture. According to U.S. Census (2010), Asian Indians are one of the fastest growing minority groups in United States. It is further projected that this growth will continue over the coming years (Barr, Jefferys, & Monger, 2008). Hence, the influx in this particular population raises a challenge for researchers to understand the factors influencing the acculturation process of this group, which can further assist the lawmakers and other professionals to implement programs and policies for immigrants (Abramson, Trejo, & Lai, 2002).
Acculturation is the process through which people associate themselves with different cultures of other phenomenal groups (Berry, 2006) and adapt to the culture of majority (Kevin & Chun, 2002). During this process, individuals’ own cultures diminish as they try to integrate into the new culture. Acculturation has been categorized as unidimensional (Gordon, 1964) and bidimensional (Dona & Berry, 1994) process. Unidimensional process is seen as immigrants completely assimilating in the cultural, social, and ethnic values of the mainstream culture, “the disappearance of the ethnic group as a separate entity and the evaporation of its distinctive values (Gordon, 1964, p. 81). As unidimensional, acculturation is a continuous process spanning over generations until the descendants of immigrants cannot be distinguished anymore from their counterparts in host culture (Ryder, Alden, & Delroy, 2000).

Contrary to that, researchers, such as Berry (2006) and Kottak (2007) have recognized acculturation as bidimensional, where both of the groups, mainstream, and immigrants’ home culture, influence each other. Kottak (2007) observed acculturation as an exchange of culture between two ethnic groups as they come into contact, whereby, the changes may occur in both groups. He posited that despite the change in original cultural patterns in both groups, they might remain distinct. Berry (2006) has described it as a two-way and bidirectional process, where changes take place at individual as well as group levels. Berry’s (2001) acculturation framework highlighted two dimensions that individuals adopt: Cultural Maintenance, an extent to which an individual maintains his or her home culture; and Contact Participation, an extent to which an individual maintains contact and participation between his home and host culture.
This study adopted Berry’s two-dimensional framework to explore the experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in K-12 environment in an urban school district in Ohio. The first dimension is concerned with retaining or rejecting the individual’s native culture and second dimension pertains to the adoption and rejection of the host culture. Berry has classified the process of acculturation into four categories of assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization, however, the researcher in this study investigated the process of acculturation as whole, where individuals and groups experience the adaptation process when settling into an unfamiliar culture (Chun, 2002).

**Background of the Problem**

Asian Indians bring their original cultural and societal values with them when they move to United States (Das & Kemp, 1997), and these values may be dissimilar to the values of other Asian cultures and societies due to an extensive diversity within Asian countries (Lee & Zane, 1998). In addition, Asian Indians are a heterogeneous group in themselves. Interacting with the new host culture, poses several challenges for these immigrants (Dona & Berry, 1994) ranging from learning a new language to retaining their ethnic identity in a society that is conspicuously different from their own (Berry, 2006). Within this context, everything in their lives might start changing, from their outlook to beliefs, values, and life styles including professional roles and gender roles. Views about parenting, marriage, divorce, religious influences, experiences, and socialization become a convoluted interplay between enculturation (e.g., socialization within one’s own ethnic culture) and acculturation (e.g., socialization to the dominant culture) (Krishner & Meng, 2012).
Asian Indian women usually experience more cultural values conflict than men when they negotiate with the cultural values of societies, the host, and the home (Inman, Constantine, & Ladany, 1999; Kett, 2002). They are expected to uphold the cultural traditions and family unity in addition to fulfilling the duties of care giving, child rearing, and still being moral, obedient, chaste, and subordinate to her husband and family (Abraham, 1999; Bhanot & Senn, 2007; Dasgupta, 1998; Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996; Goel, 2005;). On the contrary, American culture provides more independence to women, and has more progressive and elastic view of gender. Acculturation or exposure to a new culture influences the gender roles; hence, individuals reconstruct their social identities, in their new environment (Gordon, 1995).

These social identities include a newer approach towards gender roles as acculturation is a process of an active learning, constructing new knowledge, meanings, and perceived gender roles through social interactions in the host country (Cooper, Basson & Schaap, 2006; Simpson, 2002). Most of the times, the work sector, may have large influence in perceived gender roles among immigrants in their host country, since the professional environment helps them to adapt to the values of the host country. Kim (2008) found that Asian women’s attitudes towards traditional gender roles in their own culture have altered due to higher career aspirations and active participation in work force in United States. Immigrant women consequently challenge the gender inequality at home once they start contributing financially to assist the family (Ferree, 1987; Kibria, 1990), which might be a sign of acculturation to American gender roles among these women. Chin (2000) notes that this acculturation to American gender roles among Asian women can lead to conflict within family members and confusion within self, because at
home they are expected to fulfill the traditional gender roles of being subservient and docile, and out of home they are taught to be assertive. Other research (Thaker, 2013) has also reported a significant relationship between stress and employment status or income (unemployed or working).

Acculturation process at work place, especially in the teaching field, affects Asian Indian men and women in a manner that necessitates them to embrace multi-cultural practices due to the diverse nature of K-12 setting in terms of both populations of teachers and students (Szeto-Wong, 2003). That may result in positive or negative consequences depending upon the experiences of the individuals in this situation. The K-12 urban setting has its own challenges and problems due to the diverse nature of its student populations: ranging from dearth of resources, high crime rates, and lack of safety, low retention of teachers, and lower academic achievement among students (Johnson, Kardos, Kauffman, Liu, & Donaldson, 2004). Due to such diverse nature of urban schools, researchers (Shure, 2001) have recommended to bring in teachers with diverse backgrounds as well, to match the student populations. Teachers with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can help eradicate racism when interacting with mainstream student populations (Tomlinson, 1990). Lack of racial diversity of teachers in the K-12 setting limits the contact of students of color with adult role models other than their family members, who can relate to and understand their concerns, challenges, and experiences (Pang & Gibson, 2001). In the past decade, this diversity in United States public schools has been achieved by hiring international teachers (Kumek, 2012).

Kumek (2012) shared how United States public schools had been hiring teachers from other countries, including India in 2001. These teachers were hired by an urban
school district in Ohio in 2001 due to lack of qualified candidates to fill in the positions of math and science teachers, the district had to turn “to India and tried to recruit teachers with the offer of a work visa and a U. S. salary,” (Moulthrop, Calegari, and Eggers, 2006, p 263). According to the officials, they were left with no other option other than to hire qualified teachers from India to teach math and science at this particular school district. Moulthrop, Calegari, & Eggers further explained that most people with math and science degrees in United States turned to business and industry due to lucrative offers in the form of salary and benefits in comparison to the teaching jobs. According to Crumpet (2001) and, the district sent a team to India to interview teachers and worked closely with recruitment and placement agencies for the process to be successful.

However, there are not many immigrant teachers or teachers with diverse backgrounds in the schools in United States. With the influx in Asian population in United States, there has been significant increase in the numbers of Asian student population in K-12 schools; on the other hand, there are only 1.8% Asian American teachers in US classrooms according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2013, Table 209.10). Being a minority may not work in favor at times and similar to other teachers of color in K-12 setting, Asian American teachers also experience challenges related to race and culture (Milner, 2010). This may provide a valuable insight as to why Asian American teachers are reported to have higher rate of career dissatisfaction in comparison to their American White coworkers (Gordon, 1997). Despite facing such challenges and dissatisfaction, the foreign-born and educated teachers have a dedication to work in their profession in their new host country (Janusch (2014). These teachers have embraced their professional acculturation experiences as
continuous process in comparison to an endpoint, and hence incorporated the best of both worlds, of their past and their current experiences as in hybrid (Bhabha, 1998). This may help provide these teachers a sense of self-worth and self-esteem, of being accepted in the professional setting of their host country (Bhatia, 2007).

**Theoretical Framework**

This study used the theoretical framework of Vygotsky’s (1978) social constructivism that views learning as social and cultural process taking place in an individual’s environment (Dalsgaard, 2005). According to Vygotsky, “learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function” (1978, p. 90). Hence, according to this view, an individual’s learning primarily takes place through his or her culture and society. Therefore, individuals construct meanings of their reality, learning, and knowledge through their culture (Kukla, 2000). Learners come to a new situation or social context holding previous knowledge, skills, expectations, memories, and misconceptions, and make sense of their experiences to fit them into their mental model of the world. In the same way, when individuals from other countries interact with their new environment, they create their own unique meanings about themselves, others, and their environment (Clark, 1998).

Vygotsky’s social constructivism theorized that culture and context are significant factors in forming understanding, and learning is viewed as “development of higher level psychological processes occurring” through social interactions, and then being internalized (Bryceson, 2007, p 191). Social constructivism is based on specific assumptions about reality, knowledge, and learning, and learners have to be involved actively in the learning process (Cooper, Basson, & Schaap, 2006). Learners and society are interconnected and
for individuals in different contexts, construction of social meanings involves intersubjectivity, which means that individuals share a common understanding and interests, and social constructivism is applied to understand this learning process (Woo & Reeves, 2007). Immigrants develop and contextualize their own meanings of their surroundings by using their existing knowledge and constructing new meanings in a new social and cultural environment, which can lead to mental stress and conflict at times (Berry, 2005). This conflict is usually about maintaining one’s own ethnic identity, and at the same time, identifying with the mainstream culture. Researchers (Berry, 2005; Sam & Berry, 1995) have referred to this conflict as an acculturation process, where individuals go through certain changes in behaviors and attitudes.

The study anchored on the notion that acculturation is a dual process where changes occur at group as well as individual levels (Berry, 2005). As illustrated in Figure 1, group variations refer to changes in social and cultural practices, while individual metamorphosis involve shift in behaviors and attitudes. However, there is a difference in the ways as to how these changes take place at two levels (Kim, Atkinson, and Yang, 2008). Figure 1 explains how navigating through relatively new aspects of immigrant life in the host country can lead to notable changes where an individual negotiates between his or her old identity filled with the values and beliefs of native country that he or she grew up with, and the newer one that he or she is adapting for survival. This could result into a harmonious settlement into the new culture, leading to a restructured identity, adapting different aspects in a balanced way, or lead to conflict and stress, where an individual may not be ready to adapt to certain changes and may feel torn between the two distinct cultures.
From this perspective, acculturation refers to a psychological process in which immigrants develop a new national identity (Deaux, 2006). Behavioral shifts in acculturation refer to an individual’s ability to participate fully in a new and different society, while psychological acculturation refers to a change in an individual’s self-concept to sustain cultural identity and include a new national identity. In either way, behavioral, psychological, or group acculturation takes place in an immigrant’s social setting, and that
is how knowledge is constructed through social interactions among individuals and not isolated individuals (Simpson, 2002).

![Diagram of cultural and psychological acculturation levels](image)

*Figure 2. A general framework for understanding acculturation. Adapted from “Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures” by J. W. Berry, 2005 International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 29, 703. Copyright 2005 by Elsevier Ltd. Adapted with permission.*

Berry (2005) also proposed an acculturation model that shows the strategies that individuals use in their group-to-group communications. This model has two concepts central to its existence: maintenance of one’s own culture and identity, and the ability to identify with the societies wherein they live. Since it is a bi-dimensional model, it anchors on myriad acculturation outcomes, which involve an individual’s identity and how they are assimilated or acculturated.
Berry (2005) explains that the levels of acculturation can manifest itself into two ways, immersion in or adoption of the dominant society and retention; or immersion in the ethnic society which results in four various acculturation statuses, assimilated, integrated, separated, or marginalized. One is considered assimilated if one is less immersed in the ethnic society and fully immersed in the dominant society; integrated, if an individual is fully immersed in both the dominant and ethnic society. Moreover, one is considered separated if he or she is completely immersed in the ethnic society, and repudiated from the dominant society. Finally, according to this theory, one is considered marginalized, if there is a lack of immersion in both the dominant and ethnic society.

These different phases of acculturation can also characterize an individual identity for immigrants, and the cultural value conflict if any, depending upon the level of immersion in ethnic/cultural group or the culture of host country. Awad (2010) in his
study described that Arab/Middle Eastern Americans reported lower levels of dominant society immersion and higher levels of discrimination. Consequently, Asian Indians may feel the same conflict, especially Asian Indian women, as media in general has represented them in a different manner than women in western countries- in their food habits, in their dressing style, in the religious and cultural values in regard to marriage and dating (Inman, Constantine, & Ladany, 1999). Moreover, as is the case with any immigrant population, Asian Indian immigrants usually bring with them a gear and baggage of their native culture and customs, and struggle in retaining their ethnic identity, that they hope to pass on to the next generation, and at the same time gaining a newer one that functions well in their new social environment (Sapru, 2006).

A set of researchers (Sodowsky & Carey, 1988; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993) noted that first-generation Asian Indians tend to adopt the alteration model of acculturation in their development of ethnic identity. LaFromboise et al. (1993) described the alteration model of acculturation as a process whereby individuals are assumed to “know and understand two cultures,” (p. 399) and individuals have the ability to alter their behavior in different social situations. Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil (1981) reported that these individuals tend to easily adopt the interactions and dress etiquettes in their professional roles or work places, while at the same time holding onto core values, of food preferences, family, and religion. It would significantly help if the immigrants were exposed to the culture of their host society beforehand through media. Somani (2008) in her dissertation study found that prior knowledge of the dominant society helped the immigrants in a positive acculturation process.
More specifically, in terms of gender, prior knowledge of their new culture will help these immigrants understand the gender identity in their new society, since it has been considered socially constructed by some social scientists. The social constructivists view gender as socially constructed and therefore, they do not consider biological differences as the basis for it (Anderson, Logio & Taylor, 2005). Thus, they believe that society can pass on gender expectations through various processes and behaviors. Individuals assume their gender roles and responsibilities as assigned by the society and continue fulfilling those until they encounter different experiences in another culture or society than their own. Smith (2016) has argued that gender is the result of social conditioning and has been perpetuated and imposed on individuals, especially women. Davis (2002), in her study of gender roles, described how identity formation depends on “…the cultural, social, and political context in which these processes occur,” (p. 509). Therefore, it is possible that when individuals move to a different society than the one they are living in, they can adopt newer gender roles and identities over time.

Along with family, schools and communities can affect how children learn assigned or perceived gender roles in a society, since these roles are influenced by an individual’s sociocultural experiences and interactions throughout his or her development (Schneider, Gruman & Coutts, 2005). It is probable to see a shift in gender roles if the individuals are exposed to different social norms than their own. Crossman, Stith, & Bender (1990) and Haj-Yahia (2003) have found a positive relationship between acculturation and less patriarchal (egalitarian) gender role behaviors. Lower levels of acculturation indicate less egalitarian views resulting in strict, conservative, and rigid attitudes towards gender roles (Bhanot & Senn, 2007). This aforementioned study also
noted that length of residency in United States is positively related to higher levels of acculturation. On the contrary, Yoshihama, Blazevski, and Bybee (2014) found that there was no relationship between study participants’ length of residency in the United States and perceived attitudes towards gender roles. However, their study found significant association between the individuals’ length of residency in United States and their attained education, which in turn promotes liberal gender role attitudes and less patriarchal behaviors. The researcher in this study sought to explore if the study participants had similar or different experiences in regard to gender roles attitudes as stated in these previous research studies.

Kaplan & Grewal (2006) described that individuals are categorized as males or females based on current and historical societal norms and hence, they adhere to fulfillment of the roles as laid out by their societies. In addition to that, cultural and religious beliefs also play a vital role in social construction of gender roles, such as individuals as men and women, may have their own responsibilities, and they may not have the freedom to switch roles.

Gordon (1995) affirmed that acculturation influences the gender roles as the “societal forces encourage change” (p. 60), and individuals reconstruct their social identities in their new environment. The above-mentioned study further revealed that immigrant women from certain cultures acquire more freedom to live their lives the way they choose after moving to United States in comparison to when they are in their home countries. Since during the acculturation process individuals are involved actively in the learning process, they construct new knowledge, meanings, and identities through social interactions, and some of these may be their perceived gender roles in the host country
(Simpson, 2002; Cooper, Basson, & Schaap, 2006). The researcher in the current study explored if the study participants viewed their gender roles differently in their current society in the United States in comparison to the gender roles that they experienced and perceived in their home countries.

Hence, this theoretical framework assisted the researcher to understand the various interactions of culture, society, gender roles, and identities that the study participants encountered during their acculturation process. This provided the researcher an understanding of study participants’ meaning making processes of their new environment and experiences.

**Statement of the Problem**

There is a deficiency of empirical research illuminating the acculturation experiences of Asian Indian Immigrant math and science teachers in K-12 urban schools in Ohio. The existing studies on Asian Indians either focus on the acculturation of Asians as a group (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008) or focus on the academic achievement of Asians as minority group in schools (Sue & Okazaki, 1990; Qian & Shah, 2015). Researchers have studied cultural values conflict of Asian Indians when confronted with the cultural values of the host country (Inman, Constantine, Ladany, 1999), and changed expectations in gender roles, parenting, and marital practices (Inman, Howard, Beaumont, Walker, 2007). These studies have explored the acculturation process of Asians and Asian Indians in United States, however, none of the studies focused on the Asian Indian immigrant professionals in K-12 setting.

Singh (2008) in her pilot study reported that Asian Indian immigrant female teachers went through a cultural shock after being thrown into a K-12 urban school
environment in Ohio without any previous cultural training. Not only would such experiences would make it hard for these immigrants to adapt to the mainstream culture, it would also leave negative impressions for their future professional life. Though studies have emphasized providing support to these immigrants to ease their acculturation process, there is a limited body of research on helping immigrant professionals, especially teachers adjust to their new work environments without feeling like outsiders. Deters (2006) reported that immigrant teachers tend to be more successful in their career when they are accepted by their community. At the same time, the new immigrant teachers also have to be flexible and receptive to their new host culture.

Negative experiences at the work place can add to the acculturative stress among immigrants. Stephen (2011) emphasized that most Americans may feel threatened with the influx of number of immigrants and have perceived negative attitudes towards them. This prejudice towards immigrants becomes worse during the times of economic hardships (Z´arate, Garcia, Garza, and Hitlan, 2004) leading people of mainstream culture expressing negative attitudes towards immigrants regardless of their cultural backgrounds. Z´arate and Quezada (2011) expressed concerns regarding studies failing to offer “solutions to ease negative reactions towards immigrants,” (p 162).

The researcher in current study had assumed that the acculturation experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers, males and females, in urban K-12 schools in Ohio would be different from the above-mentioned research. The immigrant professionals who moved to United States for better career choices and life styles (Singh, 2008) may have had challenges when encountered with certain prejudices and negative attitudes during their professional and social interactions in the host culture. The
prevalent stereotypes against Asian Indian community among the mainstream inhabitants may have had a negative impact on how these new immigrants perceive the cultural values of their host country. Given this gap in literature, this study was conducted to extrapolate the myriad aspects of lives of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district in Ohio. The researcher explored the meaning making process of these Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in K-12 urban school district in Ohio, using phenomenology approach (Creswell, 2013) within the framework of social constructivism (Dalsgaard, 2005; Vygotsky, 1978).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to explore and understand as to how these Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district located in Ohio, construct the meanings of their new status in mainstream culture based on their professional experiences. This research focused on the creation of knowledge, learning, and experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in K-12 urban school district located in Ohio. The study investigated whether being a math or science teacher in K-12 urban school district influences their acculturation process in the United States. It explored the factors in K-12 environment and experiences of participants in the mainstream culture along with strategies adapted to cope with challenges, if any and, benefits of such strategies for other people in the similar situations. The study also explored if and how being a math or science teacher in certain urban school district would change participants’ perceptions of their lives, within their own culture, and within the host culture.
**Research Questions**

The research questions for this study stemmed from the researcher’s interest and curiosity in exploring the life experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in K-12 urban school district located in Ohio. The researcher believes that her work experience in the same urban school district as a teacher is responsible for change in her outlook, personality, and life aspirations. Therefore, her curiosity invoked to explore if other people with similar cultural background and in similar professional environment had experiences similar to those of the researcher. This idea led the researcher to more specific interest of focusing on primarily reconnoitering the meaning making experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in the same urban school district in Ohio. As per in line with Merriam (2002), “In crafting the research problem, you move from the general interest, curiosity, or doubt about a situation to a specific statement to the research problem. In effect, you have to translate your general curiosity into a problem that can be addressed through research” (p 11).

The research aimed at answering the following overarching question: How does working in a K-12 setting influence the acculturation process for Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban school district located in Ohio? To answer this question, three research questions were formed:

1. How do the experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban K-12 setting in Ohio influence their acculturation process and cultural values?
2. How do Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district located in Ohio construct meanings of their new roles, responsibilities, and identities in their new socio-cultural environment?

3. How do the Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district perceive their gender influencing their expected roles and responsibilities in their professional and personal lives?

**Significance of the Study**

As previously mentioned and cited in this chapter, various studies have been conducted on the acculturation process of Asian Indians and the factors that impede this process (Farver et al., 2002; Sodowsky & Carey, 1988). However, none of these studies focuses on the acculturation experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in K-12 urban school districts and the factors that accelerate the acculturation process of any of the participants. Most of the research studies are quantitative, lacking in-depth details on the effect of working as an Asian Indian teacher in the K-12 environment, and more so in an urban school district, on the acculturation process. The use of a qualitative approach aided in overcoming these shortcomings in current research and add to the existing knowledge for the school administration, so they can provide the needful professional development to help employees in similar circumstances as the study participants to be more successfully integrated in their professional lives.
This study will also help Western researchers and other South East Asians to understand the different cultural views that Asian Indian professional immigrant men and women hold. By understanding these cultural views, the other Asian men and women intending to migrate will be prepared to certain extent in terms of what to expect from the host culture in and, what strategies could be employed to cope with differences and conflict in cultural values, if any (Dona and Berry, 1994). The study further elucidates the effect of immigration on the professionals, especially the ones in K-12 environment, and specifically for math and science teachers from the Asian Indian background placed in urban environments. By exploring the experiences of Asian Indian immigrants in K-12 environment, this study is beneficial to potential immigrants from the Asian community in general, and education administrators at large.

Summary

Chapter one introduced the topic of the acculturation process of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in K-12 urban school district located in Ohio, and its implications for researchers, other Asian Indian teachers, and professionals settled and working in the United States. The background and statement of the problem clearly lays out the ground for this research study using evidence from the existing research. The purpose and significance of the study have been highlighted along with the research questions that this study answers. In addition, the operational definitions of the terms to be used are explained. Research of this nature would contribute to the body of knowledge about immigrant teachers and their challenges in US schools.
Operational Definition of Terms

*Acculturation* - An acculturation is a dual process where changes occur at group as well as individual levels (Berry, 2005). This is the process of both psychological and cultural changes caused by socializing with people of a different culture.

*Asian Indian* – The sample is distinguished as Asian Indian and not Indian, so that the term is not confused with Native American-Indian. This term refers to an Asian of Indian descent (U.S. Census, 2010).

*Assimilation* - A process through which individuals acquire new information and integrate that information with their existing ideas and beliefs. In this study, this term has been used to explain as “the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social differences” (Alba & Nee, 2003, p. 11)

*Culture* - This is a collection of beliefs, customs, and arts of a particular society. “A culture is an organization or integration of conventional understandings. It is, as well, the acts and the objects, in so far as they represent the type characteristic of that society, which express and maintain these understandings,” (Redfield, 1947, p. 298).

*Cultural Values Conflict* - This is a type of conflict that occurs because of the difference in cultural values across various communities. Individuals when brought up and socially exposed to traditional culture of a society feel a clash of values after experiencing different cultural values than their own after moving to a new country or society (Varghese & Jenkins, 2009).
**Immigrant** – An individual who migrates to another country and settles there permanently. An individual, who moved to United States during his lifetime, and but is a citizen of another country through birth (Wadhwa, Saxenian, Rissing, & Gereffi, 2007).

**Professional** - This term refers to a person who has special training and skills in a certain discipline and this individual uses these special skills and training to earn his or her livelihood.

**Teacher**- It refers to a professional who has special skills and education to educate others in certain discipline, in school or a college environment.

**Professional environment** - This is the surrounding in which a professional operates. It could be termed as an individual’s work setting.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The increasing number of immigrants moving to United States, and then settling down here permanently over the past decades has evoked curiosity among social researchers to understand the factors that facilitated their acculturation process. Asian Indians have been among the top emergent ethnic groups in the recent years to migrate to United States as students, professionals, or sponsored family members of existing settled immigrants (Inman, Constantine, Ladany, 1999). Where their presence has contributed to the advanced professional fields in USA, it has also brought to attention the challenges this ethnic group faces as they encounter the culture of their new host country (Martinez-Herrera, 2008; Shachar, 2006). Researchers have focused on understanding the challenges and cultural values conflict that Asian Indians face during their acculturation process (Bhugra, 2004; Inman, Howard, Beaumont, Walker, 2007; Sharma, Slate, & Nichter, 2014), however, there is little research to understand if their work setting has influenced their adjustment course of their new surroundings. Therefore, the purpose of
this study is to explore and understand how these Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district in Ohio construct the meanings of their new status in United States based on their professional experiences.

The main question to guide this study is: How does working in a K-12 setting influence the acculturation process for Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban school district located in Ohio? Three research questions were framed to answer the main question:

1. How do the experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban K-12 setting in Ohio influence their acculturation process and cultural values?

2. How do Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district located in Ohio construct meanings of their new roles, responsibilities, and identities in their new socio-cultural environment?

3. How do the Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district perceive their gender influencing their expected roles and responsibilities in their professional and personal lives?

This study used J.W. Berry’s bidimensional model of acculturation, who has done extensive work in the areas of cross-cultural psychology, such as, intercultural relations. Berry (1997) proposed that acculturation is a bidirectional process, and when individuals interact with a different culture than their own, there are changes that take place at
individual as well as group levels. At individual level, there is a modification in behavior and attitudes, and at group level, the changes are in social and cultural practices. The literature review was evaluated and selected based on Berry’s (2007) bidimensional acculturation model. For the purpose of the study, it was explored with other factors and divided into the following sections: (1) Trends in Immigration (2) Immigration and Acculturation (3) Gender and Acculturation (4) Professional Environment (work setting) and Acculturation and (5) K-12 Environment in Urban Setting.

These four sections seemed appropriate to review the literature for a comprehensive investigation to support the purpose of the study and seek answers to the research questions. The following key words were used to search the significant research data published: trends in immigration, immigration and Asian Indians, Asian Indians and acculturation, acculturation and job/work/professional setting, Asian Indians and gender roles, acculturation and gender roles, urban schools and acculturation, acculturation and immigrant teachers/professionals, and K-12 urban school and immigrant teachers.

**Trends in Immigration**

Historically, immigration in United States focused on low skilled individuals moving to work as labor force for better life aspirations (Esses, Deaux, Lalonde, & Brown, 2010). Among these laborers, there were several Asians who moved to United States to work as laborers in the plants; the planters used to blend their workers (such as, Chinese, Japanese and Portuguese) to keep the price of labor down (Takaki, 1989). Over the decades, trends in immigration to United States changed drastically as there was a surge of highly skilled and educated professionals instead of low skilled laborers from
Asia to work in the fields of medicine, science, and engineering. Many companies want to employ these highly skilled professionals from overseas to fill positions requiring specialized skills and training in advanced fields that they may not be able to recruit from within the country (Martinez-Herrera, 2008; Shachar, 2006). Thirteen percent of the immigrants moved to United States for employment reasons ((Stairs, Donnell & Dunn, 2012) over the past several years.

Along with aspirations for better life opportunities, there have been other factors influencing the migration movements in United States, from various parts of the world, and some of these factors are not as alluring as it seems. Social and political unrest in several countries over the past decades is attributed for the unsolicited, sudden, and unwilling immigration for some communities. (Karl, Naina, Simon, Vivienne, & Patrick, 2015). According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2015), over 65,000 individuals have been resettled through resettlement agencies in different parts of the country. Apart from the refugee resettlement programs, two-thirds of the naturalized immigrants in United States in 2008 were accounted for family reunification (Carr & Tienda, 2013). These immigrants predominantly originated from Mexico, India, China, and the Philippines. Another major reason for immigration has been for humanitarian cause, which accounts for 17% of the total percentage according to Stairs et al. 2012).

According to U.S. Census 2010, the Asian population has grown at a faster rate than the total U.S. population over the last decade, and among these, Asian Indians form the third largest immigrant group, falling slightly below Chinese and Philippines. In addition, Asian Indians represent the largest growth percentage among Asian immigrants, with a growth percentage of 70% in 2010 alone. This high growth rate of Asian Indians
created a need to study factors that lead to their acculturation to support the research programs in the planning and policy establishment matters regarding education and health of Asian professionals (Le, 2007).

**Immigration and Acculturation**

Regardless of the myriad reasons due to which these individuals have to leave their homelands, all immigrants experience a state of confusion as they are plunged between two conflicting cultures, home culture, and the host culture (Ng, 2008). There is a sense of uncertainly as these individuals begin their journeys in their new culture and may have to learn, new modes of behavior and values, dissimilar from their own. In most cases, the confusion may be about day-to-day routines such as, buying food and clothes, modes of entertainment, customs, and values, since most of these practices may differ from their own. This difference leads to a challenging task of deciding to either adapt or isolate from the culture of the new area of residence among the new immigrants (Sharma, 2005).

The state of uncertainty and confusion gradually reduces as they learn to adapt to the new world around them by learning new social behaviors and adapting cultural values (Martínez & Valenzuela, 2006). The process of adjusting to new modes of cultural behavior and values is termed as acculturation. It involves a change of behavior and adaption of the new culture. Hence, immigration is not a just a process of moving physically from one place to another, instead it involves, “a dynamic cognitive and emotional process of accessing, understanding and adopting specific aspects or characteristics of a new culture” (Miller, Sorokin, Wang, Feetham, Choi & Wilbur, 2006,
p.135), termed as acculturation. Berry (2002) explained that the acculturation process involves changes taking places at various levels: individual, and group. The group changes refer to familial, societal, and cultural, and occur at the same time as individual ones.

Most recent literature on acculturation regards it as a socio-cultural and psychological process of adaptation of an individual that occurs during intercultural contact (Berry, 2005). The change and adaption of new customs, alteration in political views and affiliations, and refitting the economic aspects, form the basis of socio-cultural transformations in the life of individuals as they pave way through their new host culture (Sharma, 2005). This process of making changes and familiarizing with may not seem that daunting initially, however, as the time passes, even the simpler things, such as adjusting to the diet of mainstream culture could be mentally taxing. Research suggests that being accustomed to food in the western world could be challenging for older South Asians, where as it is an easy adaptation for the younger generations (Gilbert & Khokhar, 2008), eventually leading to unhealthy patterns in life style, especially among school going children (Somani, 2008). In the same research study, it was also noted that religion plays an important role when it comes to diet, as it may impose certain dietary restriction for individuals. Such as, Hindus from South Asia were primarily vegetarians and would not even touch eggs, fish or meat, and even the ones who were not vegetarian, would still not consume beef, for the same reason that Muslims are forbidden to eat pork. This is one such example, where seemingly simple things like diet pose as a conflict, hence, there are many other adjustments in the lives of immigrants that require modification of behaviors in one or another way. These could be psychological adaptations requiring changes in the
attitude of individuals towards the process of acculturation; or group changes, occurring over the span of years or even generations as two cultures interact with each other (Berry, 2005).

Where group changes deal with the socio-cultural aspect of two cultures coming into contact and influencing each other, at psychological and individual plane, it is about individuals deciding their extent of participation in the mainstream culture, and extent of maintaining the social and cultural norms of their own culture. Therefore, changes at both levels cannot take place independent of each other. The decision-making process in this situation could be mentally taxing and could lead to acculturative stress (Taratovsky, 2009; Sirin, Ryce, & Sirin, 2014) and dissonance among individuals affecting them in many areas of their lives: familial, financial, religious, and psychological (Mui & Young Kang, 2006). Henceforth, not all immigrants may develop strategies to adapt to their new surroundings, some of them may feel more depressed, lonely, and isolated due to the dissimilarities between the mainstream and their own culture (Weisman, Feldman, Gruman, Rosenberg, Cchamorro, & Belozersky, 2005). Despite the interaction and changes in customs and values between the groups, these immigrants retain their distinctive nature (Stairs et al., 2012).

On the contrary, researchers (Kim & Kim, 2013) have also contended that acculturative stress may not necessarily result in negative consequences and in fact, may generate personal growth. Kim & Kim (2013) further reported that older Korean immigrant showed characteristics of resilience and developed positive coping strategies when faced with the challenges of adaptation to the new culture. According to Adler (1975), “paradoxically, the more one is capable of experiencing new and different
dimensions of human diversity, the more one learns of oneself” (p. 22), which implies that interaction of individuals with diverse and dissimilar backgrounds expedites personal growth. Another study supported this viewpoint and described how international students gained insight about themselves and engaged in more social activities during acculturation process (Moores & Popadiuk, 2011).

**Contrasting Views of Acculturation**

United States being a host to multiple ethnic and racial groups from different parts of the world for a long time now, has always attracted the social researchers to study the acculturation experiences of these immigrant populations. To study the cultural adaptation process of these individuals, researchers use some kind of acculturation model or scale to comprehend the differences of cultural values within ethnic groups as they undergo the process of acculturation, and their impact on an individual’s psychological wellbeing. During this extrapolation, researchers discovered their own theories and viewpoints regarding acculturation, dissimilar or similar to each other, and further supported by corresponding views in other ongoing research studies. Despite the differing viewpoints on acculturation theories, majority of the initial research on acculturation by sociologists and anthropologists contends that acculturation is a “process of change that occurs when individuals from different cultures interact and share a common geographical space following migration, political conquest, or forced relocation,” (Organista, Marín, & Chun, (2010), p. 101). With that being asserted, it is important to note that these researchers have different beliefs as to how the acculturation process takes place in an individual’s life.
Among the several competing and contrasting views, there are two viewpoints or models that emerged as more popular among the most researchers: acculturation as a unidimensional model (Gordon, 1964), and acculturation as a bidimensional model (Berry, 1994) or multifaceted. The unidimensional viewpoint explains acculturation as a complete immersion into the mainstream culture where individuals relinquish their own cultural and social values. The contenders of this model posit that immigrants acquire the beliefs, values, and norms of their new environment, but do not hold on to their original ones. According to propagators of this model, “Unidimensional models are based on the implicit assumption that change in cultural identity takes place along a single continuum over the course of time,” (Ryder, Alden, Paulhus, 2000, p.49). The concept of unidimensional model was initially developed by Gordon (1964) as an assimilation model theorizing that it is necessary for an individual to surrender his or her heritage (homeland culture) cultural values to adjust in the mainstream culture.

It has been an assumption among Americans that the preliminary European immigrants had adopted this acculturation model to resettle in United States (Schildkraut, 2007), where changes occur only in one direction, from their own culture to the mainstream culture. However, the conceptual limitations of unidimensional model have drawn severe criticism for eliminating the possibility of intercultural contact and deeming that homeland culture does not play any role in the adjustment and adaptation to the new society and culture (Chun, Organista, & Marin, 2003). Subsequent research materials reveal that total assimilation of the immigrant population may never occur since the concept of acculturation is a multifaceted subject (Organista, Marin, & Chun, 2010). According to the supporters of this view (Berry, 1980), acculturation is a bi-directional
process, which involves sharing and exchange of customs and values between the interacting societies. Berry (1980) introduced the bidimensional model of acculturation explicitly arguing that adapting to the mainstream culture, and retaining the homeland culture, are two independent dimensions. Therefore, individuals do not necessarily need to replace their own cultural values and beliefs that they are born into or grown up with the values and beliefs of the host culture (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010).

The first dimension is Cultural-Maintenance, which indicates the degree of maintenance of an individual’s original culture in a multicultural setting. The second-dimension is the Contact-Participation indicating the degree of participation and sharing between the original and the host cultural groups. Cultural Maintenance is usually demonstrated by a small group of conservative immigrants keen on retaining most of their original customs and values. On the contrary, Cultural Participation is more prevalent than Cultural Maintenance as most immigrants struggle to adapt to the culture of the new area of residence (D'Innocenzo et al., 1992). The two-dimensional approach categorizes acculturation of any immigrant group into four categories, of assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization (Stairs et al., 2012). Assimilation involves total abandoning of one’s original cultural values and habits in favor of the cultural values and habits of the host country. In Integration, an individual retains some vital concepts of his or her original culture and tries to adopt some cultural values and habits of the host country (Szeto-Wong, 2003). Separation is an extreme strategy that involves clinging to one’s original culture while avoiding any form of contact with the host or majority culture to the best of one’s ability (Berry, 2005). On the other hand,
marginalization is a strategy in which an individual neither adopts the new culture nor retains his or her original culture (Stairs et al., 2012). These acculturation model categories are crucial to understand as to what strategies Asian Indian immigrants would adopt (Thaker, 2013).

Some acculturation research suggests that immigrants have a choice about the strategies they want to adopt to facilitate the acculturation process, however, this is usually not the case since the choice of strategies also depends upon other factors, demographic or contextual (Schwartz et al. 2010). Such as, when Asian Indians couples who moved to United States around 40 years ago, had to learn a new language – American English, hence, they were forced to learn the new cultural system (Somani, 2008). Therefore, at times, some immigrants may feel the pressure to adapt to their mainstream culture, without having a choice. On the contrary, the same study revealed how several Asian Indians in the United States stayed connected to their culture by creating diasporic communities.

Other research studies have suggested that host culture or the dominant culture plays an integral role in the acculturation process of new immigrants since it depends upon the welcoming or unwelcoming attitudes of the members of the dominant culture as to how the newer members (immigrants) of the society perceive their adaptation strategies (Bhugra, 2004; Miwa, 2009). It has been conceptualized that acculturation process is easy and flexible in the multicultural societies as opposed to the unicultural ones, since it promotes cultural pluralism (Berry, 2011). Cultural pluralism is where different ethnic and cultural groups live together, practicing their traditional values and beliefs, and those of the mainstream culture (Brooks, 2002). Hence, it is believed that
cultural plural societies would be easier to adapt to, and there would be less perceived
stress because of the positive and warm attitude of the host society. On the contrary, in
the unicultural societies, individuals have only two choices, either to immerse in the
mainstream culture and give up their own or resist the host culture and are in opposition
to it (Padilla, 1980).

Therefore, a cultural plural society helps with the adjustment process in the new
culture, and immigrants experience positive adaptation. This aforementioned study
(Miwa, 2009) also reported that the new immigrants were expected to adopt the
mainstream culture in public, for example, housing and work ethics by the members of
dominant society (Euro-Americans), but were encouraged to retain their ethnic and
cultural values and beliefs in private (at home). In such cases, immigrants tend to adopt
either integration or assimilation strategies (Organista et al., 2003; Needham et al., 2016),
contrastingly the rejection of immigrants often leads to either separation or
marginalization (Somani, 2008).

Berry’s model of acculturation has also been criticized for various reasons and
generalizations regarding experiences of immigrants’ adaptation process to the new
culture. Molinsky (2013) in his research on cultural retooling established that Berry’s
acculturation strategies (1997, 2003) has only focused on individual characteristics to
study the cultural adaptation process. Such as, individuals are classified, “in terms of the
single, core strategy that they use for reconciling their native heritage with that of the new
culture,” instead of “examining processes of adaptation, or how these processes might
unfold over time,” (p. 684). Hence, Berry’s work does not provide scope to understand
how these individuals sustain over time in their host culture.
Schwartz et al. (2010) argued that Berry’s integration strategy is similar to biculturalism (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Schwartz et al. 2010), and these researchers propagated that biculturalism is of multiple types. Hence, there is a possibility of various subcategories to Berry’s proposed strategy of integration, instead of clustering this adaptation process just under one main approach. Second, succeeding researchers have questioned Berry’s marginalization strategy due to lack of clarity and support evidence, of immigrants constructing a cultural and social identity without representing home or host cultures (Del Pilar & Udasco, 2004). In addition, Rudmin (2003, 2006) configured that Berry’s acculturation model actually represents only one kind of acculturation, since all the four categories proposed in the model group under single element questioning the construct validity of the model. However, these researchers have accepted Berry’s work as the most prominent body of research in the field of acculturation, and were inspired by it to build the concept of biculturalism (Schwartz & Zambaonga, 2008; Rudmin, 2003, 2006; Chia & Costigan, 2006).

There have been several other acculturation theories in addition to the ones discussed above, such as, interactive acculturation (Bourhis, Moise, Perrault & Senecal, 1997), and biculturalism (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Schwartz et al. 2010). However, these theories did not gain as much attention. Since the inception of researchers’ interest in the individuals’ acculturation patterns and strategies during early 20\(^{th}\) century (Park, 1950; Gordon, 1964), until today, two models of acculturation have emerged as more widely held in the research of acculturation (Williams & Arrigo, 2006). Therefore, the emphasis has been on these two for comparative views on acculturation. Berry’s (2005) acculturation model suggests four approaches and categories as to how
immigrants process meanings of their surroundings in the new culture, and that would be helpful in guiding this study about Asian Indians’ cultural adjustment process in United States (Krishnan & Berry, 1992).

**Asian Indians and Acculturation**

As discussed, multiple factors influence the acculturation process, more so in the case of Asian Indians, who come from a diverse environment in their homeland. India itself is so divergent, with various subcultures, regions, languages, and religions across India (Kankipati, 2012); hence, it would be obvious to assume that this ethnic group may not encounter many challenges when adjusting to their new surroundings in United States. However, that has not been the case as many studies reported multiple challenges Asian Indians face after moving to western countries.

The acculturation process of immigrant Asian Indians is affected by several factors. Some of the most notable factors include socialization patterns, cultural influences, lifestyle, proficiency in English language and personality types, and these factors are classified into socio-cultural and psychological areas of adaptation (Sharma, 2005). Socialization and cultural knowledge predict socio-cultural adaptations while personality traits, social support, and lifestyle events predict psychological adaptations (Kankipati, 2012). Socialization enables immigrants to acquire the social skills in the host country, while cultural knowledge enhances tolerance of immigrants towards the culture in the host country. Therefore, individuals with the right social skills and background knowledge in culture find it easier to engage in the acculturation process in comparison to individuals with no cultural knowledge or social skills (Bhugra, 2004). On the other hand, the personality traits, which differ from one individual to the other, may influence
whether an individual has the right attitude towards the process of acculturation or not (Solanki, 2009).

Immigrants who receive support from their family members, friends, and other relatives usually cope well with the external challenges in the process of acculturation. In addition, social support is crucial as it alleviates the stress of acculturation and provides a better environment for occupational and educational advancement of the second generation of immigrants (Akhtar, 2011). The education system, as part of the social support, also seems to have a strong influence on the acculturation process of immigrants. It is credited for the formation and enforcement of culture, and therefore, most immigrants who spent a lot of time in the education system, in their original country, tend to hold onto their original culture (Ng, 2008). On the other hand, Asian Indians and other immigrants who spend a lot of time in the education system of the host country show a higher level of acculturation.

Talbani & Hasanali (2000) in their study of South Asian adolescent females found that female roles have evolved to some extent, if not fully after being in contact with the western host culture. In addition, the adolescents felt more comfortable accepting the western norms in their day-to-day habits, attitudes, and dressing attire as it brought them closer to their peers in the host society. The control and pressure put on by Asian Indian parents may lead to feelings of isolation among adolescent females. The elders in the community may also act as barriers to a smooth and positive acculturation process for the young individuals as they may think that upholding traditional values is crucial in maintaining their ethnic identities (Berry, 1976). Despite being part of the western society, majority of Asian Indian families continue following the same cultural norms as
in their homeland. Some cultural norms and values are clearly stated and everyone in the community seems to be aware of those, such as, children should always respect the elders regardless, and cannot question the authority of their parents and elders. (Ranganath & Ranganath, 1997). Hence, parents and elders have significant influence in all decisions made in the family. They often believe that they have more life experience than the younger ones in the family, and hence it is their duty as parents to guide them (Segal, 1998). The decision-making is not limited to career choices and social freedom for children in Asian Indian culture, but also in the choice of a life partner. Therefore, many Asian Indians still have arranged marriages (Baptiste, 2005).

Gender and Acculturation

There are differing opinions among authors regarding the role of gender in the acculturation process of immigrants. These authors disagree (I) in regard to the degree that gender or gender roles influence the acculturation process, and (II) what gender experiences are associated with more hardship or facilitation in the process of acculturation. Researchers did not find significant positive relationship between gender and acculturation in certain contexts, such as family conflict (Chung, 2001), personal struggle and social inequity (Zhang, Mandl, & Wang, 2010), quantitative analysis of gender and acculturative stress (Thaker, 2013), and parent-child bonding (Bornstein & Cote, 2006). However, there is a large body of research contrasting these findings. A section of authors portrays that gender could be a significant factor when it comes to adaptation to the new culture. Ling (2007) reported boys having more difficulties in acculturating to the mainstream culture in comparison to girls. In addition, it was established (Leal-Muniz & Constantine, 2005) that socially and culturally assigned gender roles acted as barrier for
Mexican American female students in their career choices during college. Thaker (2013) in her research found that gender, along with age, socioeconomic status, personality, and experiences influence an individual’s behavior during their cultural adaptation process.

Research indicates that females of Asian descent perform better than males on several aspects of mental health in the host countries (Thakar, 2010). Asian Indian men experience more stress and decline in their mental health in comparison to their female counterparts during the acculturation process in the United States. The researcher in aforementioned study contended that this could be due to the lack of demarcated traditional gender roles as in their home country. Another research found that women tend to cope better when dealing with stress and anxiety related to academics and career (Asher, 2008; Masood, Okazaki and Takeuchi, 2009; Roberts, Mann & Montgomery, 2015). Adopting the integration strategy as proposed in Berry’s (1997) acculturation model, has helped expedite the process of adaptation to the host culture among immigrant women, and therefore, these women were able to help their families acclimatize to the mainstream culture quicker. On the contrary, women incline to get more anxiety regarding socio cultural decisions and aspects (Rahman & Witenstein, 2014). The plausible reason for these findings is that South Asian men enjoy more freedom and favoritism in comparison to women regarding social life (Masood, et al., 2009). South Asian parents tend to be overprotective of their daughters and do not want to lose them to the mainstream culture, which leads to anxiety regarding social cultural factors among younger females (Farver, Bhada, and Narang, 2002).

While there are very few studies asserting that women tend to cope better with acculturative stress, (Thakar, 2010), several others indicate that immigrant women are
more vulnerable to psychological stress as compared to men (Solanki, 2009; Kankipati, 2012). In contrast to both views, a quantitative analysis (Thaker, 2013) found no significant gender differences when it comes to coping with or handling acculturative stress. In the same study, a qualitative investigation reported women experiencing more distress than men do, and more willing to share their opinions on stress comparatively. The plausible cause for these contrasting findings in the same study could be due to different set of expectations from men and women in their social behaviors (Conrad & Pacquiao, 2005). For example, in Asian Indian culture, men are expected to be strong—emotionally and physically, and hence, despite experiencing the stress, they may not acknowledge or accept it (Kankipati, 2012).

Asian women are increasingly participating more in the education system of the host countries, and this has influenced how Asian men and women respond to the acculturation process (Gilbert, 1997). Being educated and having higher career aspirations among women provide them a sense of independence, and they start questioning the traditional patriarchal gender roles in Asian Indian culture (Zhang et al., 2010). For, example, education and employment are predominantly for men in cultures such as the Asian Indian culture, whereas, the western culture promotes gender equality in all aspects of life (Berry, 1992; Roberts, Mann, & Montgomery, 2015; Kohli, 2015). Asian American females achieve higher educational achievements more quickly in comparison to Asian American males (Brandon, 1991). Immigrant girls have positive attitude towards school in comparison to the boys (Sarroub, 2001), as they may perceive educational attainment as a key to freedom and empowerment (Keaton, 1999). Research shows that most teachers in schools are supportive of girl students of Asian origin as boys
are considered more disorderly (Ginorio & Huston, 2001). Consequently, these girls received more support from their teachers and had friends who were more inclined towards academics (Qin, 2006). This leads to a faster process of acculturation for girls, in comparison to boys who are prone to isolate themselves from common interactions with other people.

However, immigrant females have to adhere to traditional gender role attitudes, and this may influence their educational attainment as well as career aspirations (Rivera, Chen, & Flores, 2007; Roberts, Mann, & Montgomery, 2015). Similarly, Asian Indian girls experience hardship as the time they can devote in school activities is restricted due to several household chores expected of them as per their customs and cultural values. These restrictions may also hamper their rate of acculturation due to limited interaction. On the other hand, the restrictions cause some girls to rebel against their traditional customs and quickly adapt to the western culture. This is identified as the reason for the complete assimilation of most Asian girls as compared to their male counterparts (Berry, 2006). Traditional customs, familial expectations, and cultural values among Asian Indian families have a profound effect on the educational attainment of girls. Both girls and boys, who acquire education, provide services such as translation to their parents who may not be proficient in the spoken language of dominant culture. These services are crucial as some parents allow their children to attend school to acquire this advantage. This is in par with traditional Latino families, where females are encouraged to be more devoted to the parents and family members (Ginorio, Gutierrez, & Cauce, 1996) and act as language broker, and at times accept it as their permanent responsibility (Bornstein &
Cote, 2006). These expectations influence the educational and career aspirations of immigrant females negatively.

Due to the patriarchal nature of Asian Indian culture, women are expected to adhere to the cultural norms and carry on the roles of nurturer, caregiver, and transmitters of cultural, religious, and social values (Bhattacharya, 2002). It is common to find several Asian Indians in America who are still practicing arranged marriages. As previously mentioned (Ranganath & Ranganath, 1997), elders in the family and parents believe they can take better decisions for their children as they have more life experiences despite living in western societies like United States and Canada for a long time (Baptiste, 2005). The concept of arranged marriage does not let South Asian women have any voice, and hence, in a way augments the subordinate role of women in the society (Talbani & Hasanali, 2000; Kohli, 2015; Needham et al., 2016). Asian Indian culture views marriage as a lifetime commitment, as it is believed to be an amalgamation of two families, and not only two individuals (Das & Kemp, 1997). Moreover, divorce is not an option for most Asian Indians and is viewed as a stigma (Segal, 1998); further making it hard for Asian Indian females to break the perpetuation of rigid traditional rituals and lack of voice in decision making practices (Talbani & Hasanali, 2000).

The culture in most South Asian communities promotes early marriage for the girls (Kohli, 2015. Some families continue to practice this tradition even after migrating to the western nations despite the fact that it is illegal. This leads to high rates of school dropouts among teenage girls. Consequently, most Asian girls who are subject to this tradition find little time to interact with the majority community in extracurricular activities and this slows down their acculturation process (Sam & Berry, 2006).
Living in an egalitarian culture of western countries, such as United States, the expected roles of South Asian women in their own culture and families have gained a better status. Gupta (1999) reported that Asian Indian women in today’s society have more freedom and access to employment and education, and therefore, now they perform dual roles of working woman, and of a homemaker. This is also in contrast to the traditional roles of men in Asian Indian culture where men are the heads of the household, and responsible for providing financially (Segal, 1980). In societies like South Asian, men are viewed as the leaders, and hold positions with power and status, whereas women’s status is limited to preserving and transmitting the cultural values. This has often led to dissonance and discord among women, and contributed to their acculturative stress and mental health problems (Bhatnagar, 1984; Roberts, Mann, & Montgomery, 2015). Women have more restrictions in South Asian culture in comparison to males.

Additionally, most girls are forbidden to marry outside of their race, caste, or religion, as interracial or interreligious marriages could be viewed as threat to retaining one’s cultural identity and values (Scheafa, 1980). That is another reason why South Asian women have several restrictions regarding dating, as parents fear that their children may marry someone out of the race (Durvasula & Mglvaganam, 1994; Roberts, Mann & Montgomery, 2015), which may lead to divorce due to cultural differences, communication challenges, and different set of expectations (Bratter & King, 2008; Inman & Sandhu, 2002; Segal, 1991). On the contrary, Asian Indian men and women have reported good rapport with their partners, along with greater engagement and integration with each other’s cultures in interracial and interreligious marriages despite
the disapproval of families in certain cases (Inman, Altman, Kaduvettoor-Davidson, Carr, & Walker, 2011).

Evidence suggests that acculturation lead to more tobacco use and cigarette smoking among Asian women (Zhang & Wang, 2008). It is believed that as individuals adjust to their new host culture, they tend to adopt several health-related behaviors prevalent in the mainstream culture (Choi, Rankin, Stewart, & Oka, 2008; Bhrmal et al., 2015). The dietary lifestyle has resulted in obese and sedentary lifestyle among South Asians. In addition, there is an increase in smoking among women as they acculturate more; on the contrary, it has been found that more acculturated men smoked less in comparison (Zhang & Wang, 2008; Gorman, Lariscy, & Kaushik, 2014). Researcher theorized that less conservative and more egalitarian United States society offers immigrant women the freedom and socioeconomic status that they may lack in their homelands (Parrado & Flippen, 2005), hence, encouraging nontraditional behavior, such as smoking. The patriarchal nature of Asian culture imposes different social norms for men and women, which apply to drinking as well (Cook, Mulia, & Karriker-Jaffe, 2012; Roberts, Mann, & Montgomery, 2015), especially for Asian Indians, where parental control enforces strict rules for females in comparison to males (Ranganath & Ranganath, 1997). Research has proved that immigrant or foreign-born Asian males are perceived to be heavy drinkers in comparison to Asian females, and contrastingly, there were no significant gender differences for US born Asian Americans (Kim & Spencer, 2011). Researchers believe that the gender gap regarding alcohol consumption and cigarette smoking reduces as individuals become more acculturated in their western societies due
to the prevalent lifestyle and dominant culture (Lum, Corliss, Mays, Cochran, & Lui, 2009).

However, recent developments and economic changes have led to the transformation of the view of elders and parents in Asian communities as parents recognize the importance of contribution of both genders to their economic security. Consequently, more girls are allowed to attend the education system. In addition, Asian Indian women who were subjected to early marriage are slowly finding their way back to school in a bid to acquire paying jobs. This has led to a speedy acculturation process for girls as compared to boys since girls are known to interact and adapt to western cultures easily as compared to boys (Chun et al., 2003). Economic reasons are slowly turning the tide of Asian women who are increasingly seeking acculturation to add into the financial support of their families. As much as this process is increasingly becoming common, it must be accepted that it is an evolution that has emerged due to the Darwinian concept of survival for the fittest. In this case, it is necessitated by the need for more income (Gilbert, 1997).

In addition, most Asian girls identify education as a demonstration of the gender equality in America and they perceive education as an opportunity for achieving more gender equality (Berry, 1976). The positive attitude towards education among girls enables them to persevere through every hardship towards their quest to attain an education as compared to boys, who drop out of school easily (Gilbert, 1997). Therefore, more girls than boys have the desire to attain an education in the western school system. Subsequently, this leads to a better acculturation process for Asian girls as compared to boys who have shown a great retention of their original customs.
The ability of Asian boys towards maintenance of their original customs and values is attributed to their perception of lost values in the United States considering that most Asian boys and men in the school system receive negative messages that they are too quiet, too short and too Asian (Gilbert, 1997). Therefore, according to them, they do not qualify for the masculinity that is valued in the United States. Hence, some of them retreat to their cocoon while others adopt a hyper-masculinity attitude, which teachers associate with the behavior of gang members (Sam & Berry, 2006). A comparative study of the life of Asian Indian immigrant to western nations and those in India indicates that gender relations between women and men are subjected to adverse changes in the western nations, which are beneficial to women, providing women more freedom and independence (Talbani & Hasanali, 2000).

**Professional Environment and Acculturation**

Most scholars assert that acculturation in the professional environments entails the provisions of sufficient resources for professionals to learn and integrate the values and culture in the workplace in a manner that these values become a part of an individual identity as an employee in any given organization (Gilbert, 1997). However, research shows that professional environments should develop an acculturation strategy in an attempt to enable the native-born professionals to acquire cultural sensitivity, competence, and awareness in a culture-based diverse working environment (Martinez & Valenzuela, 2006). This is because research shows that new employees must learn the values, characteristic, and beliefs of an organization in order to avoid maladjustments and adjust well in a new working environment (Samnami, Boekhorst, & Harrison, 2012).
Acceptance of the host culture, while maintaining one’s own ethnic identity and cultural values, can help the immigrant employees accept their work culture easily (Alkhazraji, Gardner, Martin, & Paolillo, 1997). Appreciation from supervisors and colleagues resulted in job satisfaction, accelerating the acculturation process among Asian Americans (Leong, 2001). Therefore, when employers, managers, or business partners engage in culturally sensitive practices at work, it helps the immigrant employees and individuals adjust better to their work environment in the host culture. Taras, Rowney, & Steel (2013) reported that these practices should be implemented regardless of the immigrant individuals’ length of stay in the mainstream culture. In addition to that, positive coworker and mentor relationships are positively associated with high acculturation among immigrant employees, hence leading to career advancement (Jian, 2012). Researchers have also theorized that individuals can compartmentalize the knowledge of retention of cultural values, for example, continuing to follow their traditional and cultural norms at home, whereas, adjusting to the host culture at work setting. This way, they can still maintain their cultural identity to some degree while still adapting to the mainstream culture professionally (Goffman, 1959).

Itzhaky & Ribner (1999) reported that despite growing up with traditionally assigned gender roles of homemaker in a conservative culture, the immigrant women in their study experienced job satisfaction along with being in control of their lives, facilitating positive experiences of their new host culture. On the contrary, Ow Yong & Manthrope (2016) in their study of workplace acculturation of Asian Indian care workers in England suggested that employers, mentors, or human resource personnel should extend services to these new immigrants to help them with their psychological and socio-
cultural adjustments. Employers or managers’ such attitudes may help immigrant employees with job satisfaction in the mainstream culture. Leong’s (2001) study reported that less acculturated employees experience job dissatisfaction, in comparison to the more assimilated ones. Therefore, it is important for companies and organizations to understand their employees’ acculturation experiences and challenges to implement effective work culture and policies.

In the study of professional Chinese immigrants in Australian workplace, Lu (2014) established that these professional immigrants relied on their colleagues primarily to learn about the host culture. These individuals reported learning about different cultures that their colleagues belonged to and represented. However, these Chinese professional immigrants expressed dissatisfaction regarding promoting their careers due to low proficiency in language resulting in self-perceived communication problems with colleagues and hindering their acceptance of promotions in supervisory and managerial roles. Besides, in the Asian cultures, certain personality characteristics, such as, being boastful, pompous, and self-applauding are discouraged, and therefore, these professional immigrants’ modesty and humility acted against them in career development in Australian workplace. On the contrary, certain positive personality characteristics, and, work ethics of dependability and reliability in the immigrant workers, have been sought by employers in western countries of New Zealand, and United Kingdom (Chen & Ward, 2013; McLaren & Spoonley, 2005; Dench, Hurstfield, Hill, & Akroyd, 2006). Therefore, workplace culture of empowerment and cultural appropriation often make employees feel valued and lead to a constructive environment (Macky & Boxall, 2014) and helps in the acculturation process.
Asian Indian professionals may feel conflict in day-to-day routines and interactions in everyday lives, because of several contrasting factors in their homeland and host cultures. These factors could be dress codes, gestures and facial expressions, accents, language, and even specific words used during speech and conversations as some of these factors may be construed as inappropriate in the Asian Indian culture (Bhatia, 2007). Acculturation in the professional environment requires the laying down of well-defined framework that defines the institutional-based culture in order to enhance acceptance and mutual understanding in the workplace (Jian, 2012). Acculturation in the workplace eliminates conflicts and enhances a sense of belonging and mutual appreciation among work-mates (Stairs et al., 2012). A positive and productive working psychology is characterized by absorption, dedication, and vigor. Therefore, the professional environment is prone to four possible work-related psychologies towards acculturation. These four states of mind vary from assimilation, integration, marginalization, to separation (Somani, 2008). While most researchers assert that integration is the optimal acculturation strategy in a work setting, others affirm that it is the strategy of assimilation.

Numerous studies have found an association between optimal professional environment and integration (Berry, 1997, 2005, 2008; Ward, 2013; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2012). Integration enables employees to appreciate the culture in their workplace while at the same time valuing their own culture and that of their colleagues. Integration strategy is explained as being in bicultural mode, having equal levels of acculturation of homeland as well as host cultures, whereas assimilation is referred to high connection with the host culture in comparison to one’s own culture (Jian, 2012).
The integration strategy does not only enhance organizational outcome through mutual appreciation but also enhances contextual performance among employees in their working environment. Adopting integration strategy enriches organizational culture and leads to relationship development through mutual appreciation and respect (Ng, 2008). On the contrary, assimilation focuses on cultural maintenance and ignores relationship developments and mutual appreciation among employees (Sharma, 2005). Individuals who adopt the strategy of integration at workplace will have more job satisfaction and opportunities for career development, promotion, and expansion (Samnam et al., 2012), in comparison to assimilation strategy. In addition, integration strategy is beneficial for an individual’s overall psychological wellbeing in the long run (Ward, 2013).

Studies (Berry, 1997, 2005, 2008; Ward, 2013; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2012) indicate that adopting marginalization and separation strategies create undesirable working environment because it results in subjugation of groups in the workplace. As such, it deteriorates the spirit of engagement and commitment in the workplaces. It escalates conflicts among employees and strains social relationships in the workplace. The individuals feel dissonance towards the dominant culture because they are not given the freedom of retaining their own culture (Ling, 2007). At times, this could happen due to the cold reception at the work place from their superiors but colleagues. Bhatia (2007) reported that professionals of Asian Indian origin often experienced unwelcoming and racist attitude towards them from the community and colleagues, due to their dress attire, accents, and at times color of the skin. Surprisingly, they reported that their supervisors or directors did not have this biased attitude towards them, and in fact recommended the Asian Indian professionals for promotions and positions of authority due to their hard
work and exceptional skills. However, this was resented by some of their American peers, and hence subjected to hostile attitudes. This lead to stress and conflict among these individuals, who moved to United States with this notion, that their education and skills would protect them from being prejudiced and discriminated. This discord at workplace threatens the peaceful coexistence and joint commitment in the professional environment.

Therefore, it is almost impossible for an individual to develop a cultural sense of identity without borrowing any aspect of his or her heritage and original culture (Chun et al., 2003). Evidence suggests that it is impractical to implement separation and marginalization strategy of acculturation successfully. Moreover, separation and marginalization approaches lack reliability and validity resulting in poor performance in the professional environment (Solanki, 2009), hence not suitable for a positive acculturation experiences of employees in a work setting.

**Immigrant Teachers in K-12 Urban Setting**

With surge in growing numbers of immigrants in United States, most urban schools are composed of multiethnic settings, with both students and staff members coming from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and communities (Apostal, 2008). The demographic realities create a need for teachers, policy makers, and educational practitioners to address the social inequities. The urban school setting provides a clear image of the identification of Asian Indians as minorities. Recent years have led to a widespread prototyping of Asians in urban schools as pillars of success and great achievement (Akhtar, 2011). Ream & Stanton-Salazar (2006) implied that urban school
districts have large minority student populations from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Kopetz, Lease, & Warren-King (as cited in Dun, 2011) described an urban school as having, “typical problems of urban environments, including lack of resources; bureaucratic hurdles; strict disciplinary plans and policing; high drop-out rates, remediation, and school failure; student poverty; and teacher attrition” (p. 1391). Steinburg and Kincheloe (2004) added that urban schools also have high populations of people of color including immigrants, who may or may not speak English since English is not their first language.

Urban schools and urban education have its own challenges that have been a topic of interest for my researchers. The diverse and multicultural population of urban schools calls for culturally sensitive and appropriate learning environment. Apart from that, there are challenges of achievement gap, retention of teachers, and communication problems between teachers and school administrators (Barton & Berchini, 2013). The K-12 environment in the urban school consists of highly diversified student population. As a result, the need to employ a diverse population of teachers has arisen in reduce the diversity gap between the students and their teachers. Therefore, reconciliation and appreciation of the various cultures within the schools is imperative for a successful learning environment. It is for this reason that the modern K-12 environment is characterized by diversity as well as integration practices among teachers and students (Chun et al., 2003).

Approximately 15,000 foreign born and immigrant teachers were recruited and placed in the U.S. schools in 2002-2003 and more than half of them were placed in large urban school districts in states like Texas, California, New York, Georgia, New Jersey,
Florida, Maryland, and Ohio (Barber, 2003). According to American Federation of Teachers (2009), schools districts in the United States employed around 20,000 teachers with the help of placement and recruitment agencies, due to lack of American teachers filling these positions. These immigrant teachers belong to various different cultures and society and come from all different parts of the world to teach in western countries such as United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Among these immigrant teachers, Asian Indians have been changing the face of education, especially in the fields of math and science (Bhatia, 2007). Some of them are professors or involved in other higher education colleges, however, most of them were recruited and placed in an urban K-12 setting in United States. With an influx of foreign-born teachers in public education system, it is imperative that school administrators are aware of their challenges and help them with their professional as well as socio-cultural integration (Barton & Berchini, 2013).

The professional environment in a K-12 setting requires professionals to work in unison and employ collaborative efforts in order to maintain a suitable learning environment for students (Dunn, 2011). The professionals in this setting must be able to handle each student in a culturally acceptable manner, despite the differences in cultural values among employees (McIntyre, 2014). Professionals must acquit themselves with these values in to help students adopt an acceptable culture in the learning environment. Szeto-Wong (2003) emphasized that this is important since the working environment in the K-12 setting is subject to diversity in terms of both populations, of teachers and students. Dunn (2011) contended that international teachers in U.S. schools have a more profound role to execute than just teaching the content, which is to be accepted by the
students and coworkers. They have a serious responsibility of understanding their diverse student population beyond the surface level, and at the same time to nurture values of cultural sensitivity in them (Deters, 2006). Most students in the K-12 urban setting grow up in their own subcultures, and it is imperative that teachers understand the diverse backgrounds of their students for effective teaching, since learning takes place in social setting, (McCarty, Wallace, Lynch, & Benally, 1991; Schrader, 2015).

An urban K-12 environment could be crude in regard to forcing the immigrant populations to adopt the strategy of assimilation (Talbani & Hasanali, 2000). The system is poised to encourage immigrant ethical groups to abandon their ethical identity and adopt the host culture’s skills, habits, values, knowledge, customs, religion, and attitude. Therefore, Asian American teachers, despite being bicultural, may still experience cultural conflict (Lee, 2012). However, growing diversity in the population of urban schools, the K-12 environment has promoted a two-way assimilation process for immigrant populations. The first dimension involves the acquisition of some cultural aspects of the western culture by immigrants, especially second-generation immigrants who can easily adopt the host culture through education (Zhang et al., 2010). The second dimension of assimilation involves the acquisition of numerous Asian cultural aspects by the individuals of dominant culture (Le, 2007). Therefore, the U.S. culture has acquired a lot of enrichment from interaction with Indian immigrants in the urban setting (Berry, 2006).

Lack of cultural awareness or being misinformed about a culture on students’ parts could leave teachers frustrated and helpless (Dunn, 2011; Dunn, 2013). Asian Indian teachers in Dunn’s (2013) study shared that their students would ask them
questions about their culture, religion, and values that could be offensive. However, these teachers expressed an understanding as to why the students in U.S schools did not know much about the other cultures and countries outside their own; because the schools do not encourage that in curriculum or otherwise. Therefore, these students, even after growing up into adults, at times remain ignorant and clueless about people from other ethnicities and cultures outside their own. Therefore, the students should also be equipped with the ability to relate and establish social bonds with each other irrespective of their cultural and social differences.

It is evident that international teachers experience cultural value conflict in the urban K-12 environments in U.S. schools. Therefore, the professional environment in a K-12 setting requires an acculturation technique that focuses on social bonds and peaceful coexistence among students and their teachers, as well (Janusch, 2015; Schrader, 2015). It is further stated that majority of the times this could be achieved with the help of school administrators and colleagues, and also by teachers’ changed attitudes towards the students, such as, being friendlier (Janusch, 2015). Gaining students’ respect and trust promotes professional integration of immigrant teachers, in addition to support provided by school administrators, colleagues, and community (Niyubahwe, Mukamurera & Jutras, 2013). Hence, it depends on the collaboration and reception of the host culture, such as, school community, as to how immigrant teachers perceive job satisfaction at work place. Therefore, professionals must be able to adopt integration acculturation strategy and enforce the same strategy for their students (Berry, 2006) for effective teaching learning process.
Research has proven that presence of immigrant teachers in schools in U.S. can promote and instill positivity and help build cordial and progressive relations between the school and community (parents). Valuing the insights and experiences immigrant teachers bring with them can help cultivate and sustain constructive views about immigrant communities, and immigrant children among school administrators and teachers (Adair, 2016). The immigrant teachers in Lee’s (2013) study had exceptional work ethics and were role models for other teachers as reported by their supervisors. In addition to that, most immigrant teachers are usually willing to help their colleagues, and consequently taking up the leadership roles. Evidence suggests that schools with diverse student populations have benefitted from teachers with various social and cultural backgrounds in establishing a better learning environment (Schmidt & Block, 2010; Schrader, 2015).

Therefore, schools should make an effort for successful professional integration of the teachers to help them adjust to the work culture. On the other hand, at times being a foreign-born and educated individual may work against these teachers, as schools may not want to hire them due to certain prejudices and stereotypes (Ozbarlas, 2008; Yee, 2008). These immigrant teachers often experience microaggressions of being a foreigner, regardless of their length of stay in the western host country, their adaptation of the host culture, or their generational status. They are viewed as outsiders due to regular portrayal of being minorities and foreigners in the media (Ong, Burrow, Ja, Fuller-Rowell, & Sue, 2013). These assumptions by media and dominant culture can be very harmful leading to discriminating hiring practices. (Schmidt, Young, & Mandzuk, 2010).
Research suggests that the K-12 urban environment is characterized by maladjustments among immigrant populations towards diversity. This is based on the fact that most of the dominant groups in the setting feel a sense of belonging and privilege over the minority groups. As such, the minority and majority groups are in constant rivalry and strenuous relationship (Schmidt & Block, 2010). Contrary to that, Akhtar (2011) indicated that professionals from the majority groups are enthusiastic about helping the minority groups to acculturate while they also learn their cultures in an effort to ensure a complete integration approach in acculturation. These conflicting studies call for a need to create awareness among the American teachers and students about their peers from dissimilar cultures than their own, to lessen the effects of racism and discrimination that individuals of color experience (Milner, 2010) and therefore, impeding the acculturation process of these individuals, teachers or students.

Some teachers revealed experiencing racism and discrimination from students as well (Schmidt, 2010) leading to job dissatisfaction. In addition to that, teachers have faced discipline and class management problems in regard to student behavior in the classroom. Especially the teachers from Asian culture find the student behavior in urban schools in stark contrast to what they were used to in their homelands (Sun, 2012; Dunn, 2011) and hence leading to negative acculturation experiences at work place. These teachers were not used to parents challenging their authority and classroom practices. Coming from societies, where education is viewed in high esteem, and teacher as an influential and well-respected person in the society, it may be hard for immigrant teachers to cope with such environment (Gordon, 1996). On the other hand, few teachers in the same study (Dunn, 2013) mentioned that after she allowed the parents to attend her class
along with their children, parents accepted that their classroom practices and teaching methods were not questionable, and the problem lied with their children instead. This promoted a healthy relation between parents and teachers, and also helped the students be part of the constructive learning environment.

Despite being highly skilled and qualified, the immigrant teachers are not able to transfer the knowledge and experience to their host culture due to drastic cultural differences. Sun (2012) reported that immigrant teachers might often feel like outsiders and struggle to gain students’ respect and integrate in the school environment. That is another challenge that immigrant teachers usually face apart from the cold reception by superiors and coworkers at work place, further impeding their acculturation process and probably leading to acculturative stress and cultural value conflict. Collins & Reid (2012) in their study of immigrant teachers in Australia found that gaining respect by students has been a challenging factor the international teachers due to their accents, physical looks, or the way of doing something. However, these teachers mentioned that they did not hold any grudges against the students for their lack of knowledge of other cultures. It is the education system, K-12 curriculum along with U.S culture, which deprives students of knowing about the other world cultures outside of United States, apart from their own. The same trend transcends into college and university education, makings students devoid of a clear understanding of values of other ethnic groups and cultures.

Asian Indian teachers experienced cultural shock when confronted with an urban culture of public schools in United States, in regard to students’ dressing sense, language usage, and public display of affection in classrooms and in general (Dunn, 2011). In addition to that, researchers theorized that Asian Indian teachers, whose prior teaching
experiences were only limited to schools in India, failed to understand the dynamics of race in urban schools in United States (Dunn, 2013), and therefore, measures have to be taken to familiarize these teachers with U.S. urban school culture before their placement in U.S. schools. Despite belonging to a society of various subcultures that are linguistically, religiously, and culturally diverse, it is wrong to assume that Asian Indian teachers can fit easily into the urban school environment in U.S. schools (Nieto, 2003), unless they are trained to use the approach of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP).

Cultural backgrounds of teachers are reflected in their teaching and it becomes imperative that these teachers’ delivery methods are linked to CRP since it promotes successful professional integration of immigrant teachers in the mainstream culture, along with building positive relations with their students in urban schools (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

CRP is explained as a culturally relevant and sensitive approach to teaching students with diverse backgrounds (Gay, 2010; Stairs et al., 2011). This calls for a need to prepare immigrant teachers through educational or professional development activities (Endo, 2015) to implement CRP. In addition, the teacher preparation programs across the globe should include this in their curriculum and practice.

Research shows that both Asian Indian men and women in the professional setting, despite the differences in their cultural roles, interpret these cultural values in the same way. Therefore, professional cultural values hold the same significance for both genders, and they uphold the integrity and respect (Bhatia, 2007; Dunn, 2013). Contrary to that, the research on acculturation experiences of South Asians in western countries, such as United States and Canada prove that men and women have different approaches and attitudes towards adapting the cultural values of the host country (Bhanot & Senn,
2007; Gupta, 1999; Thakar, 2010), hence this could be applicable to the teaching field as well. Therefore, the acculturation process may differ among Asian Indian men and women in the K-12 setting, and men finding it difficult to adapt to the western culture as compared to their female counterparts. This is because women tend to form social bonds faster than men do (Thaker, 2013) and therefore, they tend to learn and embrace changes faster than their male counterparts.

Men in professional settings face challenges in adopting cultural practices that go against their cultural values (Itzhaky & Ribner 1999), especially in the case of South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, or Bangladeshi) men. Since south Asian cultures place men in the position of perpetrators of cultural values within the society and departing from these values is perceived as disloyal and as a loss of self-identity (Talbani & Hasanali, 2000; Kohli, 2015; Roberts, Mann & Montgomery, 2015; Smith, 2016). Therefore, men and women in K-12 setting perceive acculturation process differently (D'Innocenzo et al., 1992). It has been contended that these differences in perceptions of cultural values in the workplace are drawn not only by the dissimilarities in ethnic and economic practices but also in religious boundaries that assume an incredibly complex form in an Asian Indian polytheist culture (Berry, 1992). Therefore, great care must be taken to treat each socio-cultural belief with appreciation including religious beliefs, which hold great value in cultural grounds, since it may be challenging to change the religious views and beliefs in an attempt to enhance acculturation in a professional environment (Akhtar, 2011). The best professional environment demands a cultural framework that enhances peace, collaborative effort, productivity, and mutual respects in the professional environment (Jian, 2012).
The school administrators should offer professional development, centered on the challenging factors before placing the teachers in the classrooms (Endo, 2015). Previous knowledge of the host culture can help overcome certain fears and prejudices among immigrants. Ongoing professional development would help the immigrant as well as their American peers, to understand various aspects of race, diversity, culture, and equity (Endo, 2015). This would help making the professional environment in schools free of all forms of discriminative practices in order to ensure optimal academic and social performance of students. Most of the students in school are on the verge of defining their identities as such, therefore, they should be provided an opportunity to grow in environments that uphold social values and development as opposed to hatred and discrimination (Adair, 2016). Research asserts the need of setting up a diversity programs and policies that ensure that K-12 schools are diversified in terms of both teachers and students environment (Gilbert, 1997).

Failure to understand the contributions that immigrant teachers can make to the school, students, and community may lead to lack of “culturally responsive learning environment for minority students,” (Lee, 2013, p. 200). Unsuccessful adjustment to work setting can be a reason for lack of motivation, and finally leaving the teaching field among immigrant teachers (Niyubahwe et al., 2013) further expediting the problem of retention of teachers in urban schools. School administrators need to take initiatives to address these concerns to help these educators in their acculturation process for mutual benefit and interdependence. Several researchers (Lee, 2013; Deters, 2006; Schmidt, Young, & Mandzuk, 2010) believe that immigrant teachers act as role models not only to their coworkers because of their exception work ethics, but also are a role model to
immigrant children, help them adjust to their school environment and foster school success. Niyubahwe et al. (2013) added that immigrant teachers also promote multicultural education, and hence school boards and administrators should implement procedures to help these teachers in their social and professional acculturation.

Gaps in Literature

There is a wide source of information and research studies available in the literature about acculturations experiences of Asian Indian immigrants in western countries, such as United States, Canada, United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia (Inman et al. 2002, 2011; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000; McIntyre, 2014). However, there are several gaps in the literature that need to be addressed to understand other aspects related to this ethnic group (Solanki, 2009). One of the major questions that has emerged and need addressing is the effect of immigration and the K-12 setting on the acculturation of Asians in their native homeland. Most of these studies have focused on Asians in general when addressing their professional integration experiences in United States, especially in the field of teaching (Janusch, 2015; Le, 2007). However, it is evident that Asians consist of several ethnic groups and subcultures within each group, having a different set of customs and values, and therefore, it is not rational to study Asians as one large group (Kankipati, 2012). For example, the culture of Indians and Chinese consist of several different variables that may influence the acculturation process and professional integration of these individuals in their host countries (Samaratunge, & Härtel, 2014; Corliss, Mays, Cochran, & Lui, 2009). Therefore, the Asian cultures should be studied as separate ethnic units to better understand the acculturation interactions in the dominant
culture. Therefore, there is a huge gap in literature on specific acculturation experiences of Asian Indians migrated and resettled in western nations (Ling, 2007).

Moreover, several authors have discussed social, political, and economic aspects of migrant Asians with little emphasis on the cultural effects intersecting with the other ones (Bhatia, 2007; Inman at el.,2002, 2011). The literature review identifies a huge gap in knowledge regarding the interaction between education, culture, and acculturation in an urban K-12 setting. Most of the available literature provides a Eurocentric approach with extremely limited opportunities to learn about the Asian Indian culture, history, art, and such other aspects (Esses, Deaux, Lalonde, & Brown, 2010) and social studies have a tendency to ignore the cultural influence of Asian minorities in multiethnic societies, in western nations. At most, available literature only offers a comparative analysis of minority groups in the western nations and statistical research of their contribution in the large economic and social pool of western nations (Takaki, 1989; Lee, 2007). These studies indicate the level of performance of Asians in mental, health, and other social spheres, with little emphasis on the cultural contribution in the K-12 setting. In addition, most of these studies fail to address the differences between male and female cultural dispositions of Asian Indians immigrants.

Various opinions of researchers regarding acculturation in a professional environment fail to address the impacts of acculturation among the American-born immigrants. While some researchers focused on the need to adapt acculturation strategies in order to enable the minority groups to work in a suitable environment, others have focused on the effects of acculturation in productivity of an organization (Niyubahwe, Mukamurera & Jutras, 2013; Samnam et al., 2012). This study aims at addressing this
gap in literature through exploring the effects of acculturation among Asian Indians in professional setting. Asian Indians are faced with the challenges to reconcile their own culture prior to adapting to a foreign culture (Le, 2007). Hence, there is a lack of sufficient materials addressing the effect of the multicultural nature of Asian Indian immigrant group in regard to acculturation, and its effects in the lives of these individuals.

The existing research also fails to address the role of government policies, and politics in acculturation process in an urban K-12 environment. In addition, there is a lack of sufficient materials regarding the effects of maladjustments on acculturation in the K-12 environment in the urban setting (Martinez & Valenzuela, 2006; Samnami, Boekhorst, & Harrison, 2012.). As such, this study will address the role of governmental policies in enhancing acculturation process for immigrant groups in the K-12 environment in the urban school setting. Nonetheless, this research will aim to address the issue of effects of maladjustments among students regarding cultural diversity in the K-12 environment and provide relevant recommendation in dealing with the problem of cultural adjustments in acculturation (Martinez & Valenzuela, 2006). The research will address the reasons that made these Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district decides to stay in the United States permanently. The existing evidence fails to illuminate the influence of gender in the acculturation and professional integration process of Asian Indian immigrant teachers in K-12 setting in United States. Finally, the research will seek to investigate the influence of math and science education in an urban K-12 school district on the acculturation experiences of Asian Indian immigrant teachers.
Summary

This chapter reviewed the contrasting views supported by evidence in the areas of acculturation, gender and acculturation, professional environment and acculturation, teaching profession and acculturation, and acculturation in an urban K-12 setting. This chapter also reviewed the trends in immigration, an influx of immigrant populations in United States in different professional fields, and their acculturation experiences. The acculturation was looked and analyzed from different viewpoints, discussing the significance of each view, and the limitations for this study. The literature reviewed the existing evidence on acculturation patterns of immigrant populations; and how it is different for Asian Indians. The acculturation at professional settings was analyzed using existing research and what strategies immigrant professionals adapt for professional integration for a culturally constructive workplace environment. The studies looked at gender differences, if any, in regard to acculturation process in general, and in particular to professional integration. Gender was analyzed from acculturation and professional integration viewpoint in regard to immigrant professionals, and immigrant teachers in K-12 urban environment. This chapter provides the base to locate the loopholes and gaps in existing data and address those in the current study.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Previous studies (Finlay, 2009) have focused on the academic achievement of immigrant students or the acculturation process of immigrants in general. However, existing research (Noble & Smith, 2015) does not concentrate on professional experiences of immigrants, or how these experiences could influence their acculturation process. The problem this research sought to address is the lack of knowledge concerning the acculturation experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in K-12 urban schools in Ohio. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore and understand a particular phenomenon, the experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district in Ohio. My research interest was in how these individuals construct the meanings of their new status in United States based on their professional experiences.

This study aimed to explore and understand the meaning Asian Indian immigrant teachers made of their new roles as math and science teachers in K-12 urban schools in Ohio. The study considered the perspectives of these Asian Indian immigrant math and
science teachers on their construction of their new roles and responsibilities in accordance with their current jobs in the United States. The study also investigated how the personalities and cultural ascriptions of the study participants are shaped by their newer perceived roles and responsibilities, in addition to how gender roles influenced their personal traits and beliefs. The researcher wanted to explore how these Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers, hypothetically belonging to different social classes, religions, and educational backgrounds, made meaning of their immigration experiences in the host country in regard to their personal lives, while working in the urban school environment at the same time.

This chapter provides the description of the research design. Consequently, it indicates the type of study with supporting reasons and elaborates on the choice of study participants, participant selection procedures, the technical considerations in the selection of the participants along with an explanation on how the data was collected and analyzed. It also traced how exactly every element of the study was conducted thoroughly by describing the process of assessing the reliability of the study findings in relation to the application and appropriateness of the methods undertaken to ensure the integrity of the final conclusions (Noble & Smith, 2015).

The research aimed at answering the following questions:

1. How does working in a K-12 setting influence the acculturation process for Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban school district located in Ohio?
a. How do the experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban K-12 setting in Ohio influence their acculturation process and cultural values?

b. How do Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district located in Ohio construct meanings of their new roles, responsibilities, and identities in their new socio-cultural environment?

c. How do the Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district perceive their gender influencing their expected roles and responsibilities in their professional and personal lives?

**Rationale for Qualitative Research**

According to Merriam (2009), qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people make meaning of their experiences. In order to understand the experiences and meaning making process of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers, the researcher applied the qualitative approach of methodology. The researcher expected to have insights into the problem under study by using qualitative approach. Corbin and Strauss (2008) have explained that a qualitative researcher attempts to empathize with participants by trying to experience reality in the same manner as them, to gain a better understanding of the opinions, reasons, and underlying motivations. The qualitative study used in this research put its focus on a deeper understanding of the perspectives of participants. The researcher wanted to explore how the proposed study participants achieved understandings of their experiences that shaped their current lives.
The qualitative approach fitted the topic of this research appropriately because it employed the technique of in-depth analysis as opposed to use of values and figures in quantitative study (Tellis, 1997). Therefore, the proposed study gave voice to participants concerning their experiences as immigrants resulting, in key themes emerging from the data collected (Tellis, 1997).

More specifically, Creswell (2013) defines qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (p.37). Similarly, in the current study, the researcher aimed to put together a comprehensive and integrated analysis of the participants’ meaning making processes concerning their professional roles as math and science teachers in an urban school district. Using a qualitative methodology allowed the researcher to study the phenomenon of identity construction and acculturation of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in its naturalistic setting providing richer context.

In comparison, a quantitative approach would have failed to provide the understanding of the meaning making process, contexts, phenomenon, causal explanation of situations and events since quantitative research “tends to see the world in form of variables; they view explanation as demonstration that there is a statistical relationship between different variables,” (Maxwell, 2013, p 29). Therefore, a quantitative study was undesirable because of the nature of the research questions, which sought to find the influence on the acculturation process for Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers by working in a K-12 setting in an urban school district located in Ohio. Such an
activity needed an extensive exploration that was not practical for a quantitative study. As such, the researcher of the proposed study also intended to investigate the acculturation process in their social contexts related to identity construction and cultural values conflict of immigrants in their host country; analyzing simultaneously from two major perspectives: the socio-cultural, and the individual perspective.

Qualitative research design enables researchers to give an exhaustive understanding of the study subjects in a manner that cannot be quantified, yet it is valuable in making a meaning out of the behavioral and personal perspectives about the research topic. Since such understandings of “how,” “why” and “when” of given significant activities form the basis of the qualitative research thereby aiding a better understanding of the participants and their attributes in behaviors and experiences (Cypress, 2015). The research questions could be explained and supported profoundly using only the qualitative research design. The qualitative approach helped the researcher identify richer understanding of acculturation patterns underlying the professional and personal experiences of the participants in the United States in K-12 setting; and individual, collective, or familial responses and strategies adapted for survival, which was not possible if quantitative approach was used.

**Phenomenological Approach**

In-depth analysis using an inductive approach along with phenomenological qualitative study design is able to reveal the trends and patterns in the feelings and the experiences of the target population, thereby achieving the purpose of the study (Finlay,
2009; Tellis, 1997). The researcher believed this could only be achieved by using a qualitative phenomenological approach.

Creswell (2013) explained phenomenology as an approach that “describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomena” (p 57). He further stated that in phenomenology approach, participants share common experiences regarding phenomena. Moustakas (1994), founder of phenomenological research, posited that research should focus on the wholeness of experience, to reveal the “essence of things.” He viewed experience and behavior as an inseparable relationship of a phenomenon, with the individual experiencing the phenomenon. Similarly, this study, investigated how the world, in regard to acculturation in their host country, appeared to the proposed study participants based on their personal views and experiences as math and science teachers in an urban district in Ohio. The researcher attempted to probe more deeply into causes to “uncover the essence, the invariant structure, of the meaning of the experience” (p 93) by using interview as the data collection method (Merriam & Associates, 2002).

Qualitative research qualifies to explore lifestyle elements such as culture and work (Morrow & Smith, 2000; Luca & Filipopoulou, 2014). This study was conducted in a natural setting that enabled the investigator to find, analyze, and give voice to the views of the participants accurately and appropriately (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, the best possible way for achieving this was the qualitative method (Hay, 2000; Limb & Dwyer, 2001; Robson, 2002).
Researcher as an instrument

Meloy (1994) concludes that since qualitative approach involves personal interest and engagement, it also necessitates multiple, simultaneous actions and reactions on the part of the researcher as a key instrument in the research. Since the researcher was the primary instrument in the data collection and interpretation process (Creswell, 2007), there was a chance of researcher’s feelings and prejudices becoming possible source of bias. Qualitative researchers attempt to study the subjective states of their subjects objectively (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), therefore, it is imperative that the researcher presents participants’ perspectives and experiences as they describe, and not as the researcher has perceived. With regard to this, the researcher acknowledged the possibility of her own preconceptions about the topic affecting the study results and outcomes since the researcher’s interest in the study emanated from her personal experiences and interactions in the culture of United States.

The researcher believed that she has had similar encounters and exposure in US culture as her study participants when it comes to acculturation process since she worked in the same urban K-12 setting in which the participants are employed until a few years ago. Not only does the researcher have collateral educational background, she also shares identical demographics with the participants. The researcher acknowledged that her professional experience in this school district, where the study participants are also employed, has greatly influenced her acculturation process in her host country. Working in this particular school district not only provided her with the required experiences needed to understand the urban education system, it also changed her attitude towards life, altering her long held socio cultural values. As a female teacher, the researcher also
recognized and experienced different treatment than her male counterparts. She strongly felt that her male colleagues were more respected and looked up to in comparison to the female teachers; and it was surprising since the female teachers outnumber the male teachers in the school district. Therefore, the researcher was eager to explore the experiences of study participants in regard to influence of the gender roles at work place in their acculturation process. At the same time, the researcher had to be extra careful as not to influence her participants’ opinions and the study results in any way.

The researcher followed a specific protocol and took certain measures for data collection and the interpretation process, to ensure that her own experiences as a former teacher in the same research setting as the participants in this study did not interfere with the findings of this research. One such measure she employed was bracketing.

**Bracketing**

Bracketing is one way to assess validity. Bracketing is a methodological device of phenomenological inquiry that requires the deliberate putting aside of one’s own beliefs about the phenomenon under investigation or what one already knows about the subject prior to and throughout the phenomenological investigation (Carpenter, 2007). The researcher acknowledged the possibility of her own preconceptions about the topic influencing the study results and outcomes. Therefore, it was appropriate to take necessary measures to reduce the influence that researcher’s perceptions and assumptions, if any, about the participants might have on the findings and outcomes; and such measures can only be advanced through proper bracketing.
Bracketing is a means of increasing the reliability of a qualitative study.

“Bracketing is a qualitative research method that could be used to mitigate the preconceptions’ potentially deleterious effects that may taint the process of the research” (Tufford & Newman, 2010, p. 80). The researcher bracketed out, as in mathematics, any presuppositions, and notions she had in an effort to present the data in its true form (Manen, 1990). The researcher used two pronounced processes to ensure effective bracketing. The first process was the use of reflective journals, while the other was the writing of memos throughout data collection and analysis. Each of these processes had particular strengths. The journals encompassed the researcher’s drive to investigate the topic, her assumptions on demographics, acknowledgment of the researcher’s position of power to manipulate the findings, possibilities of conflicts of roles, and other personal feelings that might have influenced the outcome of the study (Tufford & Newman, 2010). The memos were in the form of theoretical notes to assist the researcher make meanings of the concepts emerging in the data. In addition, memos included methodological notes, which explicated the research’s procedural aspects, and observational comments, which allowed for exploration of feelings by the researcher about the endeavor of the research (Tufford & Newman, 2010, p. 86).

Tufford and Newman (2010) explained that bracketing in qualitative research eliminates presupposition to ensure that preconceptions of the researcher do not taint the research process. This is how significant accuracy is attained in this process and validity is asserted. This elimination of the suppositions enables the phenomenological inquiries to attain the acceptable standards of reliability as the results of the studies become the actual findings of the participants as related to their first-hand experiences and feelings.
The practice of phenomenological reduction helped the researcher to suspend or put aside any judgements, conjectures, and beliefs about the external world or her own experiences in the host country in this case; and gain a standpoint to view and expound the phenomena itself. This enabled the participants to unfold their experiences in relation to their past and current situations. The unfolding of these experiences facilitated the themes and codes to emerge during data analysis, ensuing results both valid and reliable. The themes and codes then allowed for the accurate achievement of the last phase of the phenomenological study, of synthesizing meanings to support the results (Groenewald, 2004).

**Triangulation and Member Checks**

In addition, the researcher employed the practices of triangulation and member checks. Data triangulation was used by interviewing multiple participants on the same research topic for a “fuller understanding of the phenomena” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, pp 115-116). Data triangulation helped the researcher draw data from different sources and different people (Flick, Kardoff, Steinke, 2004; Heale & Forbes, 2013) at different times. Murphy (1998) explicitly clarified that data triangulation would help the researchers collect data from different sources to examine how individuals or groups may experience certain events. To employ member checks, participants were approached to counter check the interpretations of the researcher to ensure an accurate representation of their experiences and meaning making process (Merriam, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The interest and decision to tackle the research topic among the study population is based on researcher’s own experiences of acculturation while working as a substitute teacher in an urban school district located in the state of Ohio. In a pilot study conducted by the
researcher, she experienced, that working as a short-term and long-term high school substitute teacher in the same urban school district as the participants, helped her maintain a balance between her cultural values and in adapting the cultural values of her host country (Singh, 2008). Interactions with her students, colleagues, and exposure to that particular workplace setting helped the researcher in overcoming the stereotypes she had about western societies while growing up in her home country. However, as through bracketing, the researcher took special care not to let her notions, beliefs, and perceptions interfere with presenting an unbiased view of participants. Since the researcher is not in the same workplace setting anymore as the study participants and has been away from it for over three years, she was able to capture the experiences of the participants separate from her own beliefs and perceptions.

**Reliability and Validity Based on the Phenomenological Approach**

Patton (2001) has stated that any qualitative researcher should be concerned with reliability and validity while conducting a research. Establishing the reliability and validity of the data helps in assessing the objectivity and credibility of the research (Anderson, 2010). Where validity refers to the integrity and application of the methods undertaken and the precision in which the findings accurately reflect the data, reliability describes consistency within the employed analytical procedures (Long & Johnson, 2000). Epoche is another way to identify and set aside personal opinions, assumptions and biases, “…to refrain from judgment” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 27), (Campbell, 2011). Epoche brings in validity to phenomenological research by use of first-hand encounters given through the revelation or experiences of the subjects as per their own accounts (Bednall, 2006). In simple terms, validity in qualitative study refers to how
truthful and sound the findings of a qualitative study are, and if they accurately reflect the reality of any situation supported by evidence.

According to Tufford and Newman (2010), validity and reliability of phenomenological research is homologous to bracketing because it allows for the most crucial stages in the study investigation, namely the data collection and analysis, to be accurate. The perceptions of the researcher are discerned, and only the insights from the actually affected persons, the study participants, are used to show the meanings or implications. Through bracketing, the “researcher draws awareness to presuppositions regarding the topic” (Tufford & Newman, 2010, p. 80). Data collection, data analysis, research question, conceptual framework, and the research are all interrelated by the practice of bracketing in phenomenological research. When all these components are executed correctly, the research achieves validity and reliability (Zenobia, Chan & Chien, 2013). Zenobia, Chan & Chien (2013) showed how the researchers used the technique of bracketing to achieve trust in their work among the audience that enabled the recipients to replicate the study and made decision based on its findings about a phenomenon. This amounts to reliability and validity and is a fundamental component of the phenomenological research (Finlay, 2009). Epoch and bracketing, therefore, are critical in the shaping of the phenomenological researches as they introduce the much-needed validity and reliability to the qualitative studies that ascribe to its approach.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this research study is Social Constructivism, a theory introduced by Vygotsky (Crawford, 1996), which empathizes the social context of learning
and construction of knowledge among individuals (Kim, 2001). Social constructivism is based on specific assumptions about reality, knowledge, and learning, and learners have to be involved actively in the learning process (Cooper, Basson, & Schaap, 2006). As a researcher, I sought to gain understandings of the reality of the participants and their meaning making process in regard to their new and old social environments. Creswell (2013) argued that in social constructivism, individuals want to gain an understanding of their world—personal as well as work setting. The study participants shared their subjective meanings and interpretations of their world based on their experiences as Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban school district in Ohio. This concept ties closely with acculturation and assimilation patterns (Berry, 2005).

The study also anchored on the notion that acculturation is a dual process where changes occur at group as well as individual levels (Berry, 2005). As illustrated in Figure 1, group variations refer to changes in social and cultural practices, whereas individual metamorphosis involve shift in behaviors and attitudes. However, there is a difference in the ways as to how these changes take place at two levels (Kim, Atkinson, and Yang, 2008). Berry’s (2005) model explains how navigating through relatively new aspects of immigrant life in the host country can lead to notable changes where an individual negotiates between his or her old identity filled with the values and beliefs of native country that he or she grew up with, and the newer one that he or she is adapting for survival. This could result into a harmonious settlement into the new culture, leading to a restructured identity, adapting different aspects in a balanced way, or lead to conflict and stress, where an individual may not be ready to adapt to certain changes and may feel torn between the two distinct cultures.
From this perspective, acculturation refers to a psychological process in which immigrants develop a new national identity (Deaux, 2006). Behavioral shifts in acculturation refer to an individual’s ability to participate fully in a new and different society, while psychological acculturation refers to a change in an individual’s self-concept to sustain cultural identity and include a new national identity. In either way, behavioral,
psychological, or group acculturation takes place in an immigrant’s social setting, and that is how knowledge is constructed through social interactions among individuals and not isolated individuals (Simpson, 2002).

Social constructivists view knowledge and truth as created by the interactions of individuals within a society (Andrews, 2012). This interpretive framework is useful in phenomenological research studies. Creswell (2013) theorized that individuals form their meanings through social interaction with others, and these meanings correspond to their experiences. Hence, the researcher, in this current phenomenological study applied this interpretive framework of social constructivism by asking the study participants open ended questions (as suggested by Creswell, 2013, p 25). This paradigm also allowed the researcher to elicit rich and meaningful information during the data collection process, thus providing the participants an opportunity to share their views fully and freely. This paradigm helped the researcher interpret the findings based on the research participants’ backgrounds and experiences (Creswell, 2013), and consequently helped in gaining new insight about acculturation experiences of the participants.

The social constructivists view gender as socially constructed and therefore, they do not consider biological differences as the basis for gender identity (Anderson, Logio & Taylor, 2005). Thus, they believe that society can pass on gender expectations through various processes and behaviors. Individuals assume their gender roles and responsibilities as assigned by the society and continue fulfilling those until they encounter different experiences in another culture or society than their own. Davis (2002), in her study of gender roles, described how identity formation depends on “…the cultural, social, and political context in which these processes occur,” (p. 509). Therefore,
it is possible that when individuals move to a different society than the one they are living in, they can adopt newer gender roles and identities over the time.

Along with family, schools and communities can affect how children learn gender roles, since these roles are influenced by an individual’s sociocultural experiences and interactions throughout his or her development (Schneider, Gruman & Coutts, 2005). It is probable to see a shift in gender roles if the individuals are exposed to different social norms than their own. Crossman, Stith, & Bender (1990) and Haj-Yahia (2003) have found a positive relationship between acculturation and less patriarchal (egalitarian) gender role behaviors. Lower levels of acculturation indicate fewer egalitarian views resulting in strict, conservative, and rigid attitudes towards gender roles (Bhanot & Senn, 2007). This aforementioned study also noted that length of residency in United States is positively related to higher levels of acculturation. On the contrary, Yoshihama, Blazevski, & Bybee (2014) found that there was no relationship between study participants’ length of residency in the United States and perceived attitudes towards gender roles. However, their study found significant association between the individuals’ length of residency in United States and their attained education, which in turn promotes liberal gender role attitudes and less patriarchal behaviors. The researcher in the current study explored if the study participants had similar or different experiences in regard to gender roles attitudes as stated in these research studies.

Kaplan & Grewal (2006) described that individuals are categorized as males or females based on current and historical societal norms and hence, they adhere to fulfillment of the roles as laid out by their societies. In addition to that, cultural and religious beliefs also play a vital role in social construction of gender roles, such as
individuals as men and women may have their own responsibilities, and they may not have the freedom to switch roles.

Gordon (1995) affirmed that acculturation influences the gender roles as the “societal forces encourage change” (p. 60), and individuals reconstruct their social identities in their new environment. The above-mentioned study further revealed that immigrant women from certain cultures acquire more freedom to live their lives the way they choose after moving to United States in comparison to when they are in their home countries. Since during acculturation process individuals are involved actively in the learning process; they construct new knowledge, meanings, and identities through social interactions, and some of these may be their perceived gender roles in the host country (Simpson, 2002; Cooper, Basson, & Schaap, 2006). The researcher explored if the study participants in the current study viewed their gender roles differently in their current society in the United States in comparison to the gender roles that they experienced and perceived in their home countries.

This theoretical framework assisted the researcher to understand the various interactions of culture, society, gender roles, and’ identities that the study participants encountered during their acculturation process. This helped to provide the researcher an understanding of study participants’ meaning making processes of their new environment and experiences.

**Pilot Study**

This study was piloted in 2007 as part of a course on advanced qualitative techniques under the supervision of faculty members specializing in qualitative research.
methodology. The research question for the pilot study was, “How do Asian India immigrant female teachers in an urban school district make meaning of their acculturation experiences?” The purpose was to understand how the Asian Indian immigrant female teachers in an urban school district constructed the meanings of their new status in mainstream culture. For the pilot study, the researcher had developed a set of open-ended interview questions related to the research questions. After the approval of Institutional Review Board (IRB), three Asian Indian female teachers in a Midwestern urban school district were solicited as participants. In total, including the researcher, since the study used a heuristic approach, the participants included four female Asian Indian teachers with between two and seven years of professional experience in an urban school district in Midwest. The researcher interviewed each participant in face-to-face meetings. The open-ended questions provided information rich resources, which were audiotaped and recorded verbatim by the researcher. The transcripts were coded and arranged in domains, followed by thematic analysis, and finalized with a cross-analysis to uncover any common themes in the transcripts. The models and adult learning theories were utilized in initial coding and themes as and when identified in the transcripts.

The results of the pilot study indicated that the participants were leading dual identities in some respects: First, fulfilling the roles of a wife, mother, daughter, and daughter-in-law as per the customs of their culture is core in the lives of these teachers. Second, the participants described that making efforts and being hardworking was part of their homeland culture. In this case, the effort was at acculturating to the professional environment. The participants explained that they decided to approach their new surroundings with a new attitude, free of biases, stereotypes, and prejudices. They
extended a hand of friendship to their coworkers by associating with them at work, inviting to social gatherings, and interacting with their students to get to know them better. The outcomes aligned with the theoretical model of constructivism as the participants made new social alliances in their new socio-cultural environments. (Simpson, 2002). The participants developed understandings of their host country based on their experiences and assumptions in their present lives (Cooper, Basson, & Schaap, 2006).

The findings from the pilot study show that there were no cultural value conflicts at all when it came to the professional aspects of participants’ lives. Most of the participants came to the USA for better professional and economic opportunities, which is consistent with the findings of Bhattacharya and Schoppelrey (2004), and Bhattacharya (2000) as well. The participants reported having more facilities and amenities in the United States than in India. Although, in the beginning, they had some fears regarding their residential status, their jobs, new environments, and they faced challenges in the form of resentment from other coworkers, over the time, the participants were able to overcome these fears and challenges. Conversely, the study found cultural value conflict regarding parenting styles, and dating and marriage practices.

All of them found that life was more comfortable here than in India, and that it provided more opportunities and flexibility in the form of lifestyles; and basic things were easily available to all in general. Therefore, the attraction for better life opportunities allured these participants to leave their own country and come to the United States of America (USA). Their career lives provide the most influential aspect in enabling them to align to the mainstream culture in the United States. Therefore, they
made meanings that their prior perceptions about the USA were only illusive and that they can maintain their original cultures in the foreign land in all spheres of their lives. The findings were supported by participants’ strong wills to continue passing their culture on to their children by celebrating important days in their culture, and by participating in cultural events held at local temples and mosques relating to their home culture.

**Site Selection for Current Research**

Several criteria were used to select the urban school district that served as site for this study. The researcher used only one urban school district located within a Midwestern city, as opposed to suburban or rural setting. One reason for this was that during the pilot study, most participants had brought up how working in this particular urban school district had accelerated their acculturation process and made them feel welcomed and desired. As a previous employee of this particular school district, the researcher has access to these participants through her networks. There could have been potentially more participants based in other urban school districts; however, that possibility was eliminated from consideration due to the concerns related to accessibility for data collection. Hence, this study is geographically bound to one large urban school district in Midwest. In particular, the city in which the research was conducted is home to a number of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers, making it an ideal research setting.

Based on Milner’s (2012) categorization and definition of an urban school, this specific Midwestern school district would fall under the category of “Urban Emergent” (p 559). According to Milner (2012), schools in this category do not have as big challenges
concerning academic achievement, discipline, resources, and retention of teachers as some other school districts in major cities such as New York and Chicago have. However, the schools at which the current study participants work, have some similar characteristics and differences as the schools in New York and Chicago have when it comes to resources, qualifications and retention of teachers, and the academic achievement of students. At times, the terms urban schools and inner-city schools are used interchangeably; however, social, and educational scientists have different opinion about that, and these two terms should not be confused with each other. Commonly, urban education or urban school district is defined as a school district with bare minimum resources, and higher concentration of low-income students (Jacob, 2007). The Urban Teaching School Alliance (2013) defined an urban school as having the characteristics of higher rates of poverty, diversity, lower academic achievement, and higher rates of non-English speakers. Elliot (1994) explained that an urban institution is not designated as urban solely based on its campus location; as a matter of fact, it is the “one that is located in a city that is engaged with the diversity of people within the community it serves, and that determines its institutional philosophy on the way it sees itself in relation to its environment and to the community in which it is located” (p. 23). Hence, it was very momentous that the researcher chose participants for this research only from the urban school district for significant findings. The researcher considered all above-mentioned criterions about an urban school district and urban education and researched this particular Midwestern school district to make sure it fulfilled the requirements of an urban school district. The schools in this study were assigned pseudonyms randomly by the researcher to preserve the confidentiality of the participants.
Research Setting

The researcher collected data through one on one interview with each participant. In addition to working for the same school district, many other things appeared common among the participants of this study. The researcher solicited in total eight participants, four males and four females, who work for this particular urban school district. All the selected schools, from which the participants were drawn, are high schools except one, which is an early college. The student body at each location is diverse and includes populations that seem underrepresented or disadvantaged in general in most aspects of life. The majority of the students at these locations are non-White. The selected schools provide a multi-ethnic setting with both students and staff members coming from different ethnic communities that is consistent with the previously discussed literature review for this research proposal (Akhtar, 2011). The researcher conducted one face to face interview based on the participants’ convenience, such as at the participants’ homes, or the researcher’s home. Due to the busy schedule of the participants, the researcher had left this decision to participants as to where wanted to meet for face-to-face interviews. However, the researcher made sure that the setting where interviews took place was non-distracting and noise free.

Participants

This study used purposeful sampling to recruit the study participants. Purposeful sampling refers to the participant selection technique that involves identifying information rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover,
understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Based on the criteria of purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002), the researcher has access to Asian Indian immigrant math and science high school teachers working at a local urban school district. The researcher used her friends or community network to invite the participants who were, in the researcher’s opinion considered “information rich cases.”

The study participants had to be Asian Indian immigrants working in an urban school district as math and science teachers. The study focused on understanding the acculturation experiences of eight Asian Indian immigrants, four male and four female teachers, who had moved to USA as highly qualified professionals under the category of H1b visas or any other legal immigrant visa that provides work authorization in the USA. H1b visa, according to United States Immigration Support Services (2015) is a visa that “enables professionals in specialty occupations such as accounting, computer analysts, programmers, database administrators, web designers, engineers, financial analysts, doctors, nurses, scientists, architects and lawyers to make valuable contribution to the American economy and they should have at least bachelor’s degree or requisite experience to make up for a master’s degree.” This is a non-immigrant visa and the individual can stay in the host country for a maximum stay of six years. However, there is a possibility of these H1b visa holders to attain legal residency through their employers.

The participants also had to be the residents of USA for at least a few years, as longer durations of time in the host culture may be needed for individuals to adopt new values and beliefs that are different from their original ones (Berry, 2005). According to Berry (2005), acculturation is a dual process, where psychological and cultural changes
occur over the duration of time and may take years, at times generations, or even centuries. Similarly, Cheung, Chudek and Heine, (2011), in their study of acculturation, found that the longer exposure to a host culture lead to greater identification with host culture among the young immigrants.

The inclusion criteria for the participants simply included conditions that the participants must have attained the adult age to offer own consent to participate in the study and must be currently a teacher of this particular urban school district.

Data Collection

Prior to data collection, the researcher submitted a proposal to the Cleveland State University Institutional Board of Review (IRB) to obtain their permission. The IRB ensured that the rights of all human subjects involved in the research are protected. The researcher listed the information about the research study asked in different sections of the IRB proposal form including demographics, project description, and information about using the consent form, considerations for special populations, if any, and discussion of any possible risks/benefits to the study participants. The researcher also listed how she planned to handle the participants’ concerns, if any.

After the IRB granted their approval, the researcher approached the potential participants to sign the consent form. The researcher made a phone call to the identified study participants: Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban school district in Ohio to take part in the research study. The researcher then scheduled face-to-face interviews with each participant. The researcher met the participants at the predetermined location of convenience for an hour to hour and half long interviews.
There was one face to face interview with each participant which was recorded with the permission of the participants. Each interview consisted of the same semi-structured questions about participants’ acculturation experiences in the United States while working as high school math and science teachers in an urban school district in Ohio. The face to face interview was followed up with one to two phone calls during the data analysis for clarification on certain topics. The participants fully cooperated during the data analysis process.

**Interviews**

Semi-structured questions were framed to guide the conversational interview, addressing some of the following topics, which expanded into other categories and sub-categories after the actual interviews took place:

a) reasons for their migration to the USA; (b) overall reactions to the society in the host country; (c) their early experiences when they first arrived and recent experiences, both social and in their professional environments; (d) perceptions about gender roles, marriage, dating, premarital sex relations, socialization, moral values, religion in American society, expectations from children; (e) reflections on their own lives, and personal developments, if any; (f) perceptions about gender and work environment having impact on their acculturation processes. The new category included the family dynamics of the participants, and the struggles and challenges faced by the family members due to migration.

The detailed interview questions are attached in the appendices section. All participants were interviewed once face-to-face, with interviews ranging from 60 minutes
to 90 minutes followed by one to two phone calls lasting between 20 minutes to 30 minutes. Interviews were primarily conducted in English, using Hindi or Punjabi phrases occasionally and only if necessary, and were translated and repeated in English by the researcher. This group was a true representation of the middle-class population of professional Asian Indian immigrant male and female teachers of math and sciences in K-12 urban school district in the United States. Demographic information was obtained including their religious affiliation. The researcher protected the participants’ privacy by replacing their names with pseudonyms and by following all ethical measures of implementing educational research. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim, and the interview drafts were shared with the participants to check for accuracy of information. This process is called member checks and is necessary for application of triangulation (Merriam, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

The second interview of the participants was via phone call after member checks to cover any inexplicable, incomplete, or missing topics that emerged during the initial coding and description process of the data collected. The interview questions helped in guiding the interview sessions (Merriam, 2009). The interview questions were developed by the researcher based on her professional experience working as high school substitute teacher in the same setting of urban school district in Midwest along with in consideration of the literature review and pilot study findings. The researcher reviewed and checked for clarity of questions, the functional and structural language, biased questions, or any other semantic ambiguity.
Data Analysis

The study required the analysis of the interviews with participants. The researcher started with constructing a brief demographic report about the educational, religious, and social (socioeconomic status) backgrounds of these immigrant men and women, based on their interactions during interviews, to better understand the phenomenon of identity construction through acculturation experiences. Resultant data was categorized by assigning themes that became evident from the patterns after reviewing participants’ interview responses. The researcher then coded these emerging themes in order to trace the trends and patterns accurately. The data was color-coded, the researcher looked for similarities and differences in the data and arranged it within the emerging themes. Significant experiences were identified and assigned to the domains that are prescribed for this study within the social constructivist context of family, community, institution (school, workplace), and the wider society. These experiences of Asian Indian professional immigrant men and women were further investigated in the context of the two different cultures in which they were living, one the US and the other their country of origin. A thematic analysis of each transcript was conducted to uncover the common themes in these Asian Indian professional immigrant men and women’s acculturation experiences.

The researcher linked the data collection and data analysis to the literature review, which was used to help explain the phenomenon under inquiry (Zenobia, Chan & Chien, 2013). It helped explain and answer the research questions in regard to the acculturation process. Findings of the study were also added to the literature and studies on acculturation process of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban
school district in Ohio due to a limited number of research studies on this topic. The study addressed lack of support for immigrant teachers in schools in USA to help them adjust to their new professional and social environment. The researcher identified coping strategies employed by study participants in case of cultural values conflict, along with the issues of shift in gender roles.

Summary

This study attempted to explore the acculturation experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban school district located in Ohio, and how their work environments have influenced their acculturation process. The research also addressed the gaps in current research about acculturation experiences of these Asian Indian immigrant men and women in their professional and personal lives. The study investigated the meaning making process of study participants and tried to understand the experienced cultural values conflict, and what strategies they employed to cope with it. The researcher also explored if gender influenced the participants’ perceptions of their new roles, identities, and responsibilities in their new surroundings. This study provided opportunities and avenues for other researchers to implement similar studies in different settings. This study made an effort to address these questions and provided implications for the challenges during this investigative process of acculturation experiences of study participants.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

Immigrant teachers, students, and members of staff in K-12 urban schools across the United States derive from a range of ethnic settings (Apostol, 2008). Due to the multiculturalism of K-12 urban settings, a culturally sensitive teaching environment is essential (Barton & Berchini, 2013). Accordingly, the employment of teachers from various cultural backgrounds has increased, minimizing the diversity gap between the teachers and students. As a result, modern K-12 urban settings now include a highly diversified population of teachers that deploy more diverse teaching practices (Chun et al., 2003). In light of this trend, the purpose of this research was to explore and understand how Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 an urban school district construct the meanings of their new status in mainstream teaching culture. In essence, this study investigated whether being an Asian Indian immigrant math or science teacher in K-12 urban school district influences their acculturation process in the United States. In this chapter, the findings of in-depth interviews are presented. In this
current study eight Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district participated. The participants were interviewed to find out their meaning making experiences. The research questions that guided the study were:

1. How do the experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban K-12 setting in Ohio influence their acculturation process and cultural values?

2. How do Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district located in Ohio construct meanings of their new roles, responsibilities, and identities in their new socio-cultural environment?

3. How do the Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district perceive their gender influencing their expected roles and responsibilities in their professional and personal lives?

This chapter presents the findings of the study that explored the acculturations experiences of immigrant teachers in a K-12 urban school environment. Lack of research on this topic (Martinez& Valenzuela, 2006; Samnami, Boekhorst, & Harrison, 2012.) provided me an opportunity to gain insight into the participants’ meaning making process of their host environment, and thus added to the literature on the topic. Before discussing the findings and results, it is important to provide background on the participants, the environment in which they worked, and the circumstances of their migration to the United States.
Background

**K-12 urban school district.** The work environment of the participants and the primary agent responsible for their migration is located in a midsize urban city in Ohio. The school district spans over 82 square miles, operates 105 schools, and faces challenges of meeting the needs of a diverse population of over 40,000 students. The school district had struggled with the retention of the teachers for several years and had to reach out to the prospective employees in other countries, such as India in 2000 and 2001, to fill vacancies for highly qualified math and science teachers (Moulthrop, Calegari, and Eggers, 2006). According to Crumpet (2001), the district sent a team to India to interview teachers and worked closely with recruitment and placement agencies for the process to be successful. The teachers were brought over within few months and “thrown in the deep end at work” with little to no training. This information helps to truly understand the reaction of the participants to their new work environment, and how it affected their acculturation experiences.

**Participants.** The semi structured interviews with open ended questions was the most appropriate choice for this qualitative phenomenological study. As the researcher, I recruited eight individuals in total, four men and four women, who were interested in taking part in the research. I used purposeful sampling to recruit the study participants. Being part of the Asian-Indian community, I had access to the participants and hence, used my community network to invite the participants. When it was time for the interviews, one of the participants had withdrawn without any prior notice. I had to wait another two months before I was able to find my eighth participant who met the criteria, which was, an Asian-Indian immigrant math or science teacher in a K-12 urban school.
district in Ohio, recruited through work visa-H1 and who has been in the United States for over 5 years. All eight participants completed the interviews.

Aman, the youngest of all the participants in his mid-forties was the first participant that I recruited. Aman is a high school Mathematics teacher and shared that he likes his job even though he had more pessimistic and skeptic attitude in comparison to the other teachers when sharing his story of migration and working in urban environment. Aman belongs to a Hindu middle-class family in North India and moved to US for a better career and life opportunities. He was single and unmarried when he first moved to the US and went back to India few years later to get married. His wife was able to join him couple of months after their marriage. Aman did not seem the talkative type and spoke only when asked. Aman earned a master’s degree in Mathematics from India and did not feel the need to pursue further higher education in the US.

Varuna, a practicing Hindu, is in her mid-forties and working as a high school Chemistry teacher in the urban school district. Varuna moved to the United States in 2001 along with few other teachers from her area. Her husband and six-year-old daughter joined her after few months. Varuna was working as a teacher in the Capitol of India with a master’s degree in Sciences. Varuna completed another master’s degree in Education in the US to make herself more employable. Varuna saw this job in the US as an opportunity to have a better standard of life and be closer to her sister, who is married to an American citizen and is a nurse in Atlanta, GA. Varuna was one of the first to interview and participate in the study and gave much feedback on her transcribed interview. Varuna is very talkative and gregarious. She enjoys sharing her stories.
Preeti, also in her mid-forties, moved to the US in 2001 from South India, where she worked as a Special Education teacher along with her husband, and she specialized in Sciences. Preeti practices Hinduism. Her husband and she both were recruited by the school district and moved to the US together. Though she continued with the district as a Special Education teacher, her husband had to resign due to certain health problems. That’s why he couldn’t take part in the study, as one of the criteria for participant selection was that participants should still be employed with the district. Preeti had a master’s degree in Communication Media and obtained another one in Mathematics in the USA. Preeti is not a talkative person but usually responds when asked a question.

Mona, in her late forties, moved to the US in 2001 from South India, and she was joined by her husband and son two months later. Mona identifies herself as Christian and is involved with a local church. She shared about struggling in India since she her family was not very well-off. Her husband could not find a desirable job in the United States; however, their church helped them support themselves in many ways. Mona had a master’s degree from India and earned another one in Educational Technology from a university in US. Mona is quite chatty and enjoys sharing her life stories with others.

Omaar is the only Muslim participant in my study and is a native of South India. Omaar has a doctorate degree in education and teaches both Mathematics and Science in this particular urban school district in Ohio. Omaar moved to the US in 2001 by himself. He was joined by his wife and children a year later. Omaar is a quiet person, and it took some effort to get information from him.
Rakesh, a Mathematics’ teacher, belongs to a Hindu middle-class family from North India. He moved to the US with other teachers hired in 2001 and was later joined by his wife. Rakesh had two masters’ degrees from India and takes pride in teaching for one of the college track programs in the district. Rakesh is not very chatty but was more than willing to share his life stories.

Sameer, just like Rakesh, belongs to a Hindu middle-class family from North India. He is a friendly and talkative person and shared his story with lot of enthusiasm. Sameer had master’s degree when he moved to the US and completed professional development workshops to become a Highly Qualified Teacher. Sameer moved to US with his colleagues hired from India and was later joined by his wife and two sons. His wife also started teaching for the district after moving to the United States.

Mary, like Mona, also hails from South India and is in her late fifties. While all other participants came from middle class families, raised by both parents, Mary grew up as an orphan. Mary, like other previous female participants, is highly educated with four masters’ degrees. She earned three masters’ degrees from India and the last one after moving to the USA. Mary was my last recruit, substituting the female participant who had bailed out at the last minute. Mary is loquacious and effusive person and wants to make difference in the world by sharing her stories of struggle and success.

The participants above have been listed in the order they were interviewed. The following table presents the participants’ demographic information:
Table 1 Descriptions of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Teaching Topic</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Years in United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aman</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Ma</td>
<td>NI</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S/Ma</td>
<td>SI</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mona</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Ma</td>
<td>SI</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omaar</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>SI</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preeti</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Sp. Ed/S</td>
<td>SI</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rakesh</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Ma</td>
<td>NI</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sameer</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Ma</td>
<td>NI</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varuna</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NI</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Themes

The table below lists the prevailing themes that emerged in addition to other key definitional phrases and terms during data analysis significant in answering and understanding the research questions. The overall emerging themes are as follow:

a) Skill development  b) Support system  c) Cultural conflicts  d) Maintaining trust and respect  e) Trustworthy role model  f) Steward of student success  f) Disciplinary class manager  g) Professional gender equity  h) Personal gender equity. The following table depicts the themes emerging from the data analysis:
Table II Emergent themes and theme descriptions sorted by research question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) How do the experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science</td>
<td>1 – Skill development</td>
<td>The progression of professional skills that enhanced the capacity of teachers to instruct to the level of expectations in their current environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers in an urban K-12 setting in Ohio influence their acculturation</td>
<td>2 – Support systems</td>
<td>Social integration that contributes to the ability for teachers to thrive professional or personally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process and cultural values?</td>
<td>3 – Cultural conflicts</td>
<td>Dissonances experienced from cultural differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 – Maintaining respect</td>
<td>The process of establishing and keeping a positive interpersonal relationship with students and colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) How do Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12</td>
<td>1 – Trustworthy role</td>
<td>The interpersonal dealings between students and teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>urban school district located in Ohio construct meanings of their new</td>
<td>2 – Steward of student</td>
<td>The pattern of performance that leads to advancement and/or proficiency in a particular domain or with a particular set of skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roles, responsibilities, and identities in their new socio-cultural</td>
<td>3 – Disciplinary class</td>
<td>The act of keeping students accountable to academic or behavioral standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment?</td>
<td>manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) How do the Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a</td>
<td>1 – Professional gender</td>
<td>The fair treatment and opportunity granted to both genders in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12 urban school district perceive their gender influencing their</td>
<td>2 – Personal gender</td>
<td>The fair treatment and opportunity granted to both genders in greater society as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expected roles and responsibilities in their professional and personal</td>
<td>equity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lives?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following passages, I will examine and discuss each of the three research questions one by one along with the emerging themes addressing those respective questions.

As outlined in Chapter Three, the thematic data analysis included coding the interview transcripts based on content features that were relevant to the research questions. After coding, a “story” (theme) emerged based on the relationship between the
coded content and the frequency of occurrence of the codes. Each theme portrays a
categorical response to a sub-question guiding the research. Each theme, with exemplars,
are presented in this section, aligned with its corresponding research question.

The group interviews and students’ interactions were analysed using inductive
methods. This approach is called data-driven or thematic analysis, which means that the
researcher pays attention to the whole dataset and classifies the prominent ideas that have
repeated patterns or themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The main purpose of an inductive
approach is to move from general concepts into more specific data that assist researchers
“to develop a model […] about the underlying structure of experiences or processes that
are evident in the text data” (Thomas, 2003, p. 2). This method aligned with the research
objectives because it could “produce an insightful analysis that answers particular
research questions’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 97). There were three phases in the process
of coding that were applied to interpret the interviews, as advocated by Miles and
Huberman, (1984) and Braun and Clarke, (2006). These were, 1) gather the data through
transcribing and coding, 2) minimize the data into themes and sub-themes, and 3) present
the data in an organized way. In this research project, there was a slight difference in the
first stage, which was in the coding of interviews--- the researcher coded the repeated
themes and ideas.

Interviews were conducted primarily in English, however, at times, the two other
languages of Hindi and Punjabi were used for clarification. First, all interviews were
transcribed manually in English by the researcher. Subsequently, the initial
interpretations and preliminary codes were generated by reading the transcriptions
numerous times. According to Clark and Braun (2013), a code is assigning categories,
such as concepts, patterns, etc. to the data. This stage involved identifying the units of analysis by breaking the interview into paragraphs and writing a summary in front of each segment, generating and coding the significant ideas and themes. The second stage was to reduce the long lists of themes into a smaller manageable number. Braun and Clarke defined a theme as pattern in the data responding to the research questions. This procedure required refining these categories by assembling them under a comprehensive label, showing the relationship between these elements. The third stage was to report descriptive analysis and final results, using quotations to support tendencies or outliers in the data.

All eight interviews were manually transcribed, color-coded and organized into themes using tables. The first process to analyse was to read the dialogue several times to code the emergence of concepts, patterns and properties.

**Research Question One: How do the experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban K-12 setting in Ohio influence their acculturation process and cultural values?**

Participants were asked to give their perceptions on how K-12 urban schools influenced their acculturation processes. The participants provided both positive and negative experiences. Regardless of polarity, several main themes emerged including skill development, support system, cultural conflict and sensitivity, and maintaining respect and trust. Each of these themes were defined based on the content patterns exhibited across the interview data. That is, as respondents answered the interview questions, patterns emerged in their responses that had relevance to the overarching
research question leading this investigation. These patterns were coded as they were noted and the aggregation of the codes under each interview question led to the inductive development of a theme.

**Theme 1: Skill development.** During the data analysis, skill development came up as the progression of professional skills that enhanced the capacity of teachers to instruct to the level of expectations in their current environment. The participants revealed that learning a new culture positively influenced their teaching ability. The participants mentioned that since their work experiences was vastly different from their experiences in their home country, the new culture led to their professional development, sometimes in unexpected ways. For instance, Preeti mentioned the following when asked about the skills she had to learn to cope with her new work environment when she first moved to the US:

> A lot of people (colleagues) guided me and mentored me…I do value what I learned that I was able to implement some of the things that I learned here…My mentor teachers (American peers) were really strong. They would always let me know, "This is not the right way to do it, do it this way." Especially when it came to behavior management (in the classrooms) …I've learnt a lot. I was given a lot of opportunities to grow professionally too…I was always given chances to try a few things experiment, lead groups.

Interestingly, Preeti identified how some relationships aided skill development through the goodwill of colleagues. Talking about the opportunities to grow professional she discussed the competencies she had to acquire to be successful in her work environment:

> The work experience was completely different. I had to, I can say, delete all my memory to begin afresh here, do a lot of learning. A lot of people guided me and mentored me, I can say.
Rakesh also found that the acculturation process included the acquisition of new skills, such as classroom management, writing and delivering lesson plans, and working with an inclusion set up (a mix of general education and special needs students). Rakesh explained that collectively, the immigrant teachers were able to meet and discuss their culture and challenges with their colleagues (African-American teachers). This social interaction allowed the immigrant teachers and their American peers from the host country to learn different cultures, signifying a type of trade of best practices. The different cultural backgrounds between colleagues appeared to pique a curiosity about personal histories in a way that created opportunities to discuss differences in practice between the two countries. For example, several participants noted that these discussions—part of the acculturation process—were sources of learning on how best to improve classroom management or develop other skills as a teacher. Rakesh explained a few ways his American colleagues helped him:

They (American teaching staff) knew about the education system of India, and they knew what's the education system, what are the difficulties I would be facing in the classroom especially in the classroom management problems, so they helped me out. I have to be consistent with all my rules, so they told me, stressed to me on that particular area that I have to be consistent.

Further talking about skill development, Rakesh explained he sought guidance from his colleagues to write his lesson plans as well:

It was a problem initially how to differentiate our lessons there, because in India it was… totally we used to follow the same pattern in all classrooms because there were (there were 4-5 classrooms for each grade, called sections) sections based upon their percentage. Here it was not that segregated.

The participants also talked about learning how to deliver a lesson. Rakesh further shared:
I knew my subject area, that was not a problem but how to present it that was something. I couldn't use the lecture method math. I broke down the topics, short topics, short lessons then discuss those topics. Might be in one day I used to discuss only one particular concept, discuss the whole time 40 minutes for that.

Consistent with this, Aman had shared how he expected to learn different and newer things:

I thought like it's gonna be a big opportunity for me to uh just learn like the different style of teaching and different things.

Aman also mentioned how he learned to manage his classroom differently than he did classrooms in India. He used examples to explain that in comparison to India, where the culture is to respect the teachers regardless of their age, caste (a closed system of stratification where membership is determined by birth), or religion. On the contrary, in the US, the teachers have to earn respect by creating a good rapport with the students:

…this is like totally different. So initially like I have to just talk to them and make some jokes and then once they know that I am not very strict with them, you know. Talk and then I ask them, "How was your day?", and, "How's your family?" In that—that way, and, "Do you have any problem?"…So once they see that day that the teacher care about them—and they start coming to you.

Varuna went a step ahead and shared how she grew as a teacher after working in schools in the United States.

You learn when you start teaching…and it was so easy I mean-- Now I think I was such a bad teacher in India, I would be such a loved person now if I go back. I was the hated teacher when I was in India.

Talking about skill development, Sameer, one of the male teachers shared how he had to learn to provide everything in writing, especially when it comes to students’ behavior and discipline strategies.
In the beginning we have problems here. Slowly, we came to know we have to follow protocol (such as) writing referral, calling the parent, sending to the principle all that kind of thing. We have never done those things back there in India.

He further mentioned how he has grown as a teacher while learning and adapting to a different work environment. Sameer also shared how having access to teaching and classroom resources make an enormous difference in teaching effectively. Additionally, there is specialized and trained staff for the diverse needs of students, and all these resources were lacking in schools in India.

Work environment was different than in India. For example, in classrooms up there we do not have those much material or anything (resources), just chalk and board, and you start teaching. Here we have different staff, good staff as well technology, and other supports.

Omar explained how he worked on his pronunciation as well to be more successful as a teacher in addition to taking different non-degree courses at nearby universities to understand the teaching learning process:

I mean teaching atmosphere but here your atmosphere is different…whereas there we say respiratory system, here they say respiratory (stressing different syllables) system. Like that I have to learn…Stressing on different syllables, yes. These were the things we did not know, and we adopted those things.

Mona also touched base about being legally bound to follow certain policies and knowing all about those to function as a teacher:

Legally, there are so many issues that you have to be aware of. Initially, that was another hurdle. You had to sit and learn these books and rules, section this says this. You have a special aid kit, this is what you're supposed to do. This is the IEP and so on and so forth. None of those things are being followed there. Everything is documented here.

In Mary’s view, the teachers hired from India did not have sufficient training to work in the US classrooms. She talks about culturally sensitive class and discipline policies:
In my classroom I should adapt a culture which would be fitting for all the students. I did not learn all that. We never had any training because they thought they were all experienced teachers, trained teachers, but we were not trained in this setting. We were not trained...The classroom setting; we learned in our methodology, we learned everything, but then we never learned how to do the classroom setting itself...All these things we were not taught, and we were not expecting to come and do all that, and then we never saw this kind of setting also. It was so difficult for us, and that first year and all......so I learned a lot from the urban school as a teacher.

Without formal mentorships to aid in their transition, participants could only find this valuable source of learning through the chance development of positive relations with fellow non-immigrant teachers willing to offer extra assistance. This can be categorized as informal learning process through mentoring relationships. Additionally, they learned it from their experiences, while facing the challenges in the classroom and interacting with the students. Most participants had positive experiences with skill development and growing professionally.

**Theme 2: Support systems.** Support systems lead to the development of good relationships. During data analysis this theme was defined as a form of integration that contributes to the ability for teachers to thrive professional or personally. The participants explained that they experienced support from teachers in the host country.

**Support from their American peers: Professional Support.** Despite cultural differences, the Asian Indian immigrant teachers were able to experience support from their American colleagues in the Ohio schools. Their American colleagues introduced the immigrant teachers to restaurants and different foods. Additionally, they helped the immigrant teachers find places to shop in the neighborhood. Sameer mentioned how his colleagues used to help him with all kinds of matters, and not just professional matters:
I was working in school so my colleagues, they were Americans. We had good relations. They used to help us out rightly for everything which was excellent…Because whenever at the first year, I did not have a car or anything. They used to drop us that was excellent thing…I have been having very cooperative support from them. They always admire as I was here (as a teacher). Very nice…They were happy. They were not upset (with my presence as an outsider) …Very few of them were curious, "How come you managed to do all this, to travel, all that?" but they were supportive.

This support system from their American peers contributed to the development of strong relationships. For instance, Rakesh mentioned:

Yes, it was a very big help in the initial stages for the first one or two years, so we could share our problems and how to solve those problems with the other teachers (non-immigrant American teachers) and how to respond to the situations coming in the classrooms in our own school district so that helped a lot…

Rakesh also mentioned how the support from colleagues helped him to understand the system around him:

…as soon as we got the support of the other teachers (American) in the school, and from the district also, we started getting used to the system here.
…The first school where I was teaching, the principal was very helpful, she understood the problem, she understood what the situation is when a person moves from a totally different country to a new country and the school system is totally different. She understood the problem and she was very helpful.

Rakesh shared how his American peers provided him mental and emotional support by being empathetic.

Omaar explained more in detail the relationship he shares with his American peers, and the support he received from them since he moved to USA. The friendly attitude of his peers and neighbors helped Omaar with his transition into his host society. Additionally, he maintained how he has good relations with his peers since the last
sixteen years, and even today they visit each other’s homes at important occasions, such as graduations, weddings, and festivals:

Yes. After coming here, we got a good welcome by the school and so many other teachers. We made good friends with them. We got a good bond between all the American teachers...In the first instance, we were a little bit, I can say, a little bit shy when we were introduced to them (American colleagues and neighbors) and they were introduced to us. But after a little while we understood each and everybody. That made it easy for our transition...Most of them (friends) are Americans and we had a good relationship with them. And still, after 16 years also, I will say that we still continue with that friendship...They invited us, we invited them to our home. We had food, we had cultural exchange, and gifts exchange. So many things happening...People are same (in India and in America), very friendly, very helpful...And then when we were introduced with these American friends, they did welcome us very nicely and they helped us in different walks of life.

Omar made an extra effort to share the support and encouragement he received from most of his American colleagues:

But some of them, they welcomed us very nicely, they appreciate our education, they appreciate our experience and they appreciate the way how we teach and the amount of knowledge what we have, in that way they welcome us.

Omar also mentioned how the supportive colleagues showed faith in his expertise as a teacher:

They did approach, they talked, the ones who gave us a good welcome, who had a good idea about us and they talked like, "We can do some change here (meaning Asian Indian teachers can help bring a change)," they appreciated that.

**Personal Support System.** Two of the female participants, Mona and Mary, who identify as Christians, found more support from their church members in comparison to
support from their Asian Indian immigrant colleagues and nonimmigrant American colleagues. Mona shared:

Over here…a colleague…used to take us to the church. We got friends there (at the church).

When asked if it was easier for her (Mona) to make friends in the host country, she replied:

Yes, because of the church... Right now, I want to say I socialize more with American friends than Indian friends. It could be because of the church. Two, it could be because of my children…I meet a lot of my daughter's friends’ parents.

Mary also confirmed getting more support from her church and fellow churchgoers (Americans) when it came to transition with life and culture in USA. She shared how her American peers included her family and her in celebrating important festivals of their culture

When I first arrived, actually the human resource director (from the urban school district) was my very good friend, she used to-she used to invite me for the Thanksgiving, we used to go there to her house solely for the first two to three years. When she moved (to another place) …also she invited me. We went there to enjoy the Thanksgiving with her, like her own family she treats me.

Mary expressed how she has always felt more comfortable socializing with her American friends and colleagues in comparison to her Asian Indian friends and coworkers:

I feel so comfortable with American colleagues—socialize more with American colleagues—yes, because one of my American colleagues even though she’s Hispanic, she is the one who found the home in Lakewood[sic], an apartment (for Mary and her family)...they embraced us in the church and then also the language, we are not very bad in English-There (in India) also I go (went) to church every Sunday and here also the church people they are a big support and everything. Since I'm very very[sic] active in our church, more of the American society (more socialization with Americans).
Mary shared how her American colleagues supported her family and her through challenging times, such as finding an apartment, helping with the move, and getting necessary household items:

American colleagues, what happened like a they were very--they thought that we relocated from a different country so those teachers were very friendly with me, and then when I told them that I was going from that hotel rooms to the apartment (want to move from hotel to her own apartment) when my husband and my son is (are) coming, they wanted to actually contribute some to find out what are the things we need for our home and everything. They even wanted to help us with the small little things like that.

Aman had similar experience as Mary as he expressed how his American colleagues were helpful when he first moved here:

They like some- like they were very helpful, you know. Initially, like some of my colleagues, they were very helpful.

Rakesh shared the kind of support and help he received from his American peers as well:

The first school where I was teaching, the principal was very helpful, she understood the problem, she understood what's the situation when a person moves from a totally different country to a new country and the school system is totally different. She understood the problem and she was very helpful…I made friends with my fellow teachers, American teachers. Sometimes one of the (American colleagues) teachers used to pick me up and drop me back to my residence, and he used to take us for shopping also.

Support from Asian-Indian peers. Most of the participants discussed receiving social, emotional and professional support from their American peers and neighbors. This support made it easier for them to make friends and share their culture through food, gifts, and festivals. The participants expressed how this support was significant in their transition to the new culture and certainly accelerated the acculturation process for them.

In addition to receiving encouragement, the immigrant teachers found solace and
satisfaction in each other’s company and within their ethnic group. Preeti shared how since the beginning she felt more comfortable with her Asian Indian friends.

I related more to my Indian [friends] because they know the background…there are certain things like if I say, "You know my husband did this." My Indian friend will relate to it more than the Americans.

Omar admits receiving the support from his American colleagues, but he also maintained that all the Asian Indian immigrant teachers had each other as well, especially when they all were living in the same apartment building.

We got a good bond between all the American teachers. Of course, we did have our Indian group of teachers with us. In United States… we were all Indians in our group. We're all Indians, we're in a group. We were taking care of each other first for a long time.

On the contrary, Mona shared how her Indian colleagues did not help her out much even though she came few months after them. While discussing an incident about carpooling, she shared how her Indian colleagues left her standing outside her apartment building without offering any suggestions about how she can access some kind of transportation to go to work on the weekend. She found support and strength through her church and fellow churchgoers She delineated the harsh and selfish behavior of her Asian Indian immigrant colleagues on the first day of work (she came a month after her other Indian peers) when they left her stranded.

…all other Indian teachers went and sat inside the car. Then I was be left [alone]. Then they would drive and go. I was like what do I do? Then they (her Indian colleagues) said, “oh we initially used to take bus (hinting that she should do the same).” Then there was just one teacher who came back (to help Mona). Then he (the teacher who came back to help Mona) yelled at the others saying "You guys know she's new. She's not even been here for a week. How do you think she knows the bus numbers (bus routes)? How does she know where to get down (off)? This is a new country. I
can't believe you guys are doing this to her." I (Mona) was shocked (at the behavior of her Asian Indian immigrant colleagues).

Unlike Mona, Aman had positive experiences with his Indian colleagues when he first moved here. However, he misses not being able to see some of his Indian friends as often as he used to in the first few years of his moving to Ohio. Most of the people moved to different suburbs, and some even moved out of state when they found better job opportunities. Aman said that his immigrant colleagues:

…like most of the teachers that they came, they stayed together. Like close by in the same apartment building…It was very uh helpful because we were together. We shared our views and if you have any problem we can go to someone else but now everybody is in their own houses…they moved- So they have their own like uh, other responsibilities, you know…So that's why. But then when we were together, it was very helpful.

Having that initial support from his Asian Indian colleagues helped Aman adjust to his new surroundings better in comparison to facing it all alone. Rakesh agreed with Aman about feeling safe and gaining strength from his Indian colleagues who lived in the same apartment building during the first few years of his arrival in the United States:

Yes, it was a very big helpful in the initial stages for the first one or two years, so we could share our problems and how to solve those problems with the other teachers and how to respond to the situations coming in the classrooms in our own school district so that helped a lot.

Most of the participants clearly accepted receiving support and gaining strength from each other’s presence when they first moved here. Even though one of the participants had a negative experience, but overall, participants sought help and advice from each other that assisted them in their acculturation process. This indicates the immigrants who get social support from their friends, relatives, and colleagues likely adjust to the external
challenges during the process of acculturation. Developing such social support system assists in alleviating the acculturation stress and offers the immigrants a good environment to work.

**Theme 3: Cultural conflicts.** This theme was reflected in participants’ reports that culture in the United States was different from their own culture. The participants mentioned that during their first days in K-12 urban settings in Ohio, their cultural experiences were starkly different than what they had experienced in their home country and challenging. The majority of the participants reported challenges such as adapting to new food, new dress codes, and language. Some of them also shared how different work setting, environment, teaching style, teaching resources, student population, and curriculum was a cultural conflict when it came to adjustment in their new work environment.

**Food and dietary preferences.** Mary mentioned that acculturation in K-12 urban settings resulted in cultural conflict and stress in terms of dress code, language, and food. When asked about differences experienced in two societies, Mary focused on differences outside of her teaching life, particularly concerning food and clothing. She explained how she has been struggling to adapt to American food all these years, and still has not come to terms with it:

Yes, but food, still now I am not adapting. I'm sorry, because maybe, like you guys if I had come a little earlier maybe then I could have adapted. My son adapt [sic] very well because he was small… even though I'm a Christian. I'm a vegetarian, but I have to cook for my son and my husband. I'm a very good cook in doing that, but then I hate meat and all that.

She further explained how lack of variety in food in USA has also been a deterrent for
her when it comes to eating outside at restaurants, and that’s why she always prefers her home cooking:

…if you come to my house, not some two, three vegetarian dishes will always be there…Because the way I was brought up like that way, in a boarding school, I always preferred the vegetarian food. Because I don't know how they clean [meat] and how they make and all that, so I don't like [to eat meat] … You know, even McDonald's, anywhere, it's the same kind of food. The fries, and this, and that, and that only one or two days is good for you, but not for every day. Always home food is my food.

Varuna mentioned that adapting to American food, such as, eating doughnuts, was something she wasn’t used to in India. She expressed, with some disappointment in her voice, that American foods were not similar to Indian foods in taste and texture, and therefore, adapting to most loved American foods (donuts, cookies, and cakes) in American society was a big challenge. She said:

“Yes, I'm still not adjusted, I can't eat everything like I have never eaten--can you believe it if I tell you? I have never tasted their doughnuts” …I don't feel like having their muffins…Doughnuts, muffins and there are so many other things. I do eat the cakes, I don't like them too much. But because in the school [we have to taste and eat on different occasions]—I like Indian cakes, if you compare, Indian cakes are superb.

Aman described having difficulties accessing the ready to eat Indian food during his initial years in USA. He explained that he had to teach himself how to cook Indian food, so he did not have to depend on his Asian Indian peers. Omaar, too, struggled with the culinary differences when compared to his homeland:

The food was a completely shock for us, we do not habituate to, we did not see this type of food. We have our traditional food like rice and bread and all those but here it is McDonalds, Burger King and all. That was a shock for us.

Rakesh also found making adjustments to the American food a little difficult initially:
Yes, the food was a little bit difficult. We were not used to the food which is here in the United States.

However, he also discussed the initiatives he took to explore the cultural differences:

…we explored different things. In the school we used to have lunch, so they have different types of food there. Being a vegetarian, the principal made sure that they ordered vegetarian food also but of the American type like Mac and cheese, all of that stuff.

Preeti elaborated on not having much problem regarding food in the initial years as she used to cook all types of Indian dishes at home. However, she also agreed on not having many options for her when it came to American food:

…we used to have [cook] at home so had no problem in the beginning. Now we have adapted all kind of food, so we have no problem. We did not have any problem at that time [either]…sometimes we used to go out there [to] Indian restaurant.

Language Conflict. Language challenge kept crawling up as the data unpacked.

A few participants confessed having language barriers when interacting with their urban student population. For Mona, the slang or the vernacular used by African American students at school was one of the main barriers in adjusting to the mainstream culture in urban schools, in addition to the disrespectful attitude of students towards the teachers. This is an evident instance of lack of experience and familiarity with American urban school culture, and links to lack of pre-training of the hired immigrant teachers.

According to Mona:

Things were very harsh in the beginning. Yes, all of us said that it was a culture shock and even the language was difficult in the beginning. It was not like the English we spoke, or it was not the English our colleague spoke. The English -- the urban kids spoke African-American English with accent. Many things were shocking. The language, the curse words and so on and so forth. The disrespectful nature was a shock to me, at least, even before I could understand why they were behaving the way they were.
Omaar experienced cultural tension via language use as well. However, in his case, it had to do more with his own accent and pronunciation, at least, that’s what he emphasized. Beyond sub-cultural language differences, he struggled due to his British accent. Omar shared that, due to language differences, there were difficulties in teaching science to the students.

I did all my education in Catholic education system so English was my [one of the primary] language. I did not find much difference in England and there [in India]. But here, of course, I can say specifically when I came here, I had the British accent in talking English whereas here we have the American accent…which are two different things especially when I’m teaching science. I will give you an example. I am teaching atmosphere, but here you say respiratory (res-per-\textit{uh}-tawr-ee), whereas there we say respiratory (ri-spahy\textit{uh} r-\textit{uh}) system. Like that I have to learn (…) Another thing is in India we used to talk a little bit faster but here we had to a little bit slow down. I’m told the syllables what we are using in the words and how we are talking about the sentences is different.

Aman agreed with Omaar about students having difficulty understanding the Asian Indian teachers’ accents and that how students would ask him in his initial days to speak at a slower pace. Mary affirmed the communication challenge with her students as well:

One is a language problem even though we know English, our English our students did not understand and their English, we don't [sic] understand. That was the first few years it was like that.

Rakesh shared how language was a blockade for him during the first few years when it came to adapt the host culture:

The language, the accent in the initial stages the students were not used to our accent. They used to ask if I used for example center, we used to write C-E-N-T-R-E in India, here we write it as C-E-N-T-E-R, so these were the issues which came up in the initial stages…
He further commended the school district taking an initiative to help the immigrant teachers with their language conflict in terms of pronunciation, spelling, and urban dialect:

…the district provided us a lot of information regarding that [language and accent differences] …we had PD (professional development) sessions where they discussed about American accents, slangs, etc.

Varuna’s experience with language conflict was more unpleasant than her Asian Indian peers. She talked about the language being a barrier but then delved into how she had to learn to use the right phrases and words when describing student behavior and performance:

For example, in the beginning, I didn't know, I would say this student is not doing this and that student is not doing this and eventually I learned, you cannot say that. It comes back to you [the phrase and words used for student behavior], so that means you [the teachers] are not doing something correct. Again, there comes the difference. It comes back because you are an outsider, [because] you have come from India, so they think you are incompetent.

On the contrary, Aman and Sameer did not feel the language conflict. They both expressed language being least of the concerns when it came to culture shock and cultural conflict in their initial years in the US. Aman shared that the language part was easy for him in comparison to adjusting to the new work environment. Sameer also explained the language adjustment as an easy process:

Language is not a problem, language we speak whatever you want. English is good, no pressure, no extra thinking. English was always comfortable language for us, it is always.
Climate Change. Mary disclosed that her cultural shock came with the climate change. Mary mentioned that due to the extremely cold weather for a few months of the year, some teachers returned to their home country as they were used to a tropical climate. They [the teachers who left USA] said they were from Bangalore. They said Bangalore is more comfortable than here even the climate-wise.

Some of the other teachers, such as, Rakesh and Omaar also complained about the climate change and cold weather in their city of residence. Acclimatization (process of adjusting physically to the climate) is not something that came naturally to these participants:

…only thing was that when I initially came, I did not have a car, I used to travel by RTA. That was one of the parts where it was a little bit frustrating to go on a RTA bus, so that was a little bit frustrating especially during the snow time. We didn't have that much snow, I didn’t see the snow in India, I saw the snow here first time when I came here….the first two years it was really very much [getting used to the cold and snow] -- Because I did not have a car I used to travel in the RTA at least for the first year, so that was a little bit -- We used to have to stand in (at) the bus stop for 10-15 minutes sometimes, in extreme cold.

In Omaar’s words:

My (hometown) weather is completely like Florida, California mostly like California which is completely different to Ohio…Even though we spent 15 years (in Ohio) but still sometimes we feel snow has to stop. [laughs]

Mona also affirmed facing acclimatization challenges since she came from a tropical weather in her hometown. When asked about what she misses most in USA, she mentioned the weather. Varuna also revealed her displeasure over the cold weather in her residential city and unable to celebrate some of the popular Indian festivals unlike her sister who lives in a better weather in the state of Georgia.
Contrary to the above opinions, Aman did not find adjusting to the cold weather difficult at all. He shared that he was used to the cold and snow as he is from a cold region in India:

I mean when I came it was like a nice but, uh, and I'm used to the snow... So it was not a like a shock to me as compared to my other colleagues from India... Actually, I, um, from Himachal Pradesh... for me, it's like same (the cold and the climate) but the only thing is they have (in USA) resources to clean and that too very fast (in comparison to his hometown in India)... and the only thing is like the sunshine over there. We have snow (in India), but at the same time, we have enough sunshine over there but here (in USA) we don't...

The participants’ experiences clearly portray their struggles and challenges in day to day life as they strived to familiarize themselves with the culture and society of their new host country.

**Cultural differences at workplace.** Apart from food, language, and climate, the participants elaborated on other conflicts they faced in their new culture. For example, Aman explained the cultural differences as they played out in the school at his workplace:

Yeah, I thought like it's gonna [sic] be a big opportunity for me to just learn the different style of teaching and different things. But what I have in my mind it was not the same because the very first thing when I saw the security guards I was shocked... Because we are not used to seeing the security guards. And then in my class, I had different grades like 9, 10, 11, 12, all together in same class, which I don't understand.

In addition to the structure of workplace, teachers also brought up the topic of diversity and race dynamics at their work places. Mary added that a few teachers also left because they felt uncomfortable dealing with the diverse student population in schools in the host country:

East side is completely filled with African-American children. We did not know anything about that. We were shocked, and then two people there
[teachers] ran away because of that. ... they were there only for four months. After that they went back to India.

Mary’s reflection portrays the relationship between persistence and cultural adaptation. In the examples she provided, some new teachers were either unprepared or overwhelmed (or both) with the contrast between cultures. This was dictated by how much these immigrant teachers were exposed to the American urban culture and prepared for, before their arrival. Mona also agreed that she faced several challenges adapting to her surroundings for the initial few months after her arrival to the United States.

Along with others, Omaar reported feeling nervous and anxious during their first teaching assignment as he did not feel prepared or had much knowledge about the education system and the school culture in the urban schools in the US. Omaar described his difference in expectations as follows:

Yes, the reaction was very different when we planned to come to United States. First thing, we did not have any idea about the education system, the culture, (and) so many other things going on here. After reaching here, we find it a complete shock. It was totally different from Indian education system to US education system. The culture is totally different from India to US. To be frank, we were a little bit nervous with our first assignment, the teaching assignment. We got little training before we joined the job.

Preeti’s culture shock manifested more from social isolation or disintegration. Preeti pointed out that making friends with Americans in the early days was a significant problem, especially outside of the workplace:

My colleagues were more accepting than my neighbors. Because of [the] cultural differences, it was very hard to just get yourself involved. Even now, one of our neighbors, we don't know each other like we should. They’re very conservative, I would say.

In contrast, some participants shared how they experienced cultural sensitivity as frustration and helplessness. Aman provided the clearest example of this effect related to
relations with colleagues and administration. He shared how the district wants to hire new graduates without a formal teaching degree and relevant experience at low salaries. On the contrary, teachers like him (Aman) require higher salary due to their relevant education, training and experience. Therefore, the district or administrators consider them a burden as they have to pay them higher salaries.

And at that time when they hired us, they didn't have enough uh, certified Math and Science teachers. (And that is still the case?) Uh, I would say not because they have a new program called Teach for America…Within six weeks they get the temporary license so--they have bachelor’s degree but after that they just do only six week course and they become a teacher and they give them like a temporary license…And most of them they--they quit after couple of years because they--…I mean they (teacher candidates) do it because uh, by taking this job like they (teacher candidates) pay their college--…But if- if we have like a more experience, we are like a burden to the district. They (district and administrators) don't want to hire us like they want-- They create such conditions so that we can quit on our own.

Participants also mentioned that due to cultural differences between teachers and students, handling undisciplined students was a formidable challenge. Sameer stated that, during the first teaching practices, cultural difference made handling some students especially difficult.

In the beginning we had problems here. How to handle those undisciplined students. That was the problem because we had never had that difficulty back home. You can just say this or that, they will follow what they have learned. Slowly, we came to know we have to follow protocol; writing referrals, calling the parent, sending to the principal all that kind of thing. We have never done those things back there in India… They have to deal the students in different way not like in the Indian way.

On the same topic, Aman elaborated on having similar experiences as Sameer. He disclosed feeling the differences in student behavior and attitude. In India, students do not move from room to room for different classes, instead, the
teachers move from room to room with their mobile carts with materials. He shared an example of students being more respectful in Indian schools in comparison to the students in US. As teachers walk into the classrooms at the change of the bell, students stand up from their seats to greet the teachers with “Good Morning” or “Good Afternoon”, which is certainly not the case in urban schools in US.

Over there [in India] like if [when] you come to the class, all the students, they get up [stand up], they wish you [students standing up to greet the teacher] and then they listen to you... but here it is another way around. I mean they [American students] don't care, you know.

Similarly, Mary revealed that Asian Indians in general became frustrated due to cultural differences in the classroom. Mary mentioned that it was challenging for her to learn and understand the diverse cultural backgrounds of her students, especially the urban African American population in her classroom:

The African-American children... it was so long for me to even learn their culture and then learn that culture in the classroom. Even now, we have a domain, so many domains for the evaluation. One of the domains says we should know the classroom culture and then accordingly you have to move on. In my class, I may have so many African-Americans, maybe one or two white people, maybe two or three Hispanic children, and then each and every one has their own culture. Even though they are all from US, but then they have; they adapted a different culture. With all that culture they come to the classroom, so we adapt a culture in the classroom. In my classroom I should adapt a culture which would be fitting for all the students. I did not learn all that. We never had any training because they thought they were all experienced teachers, trained teachers, but we were not trained in this setting. We were not trained.

Mary paid particular attention to the deployment of disciplinary policy in the classroom, a key instrument in establishing a culture in line with American educational practices. Without adequate knowledge of the customary policies, she felt lost.
We learned methodology… we learned everything, but then we never learned how to do the classroom setting itself. They needed disciplinary things. That's what they say, "Did you post your discipline policy there?" Everything should be posted, and it should be enforced. After posting, if you don't enforce it, then you'll get into trouble. All these things we were not taught, and we were not expecting to come and do all that, and then we never saw this kind of setting also. It was so difficult for us.

While Varuna shared how she was surprised to see a fluidity in communication between the employees and their supervisors. Her cultural shock was more in a positive light and led to a better understanding of the hierarchy structure at her school district:

…it's much better here. If you talk in terms of the workplace, it's more open. The relationship between the authority, the Principal, and the teacher is much more-- it's not formal. You have-more casual. You address each other by first name and principals are not like [arrogant].

Varuna further shed light on it when asked how she found this shocking because in her home country there are clear demarcations of the roles of bosses and subordinates:

It was. And the way the Principal-- in India, the Principals are supposed to sit in their rooms, they just come to observe you. And they are the bosses, they'll show you that they're the bosses.

She emphasized the positive impact of the equal treatment she received from her superiors at her workplace in her new host country, and how that helped her grew professionally and personally:

[Here, they are] leaders-so you don't have to get up, you don't have to be scared of them. And they are approachable, you can approach them easily, you can discuss anything with them…I was shocked when I saw my principal cleaning his room. It's like "wow! Here they have cleaners too, but the principal is doing himself. They don't mind if he's walking [around] and he saw the cups and glasses at some place, or paper, he'll
pick it up. I would never do that. I learned some of those things from here like if you see something, you clean it up, it doesn't matter.

At the same time, Varuna did not hesitate to share her discomfort at the dissimilarities in social culture when she first arrived in this country:

…but in the beginning, when I came, teaching in these schools was a shock. It was a complete shock in terms of society, in terms of school system, in everything.

Continuing on the same topic, she further shared:

For the urban families, talking to students; it was heartbreaking, it was amazing, it was unbelievable, what kind of families they come from. I remember, my first year, - that's only one incident I remember - so I asked them to write some paragraph on something, like how was your vacation? Or something like that on the vacation...And one student turns in and, "So I went to my dad's girlfriend's house." And those were the shocking things for us. I came from India and, in India, I remember it was such a big school I was teaching in; there were like 3,000 students, or so in that school, and in the whole school there was one student whose parents were divorced. Where we were coming from, it was a big thing.

Sameer shared that he was anxious and nervous when he realized the differences in the two societies of his native country and the host country:

Anxious. Not sad but different society altogether. Related to India, it was very different society. Especially we found all this difference in the classroom. More than the street, but when you go in the classroom, you will see what difference we see there, and we see here. So many differences.

Sameer also highlighted the positive experiences:

Some of things were good way, as well. These kids here, they are very frank, very open, not hesitant, I would say in a good way. Bad way means not giving full importance to education.

Mona’s experiences were similar to some of her colleagues:

Yes, all of us said that it was a culture shock and even the language was difficult in the beginning. The disrespectful nature [of students towards the teachers] was a shock to me...We've never had students yell at us. We've never had a situation where you have to go clean the classroom or take stuff here and there.
In general, the cultural shock theme was pervasive across participant experiences inside and outside of the classroom. Instances of frustration were prevalent, magnified in situations where inadequate preparation was met with a demanding teaching environment that required the balancing of sub-cultures in some situations. One of such instances was the lack of training to prepare the immigrant teachers for the school culture and working with urban students. In cases where culture shock was minimized, positive relations with colleagues, even other immigrant teachers were present, making social integration in some form an apparent buffer to the problems associated with culture shock.

**Theme 4: Maintaining respect and trust.** Due to cultural differences, the Asian Indian immigrant teachers experienced lack of respect and trust from African-American students and teachers. Most participants disclosed they felt disrespected by African-American students, unlike students in their home country. For example, Aman explained how he feels his hands tied when the district has “no suspension” policy in place for the students. Additionally, he lamented how the low grades are reflection of teacher performance instead of student achievement, and students take advantage of this situation.

And then when we give the test to them like some year-end exams, they bubble whatever they want to bubble it and then they say, "It's not for us, it's for you." They don't take it seriously because they know that it's not for them, it's for teachers to penalize because those grades are attached to us.

Mary also mentioned that due to cultural differences, adapting to students’ disrespectful behaviors was a challenge. Mary responded that students behave harshly and disrespectfully because of language problem as well. In some cases, disrespect linked to communication troubles due to cultural (i.e., language) differences.
Even though we know English, they did not understand our English. And their English we don't understand. That was the first few years it was like that the students and they I really have anything to write with, they don’t say I don’t have a pencil- I don't have anything to write with and then they may just lie down like this. When they answer you, they don't even look at you.

Mary provided another example where students were disrespectful during the class.

When I was teaching then, by the time I go back to my class, there was gum, chewing gum, on the chair. Oh My God! I just went and sat and then they were all laughing. I could not even get up and then I had to call my husband and then I said, "I’m going to go home now…I cannot tolerate it, I want to go home now...” Because I needed another pair of pants, I couldn’t even move onto to another class.

Sharing conjecture about relationships with colleagues, Varuna expressed a discomfort and mistrust. She maintained that she keeps her distance and refrains from opening up with her colleagues due to certain bad experiences of the past, where her innocent words/intention was misconstrued and misrepresented to the administrators leading to an embarrassing situation. She has hard time trusting her colleagues when sharing information about a student or seeking advice:

Yes, it takes time. It took me time. Yes. This trust factor also, maybe I couldn't trust people. Maybe, especially, in the school setting, I don't want to open up. I don't know how people are going to take it. Things had happened earlier. I said something, and it was taken in the other way going to the principal with others. So, I didn't want those things also.

**Research Question One Summary**

The above themes and sub themes highlight how the acculturation process of study participants manifested most in issues related to skill development, culture shock, social support, lack of training, and student trust and respect. In cases, each of these
themes interacted, signifying that the acculturation process is complex and fluid and dependent on the degree of social support available to transitioning teachers either from family, colleagues, or fellow transitioning immigrants. The issue of lack of training came up in this current research and needs to be further explored in future research as it requires thorough exploration. However, all participants discussed experiencing culture shock and emotions such as frustration, loneliness, or even shame based on differences they could not control outright. With time, they formed professional and personal networks that helped them to adapt to their new surroundings.

**Research Question Two. How do Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district located in Ohio construct meanings of their new roles, responsibilities, and identities in their new socio-cultural environment?**

As part of Research Question Two, study participants were asked to provide their views regarding their new roles, responsibilities, and identities in the new socio-cultural environment. The themes identified were teacher-student relationship, role models, class management, and student success. Each of these themes and exemplary excerpts are presented below.

**Theme One: Trustworthy role model.** The participants have been playing a key role in fostering strong teacher-student relationships in their new cultural environment. A strong relationship rested on a foundation of trust, something they had to model in their interactions with students. The participants signified that they actively accepted this responsibility which, in turn, assisted them in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities to the satisfaction of their administrative authority. For example, some immigrant teachers
took it upon themselves to bond with the students in the new environment before beginning their teaching practices. Aman explains more on this facet below:

So, once you have a bonding then they started learning, listening to you. So initially I had to just talk to them and make some jokes and then once they know that I am not very strict. So, then they start coming closer and then talk and then I ask them, "How was your day?" "How's your family?" "Do you have any problem?" So, once they see that day that the teacher care about them they start coming to you. Sometimes because I have a good bonding [with students], students help me out too because somebody's not listening to me they keep him “shh” or her “shh.” So, bonding is very important. Without bonding, you can't do anything.

Aman’s experiences were validated by Rakesh, who shared how relationship development can be facilitated with advance preparation:

We used to have in my initial stages, first two years being in a middle school, we used to have team meetings. There we used to discuss about each student. What each student is facing a problem. We used to discuss that, evidently school counselor also. Sometimes the school counselor or school psychologist give us feedback that these students are having certain issues at home, or we used to discuss those things in the team meetings also.

By gathering background information on the students, Rakesh identified how he could empathize more during their interactions and attempt to find common ground when the opportunity arose. Both Aman’s and Rakesh’s approaches show how the teacher role and identity needs to start from a supportive position regardless of cultural background.

One of the methods or ideals required to establish credibility as a support role for students including gaining trust via maintaining confidentiality. That is, some teachers shared their challenges with their students and reciprocally assisted them with their problems without involving any other person. Aman elaborated on this form of trust-building in the following fashion:
So, I mean once they trust you then they start talking to you- you know. Yeah, because- because they see that they can't trust anybody, you know...So if they see that somebody's trustworthy...because and it's my duty to do not disclose any of their things to anybody else. It's like a responsibility for me of course. Whatever we are talking about should be between that person and me.

Sameer also shared how he adapted some of the common slang words in his language to relate to his students. When asked about the approach he uses to communicate and reach out to his students, he shared:

    Now it’s very cordial, there's no problem. I communicate, I speak even slang as well sometimes. They [students] laugh and they become very happy rather [after hearing the slang words from their teacher]. That's my approach and it comforts me. Suppose I’m using slang language, it sounds funny because I'm not a standard user of that, but they take it past it. It gives me positive feeling all together.

When asked if this is his strategy to have students open up with him, he said:

    Yes, they do. [They open up about] Teenage problems, parents’ problems. Many cases, yes, like for example, two days ago one student, last name Orlando, didn’t come to school. I asked him why didn’t he come to school for those few days. I said, "Why doesn't your mother help you?" Actually, I don't want to see them in jail." So, they talk to me. I tried to support with what I can do.

Omaar shared how he has set separate time slot for his students before the school starts to communicate with them:

    Yes, they were like when we start our session almost like every day we used to have like a 7:15 to eight o'clock is the time were we talk about so many things before class, it's like an individual time that the student they will come to me and we talk...We dedicate this time so that we can understand well, the students will understand as well and how we both go together... Once you-- they know that you are a very helping person you want to help them from their education point of view because they don't have, like most of the inner-city kids they don't have a particular guidance at home or in that community or society. They need somebody to talk to them, they need somebody to listen to them, and if we do that, that makes a lot of difference in their learning.
Preeti shared that in her case, if students are in her class, that’s the only time they trust to share their issues with her:

What I’ve seen is if I have them in class, they reach out more. If they're not in one of my classes, then they don't reach out as much.

Mona shared how at times she observed male students bonding more with the male teachers. She hypothesized that this could possibly be due to the lack of father figures in the students’ lives. Hence, it is natural for them, especially boys, to trust the male teachers to share their issues with as well, personal or academic.

So, they really don't know how a man would act. They've only seen women, they know women talk a lot, and that's why they have learned it. When they don't see a role model, how do you expect them to get that behavior?

Mona further explained how her students shared not having any male role models at home, and therefore, adapting the habits of the females in their households:

Then literally, when I was talking to one of my students, I told him that, "You are talking so much. Haven't you seen your dad being quieter than--?" That's when he said, "My dad? I've never seen him in my life, maybe that's the reason I'm like this."

Participants’ perceptions of their roles in their new cultural environment appeared consistent with their perceived roles in their home country. That is, trust is valuable currency in the development of bonds because it can aid in a person’s ability to teach (or reach) students effectively. In the instances where teachers actively accepted this, some relationships thrived, even in “harsh” circumstances. Hence, accepting and fulfilling their role as a trustworthy role model helps in bridging some emergent divides from Research Question One.
Theme Two: Stewards of student success. Study participants also identified as important that they are stewards for the success of students. The participants said that the curriculum of the United States’ education system is delivered slower and is less student-centered than in their home country. As such, the teacher participants have to adjust to new standards and practices in order to achieve their teaching roles and responsibilities, at times struggling with the new pace.

For example, Omaar identified how new immigrant teachers had to adapt to the new learning environment by using different teaching strategies than the ones they used in their native country. For example, Omaar segmented subjects into different parts in ways he had not done previously to meet the learning standards. Omaar explained, noting that student success is tied to how well he adapted to the different needs and expectations of the American style:

Here we have to stress more to the objective type, multiple choice type of questions and answers. From that point of view, my total way of teaching is different compared to India. Second thing, I have to divide my subject matter into small parts and let them understand that, then we will apply that into the real-life situations. Then they do understand that concept; that is how we find that big change. As the time passes [sic], I learned the education system here and when I adopted those techniques and strategies and methods I became more comfortable and that makes these kids comfortable. In that way, success goes up and up.

Rakesh also explained that teachers are identified in the new cultural teaching environment as the most important people for improving the performances of students. Rakesh mentioned how he sometimes focused on “teaching to the test” as his stewardship, a style he was not accustomed to using:

I wanted them to excel in academics. I wanted all of them to pass the standardized test. At that time in the initial stages, they used to take a higher proficiency test in the eighth grade also. My target was that they passed the test, so I used to work and discuss the content and how to prepare them for the standardized test.
Sameer explained how he expected high achievement from his students and
wanted them to succeed in life:

All round high achievement [that’s what I expect of students] and we've
tried to help them in all fields. I explain so many things to them, I guided
him, I gave them advice on what is the importance of education and this
time will not come to you anymore. Once it’s gone, it’s gone, so you have
to take advantage of being in school, so whatever you need, I will help
you, I will support you. I find [this method] it’s good.

Mona is no less than her male counterparts when it comes to being a steward for
student success. She explained how it does not matter if a teacher uses a book or
another method, as long as he or she knows how to teach, students will learn and
benefit.

Either you go by the book, or you have your own curriculum, it doesn't
matter. To me, a teacher is somebody who should -- it's an art, teaching is
an art...It's an art, meaning you exactly should know the knack or
however you want to put it.

Mona also communicated the need to understand the students’ needs and
addressing those accordingly to help them succeed:

...you [the teacher] should be addressing each one's [student’s] need...If
only you'd take the time to break it [the problem] down step by step, there
may be one who would say, "I got it...I got it." You could say, "Move on
to this problem now."

Mona further advocated the skills a teacher can use to encourage the slow
learners:

...just telling them that it's okay to take maybe another two minutes extra.
Then the child who's really smart will get it the first time. If only you can
give that comfort of -- whatever, that feeling, I think students would not
feel math is really hard...If only a little bit of extra time is given to kids, I
think it would really be very positive, would be given positive results.
These excerpts capture the sentiment that participants view themselves, first, as integral to the academic success of their students. Secondly, the findings show that effective stewardship required adapting to the different demands and expectations of the “American way.” Although this role made them feel valued and reflected part of their motivation for becoming teachers, the adaptation process was a challenging part of acculturation. Each teacher noted the need to compromise in some areas and fully adopt different strategies in others.

**Theme Three: Disciplinary class managers.** The participants identified part of their role as disciplinarians in managing class activities. This theme split across two sub-themes; behavioral and academic. Each of these sub-themes are elaborated upon below.

**Behavior.** Accordingly, the participants explained the value of a clear disciplinary plans for students. For example, Mary stated how her disciplinary work including leveraging parent involvement in the process:

For the ninth grade, the thing I used to do is find out how much who is doing the most? Who is just doing okay? Then I just observe the first whole week. We have to keep on teaching them disciplined and everything and then keep on watching them. Then the first week itself, we have to take action with that... There’re five steps. First, we have to talk to them then you have to call the parents, then you have to give the detention, then we have to tell the principal, and if they ask you to write a referral, then you have to write a referral. If you follow the first step and call all the parents, you are so much closer to the parents and these kids will get settled down. That’s what I’ve seen …

Rakesh believed that teachers have the role of working closer with parents about student behavior. He added:

I mean, say the students were not working; they didn't turn in the homework or they were regularly absent or tardy. I used to call their home and inform about the situation what's going in the classroom.
Sameer also explained how teachers identified as disciplinarians in their new socio-cultural environment because of the way they communicate with parents about students’ poor behaviors. He further mentioned that when the students show unexpected behaviors, they call their parents and share the consequences as a way to discipline the students. For instance:

Here, you have consequences, you have different ways of disciplining them, like calling their parents, talking to them, giving them different consequences. Those are the things, you try to discipline them with.

Varuna threw light on another aspect where parents may not like the teachers calling them about their children’s behavior, and parents getting defensive instead of assisting the teachers help their children learn to follow the school rules and policies.

Few parents will support you, some are like, "That's how they behave at home also. I don't know what to do." Some of the parents…get mad.

*Academic success and challenges.* Further, as the second sub-theme, several participants noted the necessity of being disciplined to the curriculum to ensure students reached required academic standards. This sub-theme aligned with the tendency of participants to portray themselves as stewards of academic success. However, to be successful stewards, participants noted they had to keep students disciplined to deploy high quality academic practices.

For example, Mary explained that administering class tests was the primary approach for her. Mary explained as follows:

I teach, my duty is to teach everything but when I test them whatever they know only I test them. One of my physics girls--she was a valedictorian of that school--she used to contact me in email a lot. She went to New
England which is the Boston school of New Hampshire she went there. She's really intelligent. She used to come and ask me, "Give me more physics problems, hard problems" like that. So, we need to touch everything actually.

Mary’s experience reflects the default institutional authority each teacher obtained. That is, their identity was bestowed upon them, granting them the ability to manage classroom behavior without having to necessarily be respected as an individual, something several participants struggled in achieving due to prejudicial classroom environments. Varuna explained how she tries to keep her students on track by not allowing to waste any time in case they are finished with the current assignment:

Academic problem, what I do is I generally discipline during the class if they are doing something, I'll go around and show them what other things they are missing and how they can make that up, so during the class tie also I do that.

Varuna is trying to inculcate the skills of hard work and diligence by asking students to think of other work they can submit. Meanwhile, several participants communicated with parents in order to enhance the academic success of students, not just for correcting unruly behavior. For example, Mona responded that:

Yes. Many times, I've heard say, 'If my child cuts the class or if she's failing, not turning in assignments, please call us.' They expect us to communicate to them.

Also, Omaar explained that to demonstrate his role as an academically nurturing teacher, he adapted his teaching. Omaar described:

I have a regular education child in my class, I have an IEP student in my class. I have a gifted child in my class, I have to consider all these people and then I have to reach to their levels and then I have to teach my subject.... I can tell the lecture methods were not going to work here, so I have to have more hands-on activities. For example, like a chapter I am teaching about how air has mass; I still recall that experience. When I was telling air has mass everybody was looking at me like oh I was teaching something mass. But when I took a balloon and filled it
with air and then I showed them, I just put my steps down to the child’s level and explained. They learned, and they understood. They got more interested with me with less talking and being more hands-on and reaching to their level to help them understand. (Omaar)

**Research Question Two Summary**

Similar to their role as a trustworthy role model, universal characteristics inherent to the teaching profession defined the perceptions of immigrant teacher’s new role, responsibility, and identity. However, the role of academic disciplinarian seemed more fundamental to their experiences than behavioral disciplinarian in how they managed their classrooms. That is, their authority as a teacher was less threatened when dealing with academic matters than behavioral matters. In the end, all teachers assumed the role of disciplinarian in some fashion, deploying several methods to do so while citing the leveraging of parental authority as a key factor in the success of their efforts.

**Research Question Three: How does the gender of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district influence their perceptions of and how they fulfill their expected roles and responsibilities in their professional and personal lives?**

The participants were asked to indicate their perceptions regarding how gender influenced their teaching experiences, asking to describe any observations of inconsistent treatment between genders. The participant views led to the emergence of two clearly developed main themes: professional gender equality and personal gender equality. Gender equity parallels with the fair treatment and access to opportunity being given to both genders. As participants reflected on their experiences in the classroom, several felt that the acculturation process reflected a more progressive representation of gender.
Theme One: Professional gender equality. In general, study participants tended to believe men and women teachers are treated more equally in United States in comparison to India. For example, in the United States, males and females are less inclined to be placed in traditional gender-roles. In turn, several participants, both men and women cited how they valued their time in the United States for the more equal treatment, stating in cases how this treatment aided a positive acculturation process. All of the participants seemed to be more satisfied with their job under such equitable conditions, revealing that this equal treatment enhanced their career growth.

For example, several participants explained that allowing both men and women are to participate in all class activities was a refreshing change for the norms in their host country. For example, Mona stated, at the most fundamental level, Americans are supportive of a woman with career ambitions:

From the administrators' perspective I don't see any differences or discrimination at all. I think they're quite equal in my school. It is okay for men and women to make efforts towards their career growth… They didn't mind it. Like, my principal was very supportive. She's a woman too…In spite of me being a foreign national person, and being a woman, it didn't matter…when they nominated me and then I got elected [for promotion], I was really proud and happy that this would not have happened in India.

Discussing about any gender biases their students’ parents may have, Mona negated having any such experiences. She explicitly shared how in her experience, parents treat the male and female teachers equally. She also explained that it’s the mothers of the students who they interact and communicate with usually and Mona feels that being a female helped her build good relationships with the mothers:
We see a lot of mothers. I've seen them being very comfortable talking with another female teacher. I think that is a plus point [being a female]. It's positive I think.

When asked if her male colleagues treat her differently being a female

I've had such experiences only in India. A sexually biased. I've seen a lot of that in India, not over here, not a lot at all...In India, even to choose a course [for education in a college], you really have to think twice. Whether you are a male or a female. I want to say, like, 20 years back, not even engineering courses were pretty much recommended for girls. They would say, "This thing, you have to work there, do this, carry this and that. Oh, girls can't do it. Don't even think about it". Those things were there. Then even to send them to a higher degree professional thing or anything. Even the payment [salary] gender differences are there, even in payment. Then, they always wanted the final word from a man. I've seen those things...I haven't seen a big bias over here.

Omaar explained that male and female teachers are treated more equally by colleagues and students alike. In cases, participants perceived that this equal treatment influenced their professional development, improved communication with students, and led to more positive interactions in the workplace. Due to stronger gender equity, male and female teachers are also paid more equally in America, contributed to a higher sense of job satisfaction. In this regard, Omaar made several key contrasts between American and Indian gender culture:

In the beginning I was thinking like, "Here they prefer more women candidates than male candidates." I was experiencing that they listen more to the women teachers compared to men teachers. They listen to their problems. They help them more. Yes, that was my experience and perception, you can say. This equal treatment has influenced my opinion about how men and women should be treated at work settings. Everybody is the same. They do get paid same. They do work same. Everything, the same.
Correspondingly, beyond similar salaries, participants observed few accounts of gender bias in administrative functions when it comes to comparing the two societies, the host and the home country. Rakesh clarified further how gender equity created a team spirit:

> All the principals, at least in this particular school, always ask a wish list. Whatever the wish list is, they give us a certain budget. In that budget every teacher gets the same amount of budget...Male or female, irrespective. We get the same budget, and we can order the things whatever we need it for the classroom...

Rakesh also identified that even the way males and females worked alongside each other differed from India. He noted that hiring practices were key to this kind of balance:

> Workplaces here work together, we meet as a team. A 10th grade team, 11th grade team, and 12th grade team. Most of the teachers are female teachers, there are two or three male teachers in my team level. I don't think there's any gender bias there…I didn't experience any because I had the opportunity and I applied for those things and I was selected. There were female teachers also who applied and didn't get selected. It was not a gender bias because the principal itself was a female principal.

Preeti also explained how gender was not an obstacle for advancement:

> Yes. I've learned a lot. I've learned a lot. I was given a lot of opportunities to grow professionally too. I never felt discriminated or because she cannot do it, I was always given chances to try a few things experiment, lead groups… I'm pretty successful.

Rakesh shared the same sentiment, identifying how one product of gender equality is the even distribution of males and females in the workplace. He said:

> In my present location, there are five to six male teachers and about eight female teachers. I don't think there's much difference. I don't see unequal opportunity, anyone can serve in the leadership team…like the principal is also a female but there's an opportunity.

Part of this equal treatment was observed through teamwork and other supportive behavior. The participants replied that in United States, this collaboration not only reflects gender equality, it entrenches it further. Aman explained how he never witnessed
any discrimination at work place in either country. Varuna shared she observed no gender bias at work place in her profession in USA as well as in India.

No. I don't feel so. I think they're being treated depending on their own abilities. They are treated equally well…

She further explained how to some extent the teaching domain is dominated by female professionals in India, and despite that she did not observe any unequal treatment of men and women:

In India, the school I was teaching in, mostly, you know, how it is, the men were there [too]... Hardly, I would say in such a big school we had three or four male teachers. One was the BD teacher. One was our computer teacher. Or maybe—there was one music teacher. So there were hardly [any], I can count on my fingers, like four or five male teachers and then there were like 70 female teachers…Mostly if you were in Indian schools, you will find mostly females…Especially at low levels, unless you have maybe higher classes, like maybe physics you will find. But I remember there was a Physics even-- she was a female teacher. Chemistry, who was a female teacher [as well]. So, there are PE teachers, but there was a female teacher for PE too.

Varuna strictly answered to observing unequal treatment and gender bias at work place in India. Mary had similar opinion when asked about the treatment of men and women in both countries:

Sometimes men are treated better [in India]. That's what I feel. That depends upon the thing, if the administrator is a woman, maybe they treat the men well [chuckles]. If the administrators are men, they treat the women well. [crosstalk]…The woman and woman getting along is little difficult here.

However, she reiterates that these behaviors are not practiced in US:

If you ask me, I’ve never seen any drastic difference in treatment between the men and women like that. Maybe in the schools, it is not happening. Maybe in a different workplace, they treat differently [not at her workplace] I don't know.

However, despite improvements in gender equality, a few participants, such as Mary and Preeti cited that discrimination was not completely absent in the
workplace, especially among students. For instance, Preeti mentioned that female teachers can be mistreated by students but not necessarily as part of a cultural issue. Preeti described one example as follows:

For the students, some of them have treated me a little differently. But this because either they have had negative experiences with females and that's where it has come out from...certain situations and life. I don’t take that personally because that's their experience. I've seen students but respond better either to females or males.

Overall, participants spoke favorably of the cultural conditions supporting gender in the workplace. Although a few participants identified instances where they believed being female was treated negatively, these accounts were outliers, reflective of the significant differences in beliefs about gender between India and America. As described in the following section, this sentiment was also observable beyond workplace settings.

**Theme Two: Personal gender equality.** Personally, participants identified that, in India, men are given first priority to talk than women, a staple indicator of gender inequity in their homeland. However, in United States, it is not only culturally acceptable for both men and women to be ambitious about career development, either can initiate personal relations. For instance, Sameer stated:

In India, we have one-way- men talk and females follow in most of the cases. It's not here. Different here we have to give equal respect to the female voices as well which is very good, very which is excellent. in United States, women are also encouraged to make efforts toward a career growth. We have more opportunities to learn extra stuff and to help the district or administration to be encouraged to go to different places to learn stuff. They give us chances. Teachers go here and there. Last time I went to LA. They were sent from their school side, and the administration we had nice meetings. I also went to Dallas, then I went to New York.

The participants stated that gender influenced role and responsibilities in that both men and women share more professional responsibilities. However, Varuna also
identified the interrelationship between personal experiences and professional experiences. She cited how the confidence she gained from her more equal treatment in America helped her teaching practice:

If I go back to India I can be a better teacher. That I can say as a person, too. I think I have learnt a lot. I have learnt it's not just the kids, because a lot is on you. I have grown as a teacher. I have opened up more.

Rakesh also shared how personal biases and a society’s viewpoint about gender roles was evident in his home country:

In India I saw that especially some places in some -- The school where I was, there was like a -- What you call for the teaching positions, not in the teaching position, in the administrative things [administrative positions], the management used to prefer male teachers…The reason could be that the male [is preferred] because sometimes we had to travel to different cities, and they went for training sessions. Our school had different branches throughout the state of Punjab, we used to travel to different places during even the Summer vacations also. That fact, that could be one of the reasons, therefore the administrative positions the female teachers were not preferred.

Rakesh implied how female teachers might be aversive to traveling for jobs in India, and hence, male teachers were preferred in higher positions. Mona also explained the parents’ view on gender in India when it comes to trusting their children with tutors and adults:

Being a woman, the parents felt more safe to send [their daughters] to me because I'm [a female] with their daughters. We may have heard many parents say, "Why don't you make a big billboard kind of board and advertise saying, "Tutoring only girls." You will just have tons of girls. They have been giving me ideas like that.

It seems obvious that while most participants affirmed experiencing or witnessing gender bias at professional and personal level in their home country but applauded and admired the equal opportunities for men and women inside and outside the workforce.
Research Question Three Summary

In general, gender equally presented as one of the strongest themes in how participants perceived the acculturation process. Given differences in attitudes about gender, participants experienced professional and personal benefits, allowing them to be more satisfied in their role over time. At times, participants noted that better gender equality in their personal lives helped their confidence in the classroom, too. In all, gender equality became an attractive component of the acculturation process.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to answer the question how Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers make sense of their experiences in an urban K-12 environment in the United States. The participants shared their migration experiences and the challenges faced during the process. The experience of migrating to the United States meant adjusting to an unfamiliar environment and making sense of their surroundings at home, at work, and in society. Some participants found the support of their new community due to similar religious (Christianity) background, while others sought refuge in their own community by associating with fellow Asian Indian teachers who they came with from India, or forming new associations through Hindu temple, and Hindu cultural society. Additionally, most participants shared about finding support of their colleagues to help them settle in their new surroundings and learn the work culture. The participants believed that finding these support systems not only helped them gradually acclimatized to the physical surroundings, it also provided the mental and emotional support needed to live in a new country. Most participants expressed growing professionally over the years in addition to being financially secure and successful.
Cultural shock was an overlaying theme across the data. From lack of professional training, acclimatizing to food, and climate, socialization at and outside of work, and understanding the urban school culture, participants concurred on the subject of cultural differences and facing challenges due to it in their host society. Cultural differences were at the core of this research and guided to understand the acculturation experiences that were influential to the development of the approaches and beliefs of the participants. Though the stories and lived experiences of the participants, connections between work, contrasting societal environments, early perceptions versus current perspectives, and context provided the framework for capturing the similarities across data. The struggles with working within new workplace structure, reservoir on previous workplace experiences, and positive supports as well as struggles, and the ways in which participants now discern their current and host society allows for a more focused understanding of the individual experiences of participants.

While a discussion of family dynamics and structure was not part of my original research proposal or the semi-structured interview questions, participants were comfortable discussing their marital characteristics, family structure, and acculturation roves of their spouses and children as well. The participants also shared the struggles and challenges faced by their family members and the changes that came with those in their lives.
Chapter V

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of the study is to explore how Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district located in Ohio experience the acculturation process. Chapter 4 presented the emergent themes in the responses of participants based on questions aligned with each of the three research questions guiding this study. This chapter provides the summary of the research study and discussion of findings based on the research questions and the conceptual framework of the research. Following the summary, the chapter also presents the conclusions, recommendations, and implications of the study in relation to the study findings. The chapter concludes with final thoughts on the study.

Summary of Study

The main purpose of the study was to explore and understand how Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 an urban school district construct the meanings of their new status in mainstream teaching culture. In essence, this study investigated whether being an Asian Indian immigrant math or science teacher in K-12
urban school district influences their acculturation process in the United States. This study addressed three research questions in the previous chapter and it was supported by the quotations with necessary interpretation and analysis. The main question was: How does working in a K-12 setting influence the acculturation process for Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban school district located in Ohio? The following are the three questions the study answered:

1. How do the experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban K-12 setting in Ohio influence their acculturation process and cultural values?

2. How do Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district located in Ohio construct meanings of their new roles, responsibilities, and identities in their new socio-cultural environment?

3. How do the Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district perceive their gender influencing their expected roles and responsibilities in their professional and personal lives?

The above research questions address the problem statement discussed in the earlier chapters on how Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers construct meanings of their acculturation process.

The literature review explored a surfeit of studies on the acculturation process of Asian Indians in general, and Asian Indian professionals in the United States and a few
other Western countries, such as, Canada, England, and Australia. However, few empirical studies examined the meaning making process of this immigrant population as they adjust to the host culture. Using a qualitative research approach of phenomenological framework and interviews, I was able to investigate the experiences of eight Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers to explore and understand their transitions, adjustments, struggles and challenges, as they experienced the new workplace and societal structures.

Conclusions

The following nine themes emerged after analyzing the data from face-to-face interviews: skill development, support systems, cultural conflicts, maintaining respect and trust, trustworthy role model, steward of student success, disciplinary class manager, professional gender equity, and personal gender equity, answering the respective research questions. The themes were explained and supported by the quotations with necessary interpretation and analysis in the findings chapter. The findings and conclusions of the study are discussed making connections to the literature on immigration and acculturation, Asian Indians and acculturation, immigrant teachers and K-1 urban setting, and gender and acculturation.

Research question one - How do the experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban K-12 setting in Ohio influence their acculturation process and cultural values?

Question one was aimed at exploring the acculturation experiences of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban K-12 setting in Ohio. Several
themes emerged towards answering this question. Each of these are discussed further below.

**Skill development Theme.** The findings with respect to the first research question revealed the development of the participants’ teaching skills during their acculturation process. Participants were able to adjust to new culture in the host country which improved their skill development. The findings revealed that participating Asian Indian immigrants developed skills as a result of certain cultural differences. The results showed that the immigrants were able to acquire socialization and cultural skills and knowledge in the host country. The results supported the existing literature that Asian Indians acquire social skills through socio-cultural adaptations to the host country. The cultural knowledge acquired by the immigrants assisted their adjustment to the new environment (Bhugra, 2004, Kankipati, 2012).

**Support system Theme.** The study revealed that the Asian Indians immigrants experienced valuable social support during their acculturation process. The findings showed that social support assisted the immigrant teachers with their communication with people from different cultures. The immigrants perceived that the education system in the host country is its own social support system where key resources exist to aid in the acculturation process. These resources included access to fellow immigrants undergoing, or having undertaken, the acculturation process. The findings contributed to the available literature that immigrants who get social support from friends, families, and colleagues allow them to adjust to the challenges in the acculturation process (Akhtar, 2011). Sarroub (2001) also explained that the social support system in education systems fosters the acculturation process to the immigrants. Through a supportive education system,
immigrants are more likely to develop positive attitude to the new school environment. This support system acts as a foundation for immigrants to achieve empowerment (Keaton, 1999). As participants described, formal (through institutional support mechanisms) and informal (through relationships outside workplace) create a type of best-case scenario whereby the challenges of acculturation process are not met in isolation.

**Cultural conflict Theme.** The findings revealed that immigrant Asian Indians encountered several tensions related to the cultural differences between their home and host country. Patterns in the data suggested that differences in food, dress codes, and language are the most pervasive challenge to immigrant teachers. The findings showed that the immigrant teachers experience cultural conflict on a regular basis. The findings significantly contributed to the available information in the literature that Asian Indian professionals are more likely to experience cultural conflict due to different factors in their home country and in the host cultures. However, one study suggested that factors such as dress codes, accents, and language are construed as irrelevant to some Indian culture (Bhatia, 2007). Since the participants operated in a highly social atmosphere that had strict professional guidelines and protocols, and relied heavily on clear communication, these elements were indeed cited as significant challenges.

In general, the theme of cultural conflict aligned with the principles of marginalization and separation strategies outlined in the theoretical framework presented earlier. The findings indicated that adapting to the culture of the host country can promote subjugation in the work environment (Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2012). Also, adapting the host culture increases cultural conflicts among the employees and strain
social interactions within the workplace. This is because the dominating groups or the majority groups can develop racist attitudes towards the minority groups, hence the minorities are not given the chance to retain their culture in the host country (Bhatia, 2007; Ling, 2007). Although it is difficult to discern whether all participants were exposed to racism and discrimination, some categorized their treatment this way. Whether it was racism derived from cultural differences, or the chronic experience of “different” that is common as people become immersed in a new culture, cultural conflicts (even shock) were commonplace. It is also noteworthy to state that such tensions were most pronounced in the earlier stages. Although the study participants stated how the tension eased over time, whether it was from the support they received or from certain adaptations or compromised they made, one must consider the role of survivorship bias. That is, these participants could be considered success stories in the acculturation process having lived over a decade in the United States. As one participant cited, some immigrant teachers do not cope as successfully and return to India. The experiences of these returnees can have immense value in understanding cultural tensions more deeply.

The findings also revealed that immigrant teachers have profound responsibilities in terms of cultural sensitivity. The findings showed that the immigrant Asian Indians are not simply required to teach the content successfully but learn to be culturally sensitive to their new surroundings in the process. In doing so, the inherent expectation is that immigrant teachers must compromise, even abandon, cultural practices related to teaching and adapt their practice to ensure the academic standards of their adopted
education system are being met. This can lead to cultural conflict for immigrant teachers who want to retain their culture.

The findings aligned with the conclusions by Dunn (2013) who had established that international school teachers in the US have more profound role to adapt while teaching. These immigrant teachers have a considerable role in first understanding the diverse culture of students in order to nurture the cultural sensitivity and avoid socio-cultural obstacles that can both slow the acculturation process and disturb their effectiveness as a teacher (Deters, 2006). As such, findings indicated that these Asian Indian immigrant teachers must abandon their cultural identity in some fashion and implement the cultural behaviors of the host country in order to meet the needs of all students. These findings were consistent with the results of a study by Talbani and Hasanali (2000) that revealed that, in urban K-12 school environment, the immigrant populations are required to desert their ethnic identity and adapt to the cultural skills, habits, customs, attitudes, and religion of the host country. As a consequence, the international immigrant populations are more likely to face cultural conflict (Lee, 2013). The study findings indicated that maladjustment to the new society among the immigrant teachers towards cultural diversity is associated with cultural rivalry and strenuous relationships. As a few participants reported, this could be a result of how groups in the K-12 urban school settings can carry feelings of privilege against minority groups. The findings to do with this “outsider” status are consistent with the research of Schmidt and Block (2010) stating that racism and discrimination in the K-12 settings results strenuous relationships between the majority or the dominating groups and the minority groups.
This tension certainly surfaced in the participants’ accounts of their earliest experiences in their new country.

*Maintaining respect and trust Theme.* For the final theme of Question 1, findings showed that cultural differences likely led to students being disrespectful and lacking trust in their international teachers. Predictably, these perceptions were associated with frustrations common to the experience of culture shock. For example, findings indicated that, due to language problems, communication between the students and the immigrant teachers can be a challenge and most students tended to respond poorly to communication difficulties. Despite the students’ behaviors, the immigrant teachers reported the importance of maintaining respect and trust with their students in order to adapt to the culture. Again, the onus was on the immigrant teachers to secure the trust and respect of the students as much as it was to hold students accountable to the policies regarding inappropriate student behavior.

The emergence of this theme is supported by research by Schrader (2015) that suggested that social bonding between students and teachers is key to a peaceful coexistence. Additionally, the results depicted that gaining respect and trust from students is also essential for professional development among immigrant teachers. Further, Berry (2006) purported that immigrant teachers need to adopt an acculturation strategy that includes the development of positive relationships with students.

In addition, the findings revealed an interesting interaction between the theme of maintaining trust and respect and having a support system. Despite disrespectful behaviors from students, immigrant teachers often leveraged support from their colleagues in their work environment in order to retain their respect to students. This
support, the equivalent of colleagues “having their back” helped changed attitudes between immigrants and their students. The results aligned with the information given by Berry (2006) that the school administrators should provide support to the immigrant teachers in order to help them develop inoculating social skills like how to be friendlier with the students and other trust-building strategies. Berry (2006) also explained that the support provided by school administrators to immigrant teachers leads to professional integration that results in improved teaching and a smoother acculturation process. Once more, the absence of interviews with returnee immigrant teachers is noteworthy, as the perceptions of these individuals could prove enlightening regarding their success (or lack thereof) in cultivating trusting and respective relationships with students and colleagues, and how much formal and informal social support contributes to this outcome.

**Research Question Two: How do Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district located in Ohio construct meanings of their new roles, responsibilities, and identities in their new socio-cultural environment?**

The findings provided the perceptions of immigrant Asian Indian immigrant teachers towards acculturation process and their understanding on their roles, responsibilities, and identities. The emergent themes trustworthy role model, steward of student success, disciplinary class manager. Each of these themes is discussed below.

**Trustworthy role model.** The findings revealed that the immigrant teachers in the new socio-cultural environment were still required to establish themselves as a trustworthy role model. The findings indicated that the immigrant teachers are more likely to develop trustworthiness with the students in the United States by sharing information. Participants perceived that social sharing, even some degree of personal
disclosure, was effective in building positive relationships with students and colleagues alike. Perceptions showed that developing a good relationship within the school environment required the immigrants to, once again, take the lead on such social interaction. Presumably, this cohort of participants who have successfully overcome many acculturation obstacles, were able to establish themselves as trustworthy and were able to build strong relationships over time. As such, many participants were highly satisfied in their job. Meanwhile, Jian (2012) demonstrated that a positive relationship between immigrants and mentors of coworkers leads to better acculturation and career development.

A key component of the information sharing process that was part and parcel of building trust had to do with confidentiality. On several occasions, participants shared how they valued keeping information confidential to protect student privacy. The study’s finding revealed that immigrant teachers talk and share the problems faced by students without involving third parties. Similarly, the study’s findings revealed that the immigrant teachers maintain ethics which assist them to cope with the new school environment and improve school success. The findings align with the information provided by Lee (2013) that immigrant teachers play key roles in modeling positive ethics. In essence, trust manifested as an important form of currency for immigrant teachers that could lead to stronger bonds and, in turn, an ethical workplace culture that indirectly fostered the academic success of students and the career development of teachers.

**Steward of student success.** The findings established that, by default, immigrant teachers have the role of ensuring student success in the new socio-cultural environment.
To do so, participants identified they must adapt to the new environment, including adjusting their practice to meet the learning requirements of students from different cultural backgrounds. The findings also indicated that, to be a successful steward, it is imperative for immigrant teachers to master the English language in addition to learning the curriculum of the host country before teaching. These findings support existing research that suggests that in addition to facing challenges to core values related to food and religion, poor preparation in this regard may harm the acculturation process (Somani, 2008). That is, immigrant teachers perceived that being knowledgeable of the host culture beforehand helped them in the early going.

Participant perceptions also indicated that acquiring knowledge about the culture of the new society helps immigrant teachers understand their roles and responsibilities and buffer threats to their cultural identity. The findings also revealed that the immigrant professionals are required to handle every student in a cultural acceptable way regardless of differences in cultural teaching norms. The findings were consistent Dunn (2013) who suggested that international teachers working in US schools understand the culture and numerous possible sub-cultures of all students and the coworkers.

**Disciplinary class managers.** In the final theme for Question 2, immigrant math and science teachers need to establish and follow a disciplinary plan for behavior and academic standards. The findings showed that most participants identified as a disciplinarian with the responsibility of fostering good behaviors among students. Examples of the bad behaviors that participating immigrant teachers faced in their workplaces include racism and discrimination, particularly from African-American students. Thus, the findings suggest that Asian Indian immigrants need to adjust their
class management strategies to improve class behaviors among students. The results align with the information in the existing literature Asian teachers experience class management challenges and disciplinary problems due to bad student behaviors in contrast to their experiences in their home country (Dunn, 2013).

**Research Question three - How do the Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district perceive their gender influencing their expected roles and responsibilities in their professional and personal lives?**

The findings also revealed the perceptions of Asian Indian immigrant teachers regarding the effects of gender on teachers’ professional and personal lives. The findings indicated that gender equity, promotions, and discrimination were the main effects of gender.

**Professional gender equality.** The findings with regards to the third research sub-question indicated that, professionally, gender is associated with improved motivation and job satisfaction due to the narrowing of the inequality female teachers experience in India. The findings showed that it is possible that when immigrants move to a new society, gender discrimination relinquish, and gender roles are less pronounced in some important ways. In this study, both men and women in the K-12 urban settings perceived more equal opportunities across gender. All teachers identified that this opportunity was most pronounced related to professional growth. These findings showed that the length of residency is also associated with higher levels of acculturation in terms of gender roles and responsibilities. That is, participants appeared to fully accept changes in gender roles over time. Studies suggest that the length of residency contributes to a positive relationship between acculturation and patriarchal gender roles and responsibilities.
(Bhanot & Senn, 2007). In general, these findings are also consistent with Andersen, Logio, and Taylor (2005) study which showed that when individuals move to different society, they are able to adjust to new gender roles as assigned by the other society. As participants in this study showed, this adjustment is likely positive if the gender roles shifted in a more liberating direction.

Additionally, the findings indicated that in the United States, both male and female teachers are given equal responsibilities which have resulted in improving the professional development for all teachers. Both male and female teachers are paid equally because they share responsibilities. The findings are supported by studies by Mann, Roberts, and Montgomery (2015) and Kohli (2015) which showed that, in the western culture, gender equality is the most essential factor in all aspects of human life. However, the findings contradicted Gilbert (1997) who indicated that, in the host countries, Asian women participate more in various activities in the educational settings than men because women are more educated than men. Therefore, they have a higher sense of independence.

Participant perceptions also showed that gender equality exists for job promotions. The findings disclosed that Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in a K-12 urban school district perceived that promotions are given to both men and women compared to their home country. The findings showed that both women and men are given the opportunities for leadership roles and other available top positions in school settings. This finding supported the work of Samnami, Boekhorst, and Harrison (2012) that revealed that all individuals who adapt an integration strategy have access to promotions, expansion, and career development regardless of their gender. Additionally,
Bhatia (2007) explained that, in the West, Asian Indian professionals tend to be given the same opportunities because they all have equal exceptional skills and hardworking and, therefore, can progress their career based on merit.

The results attained in the current study also showed that, although the state of gender equality is considerably improved in America, female participants experience discrimination more than men, particular from the students they teach. These findings support the literature that claims male teachers have superior roles than women in the school environment. This tendency is a rather universal phenomenon whether the teacher is an immigrant or not. However, for Asians, Mann et al. (2015) explained that Asian men hold positions with power and status whereas women have limited opportunities based on cultural values.

**Personal gender equality.** The second theme under Question 3 pertained to experience with gender equality beyond the workplace in society as a whole. Current study findings also revealed that, in the modern society, Asian men and women have the access to equal opportunities and education. This has resulted in promoting personal development for both men and women teachers. The results showed that adapting to the western culture in the United States has reduced common inequalities among Asian men and women. The current study’s findings support the existing literature that, in the modern society, women tend to hold the same positions as men and they all share responsibilities (Gupta, 1999).

**Implications for Practice**

The emergent themes pertaining to the three research questions guiding this investigation reveal a few recommendations for applied practice. These recommendations
for practice are centered on improving the acculturation process for Asian Indian immigrant teachers.

**Support from the district, administrators, and colleagues.** The study revealed the apertures and barriers that the immigrant math and science teachers faced in their initial years of working and living in the US. These teachers constitute a diverse teaching body and the administrators, and the districts can validate and underscore its value by enforcing certain institutional practices. The district should acknowledge and cogitate the complexities surrounding the migration process of the international teachers, such as, cultural shock in terms of diet, clothing, language (dialect, slang), climate and values.

The participants revealed how the lack of professional training affected their adjustment in their new work environment. The district should focus on providing a series of professional development sessions to help the international teachers prepare for their new work and social environments. In addition to training the teachers to familiarize with the new curriculum and teaching styles/methods, teachers should also be exposed to and acquainted with the social and home environments of the student population they would be working with in these schools.

To help the immigrant teachers succeed in the US urban area schools, districts can create and implement a training and teacher preparation models for all international and immigrant teachers. Childress, Elmore, and Grossman (2006) in their policy report suggested that only the urban school districts are in control of planning, creating, identifying, and implementing best practices, and training models when it comes to leadership capabilities, building information systems to monitor student improvement and holding the employees at all levels accountable for the output. The participants in this
study were hired by the US school districts through a recruiting agency, hence, the
district and administrators can also develop guidelines for such institutions and agencies
in their employment of immigrant instructors. This would help reduce or even eliminate
the load on school districts of priming the new immigrant teachers for the US schools.

It would also be beneficial for the teachers as well as the districts to acknowledge
and recognize that such teachers are prone to more vulnerability in comparison to their
native-born peers when it comes to adjusting with the values of the Western society
(Morgenshtern & Novotna, 2012). A helpline or a forum could be created where the new
immigrant teachers are able to share their experiences and concerns in a supporting,
affirming and systematic way. Additionally, the existing staff, administrators, and the
teachers should be made aware of the essential aspects of immigration and how the
process impacts an individual’s life. The participants in the current research talked about
the support from their colleagues and shared the positive and some nugatory interactions
with them. In this case, the views and attitudes of the colleagues towards their new
immigrant teachers vary and largely depend on the extent to which they have had formal
preparation to be culturally appropriate and deal with culturally diverse staff members
(Rubinstein-Avila and Lee 2014). This is another area where district can provide
necessary training and information to its staff members to extend support to the new
immigrant teachers.

Some participants in the current study had shared the benefits of instructional
support by having a mentor teacher in their initial years. However, the topic of emotional
support was left almost untouched and based on the data, it was quite evident that the
immigrant teachers did not seek support in the areas of personal and emotional conflicts
at their professional setting, but from their families and community. It is quite possible that the participants did not deem it right to seek help to deal and cope with their challenges not directly related to their profession from their administrators or colleagues, as they did not want to come across inefficient and incapable of performing their job duties, and to gain the trust and respect of their supervisors (Lee, 2010).

This is a topic that needs further in-depth investigation and can be used in future studies.

**Advance preparation by participants.** The district has some loopholes to fill when it comes to assisting immigrant teachers in their acculturation process, however, on the other hand, the immigrant teachers can also prepare in advance to face the challenges of migration to a new work and social environment. The discussions with the participants suggested their determination to embrace the change and mold oneself to one’s new surroundings.

The study participants discussed the class management, discipline among students, and obedience and respect towards the teachers as crucial factors that challenged the teachers’ authority over and over in their initial years of working as a classroom teacher. Such as, in US schools, students do not stand up to attention out of respect when the teachers enter the rooms, and this factor, like many others was surprising to the new immigrant math and science teachers in US urban schools and required significant adjustments over time of both expectations and behavior. This surprise element can be reduced or eliminated if teachers acquaint themselves to the host country’s school environment in terms of student discipline, student behavior, and class management style and strategies prior to their arrival or even acceptance of the job (Lee, 2010).
The teacher participants in the study emphasized the importance of being flexible in terms of adopting new teaching strategies and methods. Some participants shared examples of how they had to modify their teaching styles as well. Teachers had to be creative and self-reliant in addition to being flexible and open minded to find the appropriate materials and resources in align with the state curriculum to teach in their classrooms. Whereas, in their home country, they were provided standardized materials and had to teach in a standardized manner, which was usually transmitting the textbook knowledge (Niyubahwe, Mukamurera, and Jutras, 2013). The immigrant teachers can acquaint themselves with the curriculum, materials, resources, and teaching styles and methods of the US schools prior to their arrival. The recruiting agency can also hold special workshops for this purpose in the home country of the participants. Alternatively, in this age of easy access to internet, participants can also look up teaching demonstrations of US teachers online.

Working under conditions that are new and in stark contrast to the ones that the participants were used to, was a tempestuous and bumpy process and some of this could be circumvented in future for new immigrant teachers with appropriate guidance and grounding in American culture prior to their arrival in the USA. Though circumstances have changed since the time the participants in the current study moved to the United States, and the new immigrants in general are more mindful and knowledgeable of the host country’s culture due to globalization, it will still be beneficial. Many people around the world have access to internet and media and can easily learn about other cultures and societies different than their own. Television and films have a great contribution in making world citizens as people in India have access to American, and British TV shows,
and movies. This has helped people to learn about American life, society and values. Indian culture has also borrowed values from American society as globalization’s cultural consequence, and incorporated elements of American culture into Indian culture creating a newer hybrid culture, especially when it comes to popular music and religious life (Holton, 2000; Raina and Roebuck, 2014). The American TV shows, films, documentaries, in combination with media (online or print) can provide an overview of American culture and life to the future immigrant teachers from India or other similar countries before moving to the US. Additionally, immigrant teachers can make an effort to socialize with their colleagues to learn more about the culture of the host country.

The participants can also prepare themselves by learning the language of the host country, such as the pop culture language, slangs, dialects, accents and common phrases. Linguistic barriers can not only add to the challenges faced by the immigrants, but can also hamper access to employment (Myles, Cheng, & Wang, 2006). The participants in the current study also shared having problems due to the lack of knowledge of urban dialect, slangs and at times, different accents. The participants also highlighted their concerns of being considered an outsider due to their language barriers and unable to adopt accents. Since this was a common disquietude, the participants can also undergo accent reduction training to enhance their chances of rapid adjustment in their work environment and ultimately for a better rapport with their students (Hutchison, 2005). The teachers can continue to learn the language and culture even after moving to US as there are several institutes and agencies training people in this area.

Reading research-based textbooks, and articles about teaching strategies in US schools can also help the newly hired international teachers to prepare themselves before
arriving in the United States. Eventually, what also matters is having a positive attitude and open mind to build good relationships with others in addition to more proactive and creative attributes towards problem solving in challenging times.

**Limitations of the study**

This was a qualitative research study; hence, it was more open ended than the quantitative or a mixed research study. The participants had more control over the content of the data and hence, verifying the results objectively may not have been fully possible. A mixed methodology study may shed more understanding of the participants’ lived experiences and meaning making process. In addition, using a phenomenology research methodology can lead to subjectivity as it requires researcher interpretation and therefore, despite the best efforts may get subjected to pre-conceived ideas about an experience or phenomenon. Researcher bias is difficult to determine in such studies.

For future research, case studies and narratives can also be used to learn about the participants’ acculturation process in depth. Also, qualitative research, or more specifically in this case, phenomenological approach is not considered to be transferable or generalizable and may need to be undertaken a few times by few different researchers before claiming its generalizability (Thomas and Mukherjee, 2019). Another limitation of the study is the small sample size of the participants used in the current research. Due to time constraints, travel expenses, and unwillingness of some participants to participate in the study, I had to limit my sample to eight participants in one local urban area school district.

Furthermore, the study was limited to Asian Indian math and science teachers in a local urban school district and lacked diversity in terms of the choice of participants. By
adding other subject teachers, school districts, and ethnicities, the study may have had different interpretations and results. Lastly, my closeness to the study was also a limiting factor and I discussed the steps and precautions I took as a researcher and a previous employee of the school district to reduce bias in chapter two of this research.

To summarize, the following practices should be put in place:

i. The district should create a separate formal mentoring program specifically for the new immigrant teachers to provide them the support they need in their initial years.

ii. The district should create a formal training program that could be implemented in participants’ home country as well as the host country to help them prepare for their new work environment.

iii. The district should offer mandatory English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to the participants. This could be part of the formal training program or a separately embedded in the teaching preparation training program for the first few years. This would help the new immigrant teachers learn dialects, slangs or the popular pop culture language to help them better adjust in their new society.

iv. The district should hold a Question and Answer Session with the new immigrant teachers before their hiring process to provide them a true account of their work duties and responsibilities, in addition to educating them about their work environment and student population.
v. The district should renew their student and teacher evaluation systems, and the teacher evaluation should not be based on student performance or academic achievement.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Several recommendations for further research can be made based on this study’s findings. First and foremost, future research should consider exploring the acculturation process with Asian Immigrant teachers who did not successfully manage their experiences. That is, what can be learned from Asian Immigrant teachers who returned to their home country because of their negative experiences and lack of support in the host country. This insight could prove useful in suggesting practical strategies to assist Asian Indian teachers wishing to move to America in future.

Secondly, study focused on only Asian Indian immigrant teachers in the United States. Thus, the findings obtained may not be applicable to other immigrants in other countries. Thus, it is recommended that future research studies should focus on other immigrant populations in order to acquire their perceptions about the acculturation process in the US. Future research studies should include not only immigrant teachers but immigrants in other professions as well—perhaps with less exposure to a large social institution like the education system—in order to explore the acculturation experiences from a different angle and with a larger sample. This will extend understanding of the challenges of adapting to the new culture in the host countries and generate new ideas for the preparation of immigrants wishing to move and work abroad in a starkly different culture. Third, the future studies can operate on different paradigm other than social
constructivism and also use a mixed methodology to explore and understand the challenges immigrant teachers face after moving to US.

Most importantly, this study revealed the subtle and obvious racism that teachers faced while working in urban K-12 environment, mostly from their students, and somewhat from their peers. The future research should look into the dynamics of race and racism between the immigrant teachers and the student population of the urban schools, primarily made up of African American students (Johnson, Kardos, Kauffman, Liu, & Donaldson, 2004). It would be insightful to find out how immigrant teachers perceive, and combat with the anti-blackness wave/vibe in the United States from the perspective of Critical Race Theory (Kohli, Pizarro, & Nevarez, 2017). Berry’s (2005) framework of acculturation could be used in future studies to understand the Racial Identity Development to truly comprehend the transition process of immigrant teacher in an urban K-12 environment. Lastly, the further research should also focus on the impact of current US immigration policies on the hiring and retention of the immigrant teachers in public schools, and how do these immigrant teachers perceive the post 9/11 and current immigration policies enforced after/during Trump’s presidency (Sanchez, Freeman, & Martin, 2018)

**Final Remarks**

The study examined the meaning making process of immigrant teachers in USA as they transitioned into a new culture adopting new values and retaining their own to much extent. This was certainly not an easy process, i.e. leaving one’s country, family members, and culture to pursue professional opportunities in a foreign land. As these teachers struggled to make the new society their home, they navigated the obstacles
inherent to such situations in the migration process, such as, making changes in their life style, learning their new work environment, learning the language, new curriculum, teaching methods, and questioning their identities. In the hope of acquiring better opportunities for their family members and themselves, these study participants made compromises and lived with the hope of a better life eventually. As they shared, now almost two decades later, USA is a home to them, but it took efforts, toil, sacrifices, and arduous work to successfully tread through the process of acculturation and keeping a balance between two cultures. There is a significant benefit in adopting the mainstream culture and the participants revealed this through their experiences. The increased number of immigrants, like Asian Indian professionals in the United States has contributed to the need to understand the acculturation process in greater detail (Bhatia, 2007).

The participants of the study identified the benefits of acculturation to the mainstream culture for several reasons. From skill development for the advancement of their careers to adopting the food, dressing style and even religious practices to some extent helped them successfully settle into their new environments. This would further aid them assume the role of a trustworthy model to facilitate the academic success of American students. In addition, as a change agent, these teachers can promote, support, and enable other newly migrated individuals in their community and may act as mentors for other immigrant teachers in the school district.

The current study also shed light on evolving gender roles in the lives of Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers. The Indian males had started contributing more towards the household chores and duties, and this took some load off the women, who were also working full time and adjusting in their new surroundings. This is in align
with the existing research (Khandelwal, 2002; Bhalla, 2008) on Asian Indians about developing more egalitarian gender relations within families after migrating to the United States due to greater male participation in the domestic work. Where positive changes took place at home front, the female study participants also revealed recreating new gendered identities due to experiencing equal treatment at work place in terms of gender equality. The male participants did not notice much gender differences, however, the female participants in the current study attributed gender equality at work to their professional success. In addition, the immigrants who adapt to the western culture are more likely to get similar promotions and other leadership positions like due to equal education, experience, and exceptional skills (Yoshihama, Blazevski and Bybee, 2014).

Overall, the study participants exhibited a satisfactory attitude towards their professional and personal lives. Most agreed to have adopted the food habits, which was a larger issue in their initial years in US, and also displayed a sense of pride at their successful acculturation in the host country. Even though initially it was challenging for them and their family members, all participants assented to continue living here for a better future of their children and superior opportunities of having a stress-free life.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Informed Consent

My name is Loveleen Sharma-Chopra. I am a doctoral student at Cleveland State University. I am requesting your participation in a research study. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (216) 255-2670.

Dr. Brian Harper, an Associate Professor at Cleveland State University, Department of Curriculum & Foundation is supervising this research. He can be reached at 216-875-9770.

The study focuses on Asian Indian immigrant math and science teachers in an urban K-12 setting. I hope to understand how these teachers adapt to their new surroundings. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in two face to face interviews with the researcher. These interviews will be audio taped using a recording software on the researcher's laptop.

Risks associated with participation are considered to be minimal. Such risks are largely limited to compromised confidentiality. To minimize such risks, the personal data will be stored using pseudonyms of your choice on the researchers' personal (at home) and office computers (at CSU Main Campus) with password. You are free to skip any items you choose not to respond to. You may withdraw from this study at any time without any
consequence whatsoever. No personal identifiers will be included in such data. There are no direct benefits available to you as a participant in this research.

A copy of this Informed Consent will be provided to you for your records.

Please read the following: “I understand that if I have any questions about my rights as a research subject, I can contact the Cleveland State University Institutional Review Board at (216) 687-3630.”

There are two copies of this form. After signing them, keep one copy for your records and return the other one to the researcher.

Your signature below means that you understand the contents of this document. You also are at least 18 years of age. Finally, you voluntarily consent to participate in this research study.

_________________________________________  __________________
Signature                                      Date

_________________________________________
Name (Printed)
APPENDIX B: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

*Introductions:* Explanation of Interview Process and Confidentiality (pick an alias)

*Section One: Participant Demographics and Background*

1. How long have you been in the United States?
2. What was your age at the time of migration to US?
3. Did your entire family immigrate together?
4. What was your main reason for moving to US?
5. What is your resident status in this country now? Are you a citizen or do you still hold a non-US passport? If yes, do you plan to become US citizen overtime?
6. How do you identify yourself currently (Oriental, Asian, Asian-American, Indian, American, Other, etc.) and why/why not?
7. What is your highest education level? Did you obtain any of your degrees in US?
8. What did you do in India—were you always a teacher? What kind of school did you teach at (urban/suburban/rural)?

*Section Two: Acculturation experiences in United States and construction of new roles*

9. What were your early reactions to US society right after you moved here? [Were you happy/sad/excited/anxious/or any other emotions about your decision to move? Did you think you would stay here for this long?]
10. Did you have any family or friends in US when you moved here?
11. How easy was it for you to make friends or associate with the Americans, at home with neighbors and at work with your colleagues, when you first arrived into the host country?
12. What similarities/dissimilarities did you find between the culture/society of India and US? [How did you feel about the dissimilarities?]

13. Was it an easy adaptation for you in the US society, in regards to food, dress attire, language, accents, entertainment, etc.? What efforts you made, if any, to combat the differences and adjust to the food, dress attire, etc.?

Section Three: Professional Environment and acculturation

14. How did you find your workplace in US, was it similar to your work setting in India? Why/why not? What similarities/dissimilarities did you observe between the two settings? What were your early reactions to your work setting, geographically, and population wise?

15. What were the initial reactions (attitude/comportment) of your American colleagues to you as an Asian Indian immigrant math and science teacher in the urban school setting? What did you feel about their mannerisms towards you? Did it affect your perception of the work culture of the schools you were appointed at?

16. Describe your teaching experience in respect to discipline and class management. How did you discipline your students? Were you able to transfer your class management strategies implemented in India, in US? How/Why? How did you find the curriculum taught in US schools? How successful it is for student achievement? What changes would you like to make in it, if any?

17. Describe and give examples of how do you communicate with your students? With parents? Or with other community members involved with your profession?

18. What do you expect of your students? Do expectations of your students’ parents match yours? How/why not? Do the parents have different expectations of you if
you are a male/female? What are those expectations? How coworkers respond to you as a man versus woman?

19. Do your students have different expectations of you being an immigrant, in comparison to your American counterparts? Why/why not? [What and how are those different?]

20. How has being in an urban K-12 environment affected your growth as a teacher, if any?

21. How successful do you consider yourself in your career? Have you received any awards/honors/promotions?

22. What aspect of your profession or experience are you very satisfied with, and What aspect you are not? How do you think the lapse could be overcome, if any?

Section Four: Gender and acculturation experiences

23. How are men overall treated at your work place? How are women, in general, treated at your work place? Are there any similarities or differences the way men and women are treated at your work setting? What similarities or dissimilarities have you observed and experienced?

24. Do you feel that people/colleagues respond to you differently because of your gender? How/why/why not?

25. Did you students treat you differently because of your gender? How/why/why not?

26. Has being in United States influenced your opinion about how men and women should be treated at work setting? Do you feel it is okay for women to work, and make efforts towards their career growth?
27. What differences, if any, did you find in regard to gender status between your professional environment in Indian schools, and in US schools?

28. How about your family and friends in India, do they think your perceived gender roles have changed being in US?

Section Five: Asian Indian Identities

29. Do you miss not being in India? [What aspects do you miss if any? Why?]

30. How do you stay in touch with your culture/religion?

31. Do you take part in the traditional Asian rites, traditions or other occasions of the sort? What are those? Do you affiliate with any ethnic/cultural groups? Has that helped you in adjusting in your current society: professionally, socially or both?

32. Do you think the overall lifestyle of US is better than India or vice versa? Please explain. If given a chance, would you like to go back to India, or would you choose to stay here in US? Please explain, why?

33. Whom do you now associate with in the American society, are they Americans or Asian Indians? Why/why not? Whom would you prefer to associate with in the community, if you could pick and why?